Argentina

Córdoba Extension

28th October to 1st November 2022 (5 days)

North West Endemics

1st November to 14th November 2022 (14 days)



Burrowing Parrots by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Our comprehensive north west tour is set amongst some of the finest scenery in all of South America, and targets every single endemic and near endemic the region has to offer! From such diverse areas as Quebrada de las Conchas and Tafi del Valle to the spectacular Humahuaca Valley and Yungas Cloud forests of Calilegua National Park, no better backdrop exists against which to search out the region's avian gems! Highlights include Rufous-throated Dipper, Tucuman Mountain Finch, flashy Red-tailed Comet, immense Andean Condor, Sandy Gallito, Burrowing Parrot, Tucuman Amazon, Lark-like Brushrunner and even Spot-winged Falconet.

Our Cordoba Extension targets some of the least-known birds and least-visited areas of Argentina. The geographically isolated Cordoba Hills are a haven of endemicity where we can expect to find the endemic Olrog's and Cordoba Cinclodes. The nearby salt pans and lakes of Salinas Grande and Mar Chiquita offer up numerous flamingos and the highly localised Salinas Monjita. Visiting some highly accessible and largely unspoilt habitats, this short tour provides the perfect opportunity to clear up the region's endemics and enjoy excellent sightings of otherwise difficult species

Itinerary & Map

Cordoba Extension

Day 1	**Córdoba to Pampa de Achala**
Day 2	**Sierran Chaco**
Day 3	**Mar Chiquita**
Day 4	**Dean Funes and Salinas Grande**
Day 5	**Dean Funes to Córdoba**

North West Endemics

Day 1	**Arrival in San Miguel de Tucumán, transfer to Tafi del Valle**
Day 2	**Tafi del Valle**
Day 3	**Tafi del Valle to Valles Calchaquíes**
Day 4	**Valles Calchaquíes to Cabra Corral**
Day 5	**Cuesta del Obispo (Cachi Road)**
Day 6	**Cabra Corral to Joaquín V. González**
Day 7	**Joaquín V. González area**
Day 8	**Joaquín V. González to Calilegua National Park**
Day 9	**Calilegua National Park & Yungas Cloud Forest**
Day 10	**Calilegua National Park to Quebrada de Humahuaca**
Day 11	**Quebrada de Humahuaca to La Quiaca**
Day 12	**La Quiaca area**
Day 13	**La Quiaca to San Lorenzo**
Day 14	**Final departures**


La Quiaca
Humahuaca
Calilegua NP
San Lorenzo
Cabra Corral
J. V. González
Valles Calchaquíes
San Miguel de Tucuman
Tafi del Valle
Salinas Grande
Dean Funes
Mar Chiquita
Cordoba
Pampa de Achala
Chile
US Dept of State Geographer
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus
Google Earth

Birding sites in detail

Pampa de Achala. Pampa de Achala is the highest plateau in the heart of the Sierras de Córdobas. This granitic massif is surrounded by woodlands and scrub more typical of the Chaco. Detached from the main Andes range by some 300km, the high levels of endemism are a direct consequence of this geographical isolation. High up on our list of priority species today is the endemic Olrog's Cinclodes, a bird we often find from the roadside. Further exploration should yield Cordoba Cinclodes, Rufous-banded Miner, Subtropical Doradito, Rufous-naped Ground Tyrant, Red-legged Seriema, Red-tailed Comet, Andean Swift, Band-tailed and Plumbeous Sierra Finch, Hellmayr's Pipit and Puna Canastero (the locally occurring subspecies sclateri is often considered a species in its own right – Cordoba Canastero).



Red-legged Seriema by Clayton Burne

Sierran Chaco. This scrubby habitat surrounding the Cordoba Hills is actually the very southern edge of the Chaco, providing fertile grounds for Blue-tufted Starthroat, Tataupa Tinamou, the very rare Black-bodied Woodpecker, Black-crested Finch, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper and Spot-winged Falconet. Amongst the commoner species, we should find Stripe-crowned and Yellow-chinned Spinetails, Brown Cacholote, Lark-like Brushrunner, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-crowned and White Monjitas, Spectacled Tyrant, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Screaming Cowbird, Long-tailed Meadowlark and Hooded Siskin.

