Argentina

Córdoba Extension

Northwest Endemics



Burrowing Parrots by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Our comprehensive northwest tour is set amongst some of the finest scenery in all 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 to Dean Funes
Day 3	Dean Funes and Salinas Grande
Day 4	Mar Chiquita to Córdoba
Day 5	Depart from Córdoba

Northwest 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 Taco Pozo
Day 7	Taco Pozo area
Day 8	Taco Pozo to Calilegua National Park
Day 9	Calilegua National Park & Yungas Cloud Forest
Day 10	Calilegua National Park to Quebrada de Humahuaca via Yala Valley
Day 11	Quebrada de Humahuaca to La Quiaca via Pozuelos/Lagunillas
Day 12	La Quiaca area (Yavi & Lizoite Pass)
Day 13	La Quiaca to San Lorenzo
Day 14	Final departures


Lagunillas_a Quiaca
Humahuaca
Calilegua NP
San Lorenzo
Cuesta del Obispo
Cabra Corral
Taco Pozo
Valles Calchaquíes
Tafi del Valle
San Miguel de Tucuman
Salinas Grande
Dean Funes
Mar Chiquita
Cordoba
Pampa de Achala
Buenos Aires
Data SIO, NOAA, U.S. Navy, NGA, GEBCO
Image Landsat / Copernicus

Birding sites in detail



Cordoba Cinclodes by Glen Valentine

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, endemic sub-species of Long-tailed Meadowlark, Hellmayr's Pipit and Puna Canastero (the locally occurring subspecies *sclateri* is often considered a species in its own right – Cordoba Canastero).

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.



Dinelli's Doradito by Glen Valentine

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 many 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.

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 White-fronted Woodpecker, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Little and Freckle-breasted Thornbirds, White-tipped Plantcutter and Red-crested Cardinal to mention a few.



Salinas Monjita by Glen Valentine

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 Ringed Warbling Finch, uncommon Ash-breasted Cuckoo, 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 Finches.



Yellow-striped Brush Finch 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, Tucuman Amazon, Plumbeous Tyrant, Andean Slaty Thrush, Crested Becard, Black-backed Grosbeak, Yungas Guan, White-browed Tapaculo 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, chances for the immense Andean Condor, Aplomado Falcon, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Paramo Pipit, Ornate Tinamou and Ash-breasted Sierra Finch.

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 and Steinbach´s Canastero, along with White-fronted Woodpecker sallying for insects, White-throated Cacholote, Patagonian Mockingbird, Golden-rumped Euphonia, and, if we are very lucky, the nomadic endemic Cinnamon Warbling Finch and endemic Monte Yellow Finch.

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



Rufous-throated Dipper by Clayton Burne

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, Boulder Finch, Zimmer's Tapaculo, Rufous-webbed Bush Tyrant, Ornate Tinamou, Scribble-tailed and Puna Canastero, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Yungas Guan, Plain-colored Seedeater, Rufous-bellied Mountain Tanager, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail and Maquis Canastero.

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



Sandy Gallito by Clayton Burne

Taco Pozo. We will spend the entire day birding in and around the town of Taco Pozo. 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 several trickier skulkers including Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Crested Gallito and Stripe-backed Antbird. However, our primary reason for visiting this site are the core chaco species such as Black-bodied Woodpecker, Spot-winged Falconet and Quebracho Crested Tinamou. Other species that could appear include Brushland and Quebracho Crested Tinamous, Savanna Hawk, Chaco Chachalaca, Turquoise-fronted Amazon, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Checkered Woodpecker, Chaco Earthcreeper,

Crested Gallito, Rufous and Crested Horneros, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, White Monjita and Many-colored Chaco Finch, amongst numerous others.

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

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, endemic Tucuman Amazon, White-barred Piculet, 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, but very rarely found Blue-capped Puffleg, among other more widespread species.



White-throated Cacholote by Clayton Burne

Potrero de Yala. We'll spend time along the entrance road of this park, primarily searching for the near endemic Red-faced Guan, Cream-backed Woodpecker and Fulvous-headed Brushfinch. Other species of interest include Yungas Dove, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Smoke-colored Pewee, Plumbeous Tyrant, Andean Slaty Thrush, and Rusty-browed Warbling Finch. This is also an excellent backup site for Rufous-throated Dipper if we haven't connected yet.

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.



Moreno's Ground Dove by Bobby Wilcox

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, Rufous-banded and Common Miners, White-tipped

Plantcutter, Black-hooded Sierra Finch and Blue-and-yellow Tanager, amongst many others.

La Quiaca & Yavi areas. 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 and eye-catching 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 Bobby Wilcox

***Laguna de los Pozuelos / Lagunillas.** 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 White-tufted and Silvery Grebes, Giant Coot and the difficult but spectacular Horned Coot.

**This site is not always accessible due to variable local weather and road conditions.*

Lizoite Pass. Time permitting we will visit one of the higest roads in Argentina, the Abra del Lizoite pass. Here we'll have a chance of finding Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, Grey-breasted Seedsnipe and Red-backed Sierra Finch.

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		Several drives, some very 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 Northwest 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 may 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. (Flight dependent, we may fly on the evening of day 4 to San Miguel de Tucumán in preparation for the main tour).

The Northwest Endemics tour will depart from Tucumán City Airport mid-morning on day 1 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 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 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.

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