Mar Chiquita. The famous Mar Chiquita lagoon is the biggest saline lagoon in South America (and the fifth biggest in the world), a Ramsar site, an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA), a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve and a Multiple Use Reserve. Covering 950 000 hectares, Mar Chiquita holds not only a great number of birds, but an impressive level of diversity including many migrants. During our time here we will certainly not struggle for flamingo sightings, with over 100 000 resident Chilean as well as a number of Puna and Andean Flamingos. Migrants include up to half a million Wilson's Phalarope, Lesser Yellowlegs, Baird's Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpipers and American Golden Plover.



James's Flamingoes by Clayton Burne

Aside from the mega spectacle of flamingos and waders, we will also spend time searching for the elusive Dot-winged Crake, skulking South American Painted-snipe and localised Dinelli's Doradito, In the surrounding scrub we will keep our eyes open for the mighty Solitary Eagle, White-fronted Woodpecker, Olive-crowned

Crescentchest, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, White-tipped Plantcutter and Red-crested Cardinal to mention a few.

Dean Funes & Salinas Grande. San Jose de las Salinas is home to the last remnants of the now derelict salt mining trade and is our access point to the massive Salinas Grande salt pan (8,900km2)! The salt pans harbour a remarkable range restricted species that occupies a highly specialised niche. The Salinas Monjita is found almost exclusively in the highly stunted vegetation surrounding the area's salt flats and pans. Around the salt pans we pass through excellent Chaco habitat with a good chance of seeing the much sought-after Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Brushland and Elegant Crested Tinamous, Black-legged Seriema, White-fronted Woodpecker, Suiriri Flycatcher, Crested Hornero, Straneck's Tyrannulet, White-banded Mockingbird, Red Pileated and Many-colored Chaco Finch.



Salinas Monjita by Clayton Burne

Rio Los Sosa Valley. The Yungas cloud forest shrouding the Rio Los Sosa Valley is of particular interest for a few localised specialities including the endemic Yellow-striped Brushfinch, Rusty-browed Warbling Finch and sprightly Brown-capped Whitestart, while along the swift waterways, we will search for Torrent Duck and the extremely localised Rufous-throated Dipper.

Tafi del Valle & surrounds. The montane forest and high Andean grasslands around Tafi del Valle offer up targets such as the endemic Tucuman Mountain Finch, Moreno`s Ground Dove and White-browed Tapaculo, as well as the outrageously colourful Red-tailed Comet, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Puna and Scribble-tailed Canasteros, chances for the immense Andean Condor, Aplomado Falcon, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Paramo Pipit, Ornate Tinamou and Ash-breasted Sierra Finch.



Yellow-striped Brush Finch by Clayton Burne

Valles Calchaquíes. Species are markedly different in this Monte desert habitat, stunted with tall cardon cactus. Some of the key birds we can expect to see include the endemic Sandy Gallito, Steinbach´s Canastero and Cinnamon Warbling Finch, along with White-fronted Woodpecker sallying for insects, Patagonian Mockingbird, Golden-rumped Euphonia, and, if we are very lucky, the nomadic endemic White-throated Cacholote.

Cafayate. In the verdant wine lands of Cafayate, we will search for large flocks of Green-cheeked Parakeet, the local subspecies of Burrowing Parrot, as well as explore the thorny scrub and dry streambeds for Ringed Warbling Finch, the localised endemic Steinbach's Canastero, Green-barred and Checkered Woodpeckers, Chaco Puffbird, the outrageous Ultramarine Grosbeak, Chaco Earthcreeper, White-winged Black Tyrant, and hyperactive endemic Rufous-naped Ground Tyrant along the river

banks, and Sandy Gallito (known locally as 'little rooster') scurrying across the desert floor.

Cuesta del Obispo (Cachi Road). The rich Cuesta del Obispo area is reached after a steep ascent passing dry, eroded slopes and cacti scrubland. We will bird patches of Yungas cloud forest and high Andean grasslands. Species we hope to find today include the range-restricted Rock Earthcreeper, Andean Condor, Chaco Chachalaca, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Dusky-legged Guan, the tiny Tataupa Tinamou, Suiriri Flycatcher, Plain-colored Seedeater, Rufous-bellied Saltator, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail and Maquis Canastero.



Rufous-throated Dipper by Clayton Burne

Cabra Corral. The surroundings of Cabra Corral hold both Black-legged and Red-legged Seriemas amongst other dry woodland specialities.

Joaquín V. González. We will spend the entire day birding in and around the town of J.V. González. Large tracts of the Chaco have sadly been felled here to make way for agriculture, but fortunately, there are still some easily accessible patches to be found. Alongside more common species such as Blue-crowned Parakeet and Eared Dove, we will be searching for a number of trickier skulkers including Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Crested Gallito and Stripe-backed Antbird. Other species that could put in an appearance include Brushland and Quebracho Crested Tinamous, Savanna Hawk, Chaco Chachalaca, Blue-fronted Amazon, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Pale-crested and Checkered Woodpeckers, Chaco Earthcreeper, Crested Gallito, Rufous and Crested Horneros, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, White Monjita and Many-colored Chaco Finch, amongst numerous others. We will also spend a few hours looking for nocturnal denizens, which might include Spectacled Owl, Little Nightjar and Common Potoo.

Dry Chaco en route to Joaquín V. González. Regular stops in the dry, thorny Chaco could turn up Greater Rhea, Black-legged Seriema, Chaco Puffbird, Lark-like Brushrunner, Little Thornbird, Brown Cacholote, Spot-winged Falconet, Stripe-backed Antbird, Short-billed Canastero, Great Antshrike, Great Rufous and Scimitar-billed Woodcreepers, Straneck's Tyrannulet, Solitary Cacique, Greyish Saltator, Cinereous Tyrant, Crowned Slaty Flycatcher and up to three Woodpeckers - White-fronted, Checkered and Green-barred.



Sandy Gallito by Clayton Burne

Calilegua National Park. We'll explore the fantastic Yungas cloud forest within the park. Our main targets here are Golden-collared Macaw, Green-cheeked and Mitred Parakeets, Blue-fronted and the endemic Tucuman Amazons, Ocellated Piculet, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Giant Antshrike, reclusive White-throated Antpitta, White-throated Quail-Dove, Plush-crested Jay, migratory Andean Slaty Thrush, the banana-billed Toco Toucan, Yungas Dove, Orange-headed Tanager, Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher and the

sparkling Blue-capped Puffleg, among other more widespread species.

Lerma Valley. Some of today's target specialities include Andean Tinamou, White-sided Hillstar, another chance for Rock Earthcreeper, Spectacled Tyrant, Pampa Finch, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, migrant Slaty Elaenia, Stripe-capped Sparrow, Cinereous Tyrant, Striped and Cream-backed Woodpeckers, White-barred Piculet, impressive Great Rufous Woodcreeper, Black-legged Seriema, Masked Gnatcatcher, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Crested Gallito, Black-crested Finch and the beautiful Many-colored Chaco Finch.



White-throated Cacholote by Clayton Burne

Of mammalian interest, we will keep our eyes peeled for herds of rare Guanaco, the delightful Southern Mountain Viscacha (something of a cross between a rabbit and an oversized squirrel!) and Culpeo, the locally occurring fox species.

Quebrada de Humahuaca. This narrow, arid valley was a major trade route over the last 10,000 years and is still the most important thoroughfare from the high Andes to the temperate plains of south-eastern South America. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the former Camino Inca is the present-day location of the Pan-American Highway.

History aside, the incredibly coloured vistas here offer excellent and unrivalled photographic opportunities. We will spend time birding at various points, searching for Cinereous Harrier, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Andean Swift, Straight-billed Earthcreeper, Andean Tyrant, Rufous-banded and Common Miners, White-tipped Plantcutter, Black-hooded Sierra Finch and Blue-and-yellow Tanager, amongst many others.

La Quiaca area. This area is typical Altiplano habitat where little rain falls. Local people's humble adobe houses are usually isolated from predators with elaborate rockwork fences, painstakingly constructed to secure their herds of sheep and llamas. Some targets in this area include Puna Canastero, bright Citron-headed Yellow Finch, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Black-fronted Ground Tyrant, Straight-billed and Buff-breasted Earthcreepers, eye-catching Red-backed Sierra Finch and Wedge-tailed Hillstar. We will also keep our eyes peeled for herds of Vicuña, a wild relative of the domesticated Llama.



Tucuman Mountain Finch by Jonathan Rossouw

Laguna de los Pozuelos. This National Natural Monument is a huge, saline Altiplano Lake home to hundreds of thousands of birds. Waterfowl, waders, flamingos and ibises can be seen in large numbers if conditions are favourable. Some of the more regular species on offer include Chilean, James's and Andean Flamingos, Giant Coot, Andean Goose,

Mountain Caracara, Puna Ibis, the stylish Andean Avocet, Puna Teal, Andean Gull, the uncommon Puna Plover and, if luck is on our side, even Puna Tinamou. Other water bodies in the surrounding area could yield Grey-breasted Seedsnipe, White-tufted and Silvery Grebes, Giant Coot and the difficult but spectacular Horned Coot.



Vicuña herd by Clayton Burne

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate. Endemic and target focussed trip. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges.
Birding Ease		Moderate. Most species provide decent visuals in open conditions. But some skulkers and low-density targets.
Accommodation		Comfortable, some lodges are simple.
Walking / Trails		Average walking, mostly on flat ground with variable substrate. High altitude walking is mostly downhill or kept to short distances.
Vehicles / Roads		A number of drives, some long. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas. Mountain passes and eroded dirt roads can be bumpy.
Photography		Good to good+. Some species distant, and bright light can be challenging. No dedicated hides.
Annoyances		Temperatures vary from hot & humid to cold. High winds expected, flies can be numerous at some sites.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 5 for those on the Cordoba Extension;
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 14 of the North West Endemics tour;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services
- Tips for local guides, drivers and services.

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- 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.

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader/s. If you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is 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. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes made need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- To ensure your comfort and that of your companions, please limit yourself to one medium-sized suitcase or duffel bag (20 kg / 44 lb) and one carry-on bag, as space in the vehicles is limited.

Arrival and Departure Details

The Cordoba Extension will depart on day 1 at around midday from Cordoba City Airport, and will end here on the morning of day 5.

The North West Endemics tour will depart from Tucumán City Airport on day 1 at around midday and conclude at Salta Airport on the morning of day 14.

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.

Ministro Pistarini International Airport, Buenos Aires (IATA: EZE) is the main port of entry for international flights into Argentina and is well serviced by all of the world's major airlines. Martín Miguel de Güemes International Airport, Salta (IATA: SLA), Ingeniero Aeronáutico Ambrosio L.V. Taravella International Airport, Cordoba (IATA: COR) and Teniente General Benjamín Matienzo International Airport, San Miguel de Tucumán (IATA: TUC) are all well connected via Buenos Aires airport.

It is important to note that there are two major airports in Buenos Aires;

1) Ministro Pistarini International Airport (IATA: EZE) and;
2) Buenos Aires – Aeroparque, also known as Jorge Newberry (IATA: AEP) which handles domestic flights.

Both the international and domestic airports cater for internal flights within Argentina. These airports are completely separate, and the drive between them usually takes between 1 and 1½ hours. It is, therefore, essential that you confirm the IATA airport codes with your travel agent in order to be sure which airport your flights arrive at and depart from.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements. The following website provides detailed information about visa eligibility and assistance with online applications options where viable: Visa HQ for Travel

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour.