

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES
birding & nature tours



Japan Birding Spectacle 2023 – Steller's Sea Eagle, Dancing Cranes.

February 6 – 20, 2023

Guided by Alvaro Jaramillo and Kaz Shinoda



ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



Japan needs no introduction. It is a large archipelago of islands that stretches for a wide latitudinal gradient offshore from China, the Koreas and Russia. Japan is largely a mountainous country, with a chain of volcanos and mountains that create a spine to the main islands. Japan reaches from sea level to over 12,000 feet at the top of Mt. Fuji, perhaps one of the world's most beautiful volcanos. Japan is a gorgeous and unique country to visit. Not only for the scenery, but the distinctive food and culture. There is no doubt that Japan is a country that has shaped the world, one of the great civilizations of our planet.

But in Japan there is another side that one usually does not contemplate, and this is the natural world of Japan. If one word had to sum it up, it would be spectacle! A nature spectacle. Picture thousands upon thousands of Hooded and White-naped Cranes, rivaling the well know version of this in the United States, Bosque del Apache or the Platte River. But in Japan there are various species of cranes. Farther north one can see the rare and beautiful, Red-crowned Cranes, often dancing on the ice! Truly spectacular. Add to this the chance of seeing some rarer crane species and you get the idea that it is a very special place for these large, memorable and often endangered species of bird.

Also imagine the spectacle of the largest fish eagle in the world, the Steller's Sea Eagle, and in numbers! This is without a doubt one you would include in the top five most impressive raptors on earth, with its huge beak, wonderful coloration, and that odd diamond shaped tail. They come to the northern island of Hokkaido, and not only that they are surrounded by many White-tailed Sea Eagles. If you have seen those amazing photos of sea eagles, with a snowy background, they were taken here in the Japanese winter. We will see a wide variety of Japanese birds on our trip, from a nice assortment of wintering gulls on the coast, along with Japanese Cormorants, and even possibilities of some gorgeous and specialty alcids like the Spectacled Guillemot and Japanese Murrelet to waterfowl, and forest birds in the lowlands and other goodies up higher in the mountains.

Another spectacle are the wintering flocks of waterfowl, with densities of Whooper Swan in Hokkaido, and Bewick's Swans in the south. Some of those birds you look for as rarities back in North America are common here, such as Pochard, Tufted Duck, and Eurasian Wigeon. Three of the most striking ducks anywhere are possible in a winter Japan trip, the Falcated Duck named for its Scythe shaped ("falcum") tertials is a fantastic looking duck, perhaps outdone by the Baikal Teal, and then there is the rare but likely and almost impossible Mandarin Duck – any one of these three is a stunner. And let's not forget the Smew! We hope to pad the waterfowl list with various other possibilities, some of which are beauties shared with North America such as the Long-tailed Duck, and Harlequin Duck. Two species of swans are possible, and the Whooper Swan in Hokkaido is fantastic to see on the ice. While we look for water birds, we may find the Brown Dipper, or the Japanese Wagtail among others.

There is so much to see in Japan, from scenery to a rare flock of Japanese Waxwings, to the most impressive of owls – Blakiston's Fish Owl. But a trip to this nation is also an immersion into a one-of-a-kind culture and people. We will be having

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



some great traditional meals and will stay in several traditional hotels including some with thermal baths (onsen) and will be co-led by one of Japan's superb and knowledgeable birders (Kaz Shinoda). He will make sure that we not only experience the natural aspect of Japan, but also enjoy and understand the cultural aspect of Japan. This tour may have some of the best and most interesting food of any tour we do, I always look forward to the food on the tour. It is diverse and amazing. Come with us to experience the Land of the Rising Sun, and some of the best avian spectacles one can see anywhere. Take your camera, some of the memories you will make are picture worthy. Japan in February 2023 – Let's go!!!



Ural Owl

The Birding Sites We Visit

In order to enjoy a wide variety of species during our winter trip in Japan, we will visit three of the four main islands on the country. We will start in the main island of Honshu, we will then visit the southern island of Kyushu, and we shall end in the northernmost island of Hokkaido. We will be flying between these islands, as the distances involved are great; Japan is a large country!

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



Honshu

This is the main, central and largest island in Japan. It is where we will land in Tokyo and begin our tour. We will be visiting areas along the coast, and lowlands as well as a visit to the Japanese Alps while we are here. This includes some time photographing the famed, snow monkeys (macaques) of Japan. Please look at the day by day itinerary below for some of the birds we will look for on Honshu. We will be focusing on waterfowl and forest birds while here, with various buntings, Japanese Green Pheasant and other edge and open country species as well. Note that on Honshu we will be privy to experiencing some of the best gull watching anywhere in the planet on the coast and can expect a wide diversity of species including Black-tailed, Vega (Herring) and Slaty-backed.

Kyushu

This is the southernmost island in Japan. On Kyushu, we will enjoy some fantastic crane watching. As well, we will look for southern specialties such as Daurian Jackdaw, and Ryukyu Minivet among others. Our visit to the coast may also allow us a chance at the Japanese Murrelet and perhaps the rare Saunder's Gull. This part of Japan is warmer than other areas we will visit, although in winter we still expect some cold.

Hokkaido

On the other hand, Hokkaido is the coldest and northernmost island we shall visit. Here is where we will enjoy the spectacle of fish-eagles, along with the chance for the rare Blakiston's Fish-Owl. More crane watching is in store, as this is where the Red-crowned Cranes are to be found, and hopefully we shall enjoy their dancing while we are there. A short boat trip may allow us to find several alcid species, of which the Spectacled Guillemot will be high on our list of specialties we will look for.



Spectacled Guillemot



Red-crowned Crane

About the Physical Requirements & Pace

This is not a difficult tour; we will be mostly birding on flat ground and the pace will be relaxed. There are no long hikes, although to get to the snow monkeys we do have to walk on a mile long trail in the snow. However, it is a trip in winter and in particular in the north we may encounter snow and ice. There may be walks where the ground could be snowy or icy, where even parking areas may have ice. However, we are always near our vehicle or some place to get warm if needed. We will we will have a longer walk on possible icy paths in Karuizawa, if you want to stay back (depending on conditions) you may stay at the hotel and enjoy the birds at the feeders. We recommend taking crampons to put on your boots, these help you grip on ice and snow and make birding in these conditions quite comfortable (see below). The short (3 hour) boat ride is on a fishing vessel and in moderately protected waters, but if you are especially prone, you may want to have some seasickness medication available.

In Japan it is not always common to use salt or sand to melt away ice as is common in North America. In the alps and parts of Hokkaido we may be walking in trails that are

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



snowy or icy. We strongly recommend taking crampons that easily slip over your boots to add a level of grip on ice or snow. Alvaro found these quite easy to use and really helpful for helping to enjoy the places, birds and scenery rather than being stressed out about the walking.

Note that our hotels are a mix, some are Western style hotel, and others are Japanese style hotels. Japanese hotels may take some getting used to, on some you will sleep on traditional and very comfortable, Japanese futons. Single rooms may not be available in some hotels. Most Japanese hotels have private bathrooms, but not all, we may have to share bathrooms in at least one hotel. One hotel has showers only in the onsen hot springs. Hotels in Kyushu and Hokkaido tend to have natural hot springs that you may want to enjoy. We will be able to sample some wonderful traditional Japanese cuisine as we travel, although lunches tend to be at quicker and in more efficient places including roadside convenience stores which offer a varied and much healthier fare than you would expect from a store such as this in our country. Some of our dinners are feasts, for the palate as well as for the eyes! Note that in traditional restaurants, you may eat at low Japanese tables, again this takes some getting used to for us westerners. It is traditional to take your shoes off in Japanese style hotels. They have slippers there for guests to use, but you may consider bringing your own.



Blakiston's Fish Owl

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



Note that restaurants in Japan will usually not tailor a meal to someone's specific needs or choices. You are expected to leave anything you do not want to eat, but there is no tradition of ordering food to your specific requirements. The food is fantastic however! If you do not eat fish, keep in mind that fish is served on most days. Japan is not an easy place for vegetarian eaters, if you do not eat fish.

Itinerary for Japan 2023

Feb 6, 23. Day 1 – ARRIVAL IN JAPAN. Arrival day at **Haneda International Airport**. Recall that you will be crossing the international date line on transit from North America so you will arrive a day later than your departure day! Our hotel is near the airport, and easily accessible using the courtesy shuttle. We will be meeting for a joint dinner and meeting our local guide Kaz during this evening. If you fly in Narita Airport, you will need to take a transfer bus from Narita to Haneda (80 min. cost is approximately \$30). Please allow enough time to shuttle from Narita.

As travel can be stressful, bags can become misplaced, and it is a long trip from North America, some folks may choose to arrive a day early and we can help you arrange that with extra nights at the hotel. Night in Haneda Airport area hotel (Haneda Excel Hotel Tokyu).

Feb 7, 23. Day 2 – TOKYO TO KAGOSHIMA, KYUSHU. This morning we will transfer to the airport for our two-hour flight to the southern island of Kyushu. Japan is of course a large archipelago, of which there are four large islands. From north to south, they are Hokkaido, Honshu (the largest, and where Tokyo is located), Shikoku and Kyushu. We will bird woodlands and a reservoir in the early afternoon, looking for Mandarin Duck, Eastern (Japanese) Buzzard, Northern Goshawk, Olive-backed Pipit, Ryukyu Minivet, among others. We will stop by the coast and scope out over the ocean, with luck the Japanese Murrelet is a possibility here. But the highlight of the day will be our evening at the Arasaki Crane Reserve. Here we will be able to watch thousands of Hooded and White-naped Cranes coming on to roost. Night in Izumi, Kagoshima.

Feb 8, 23. Day 3 – ARASAKI. Today we return to the Arasaki Crane Reserve after some morning birding near our hotel. Again, we will enjoy the Hooded and White-naped Cranes, but now we may have some more time to search carefully through the flocks. Annually there are Common Crane and Sandhill Crane that can be found here, if the crane deities are smiling on us, rarer vagrants such as Siberian and Demoiselle Crane have been found here. Birding in ruderal field and edge areas may allow us to find

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



Russet Sparrow, Daurian Jackdaw, the uncommon Ruddy-breasted Crake as well as various buntings such as Chestnut-eared, Black-faced and Rustic among others. The gorgeous Green Pheasant is a possibility, as is Chinese Penduline Tit, and Japanese Grosbeak. Night in Izumi, Kagoshima.

Feb 9, 23. Day 4 – THE HIKAWA & KUMAGAWA RIVERS. We will first drive approximately 30 mins to the Kogawa Dam, and then two hours to Hikawa and Kumagawa Rivers. The dam is a good spot for the Mandarin Duck, as well as the White-bellied Pigeon. There are more chances for various buntings, Black Kite (often separated as Black-eared Kite), Crested Kingfisher, Japanese Woodpecker and Grey Wagtail. The rivers are a wonderful spot to see the very rare Saunder's Gull, and perhaps the more common Black-tailed, Vega, and maybe Heuglin's and Pallas's gulls (rare). We will also be on the lookout for Eurasian and the rare Black-faced spoonbills, as well as wintering shorebirds. Night at Yunomoto-Onsen Ryokan (single rooms may not be available).

Feb 10, 23. Day 5 – KAGOSHIMA TO KUSHIRO, HOKKAIDO. A short drive from our hotel we will visit Lake Miike & Kirishima Jingu Shrine. There is great forest here, where Ryukyu Minivet as well as Pygmy and Japanese woodpeckers can be found along with other woodland birds: Long-tailed and Japanese Tit, Red-flanked Bluetail, Olive-backed Pipit, as well as Grey and Yellow-throated (Elegant) Bunting. The rarer White-backed Woodpecker has been found here. After lunch, we will return to the Kagoshima Airport, for our flight back to Haneda Airport and then our flight to Kushiro (Hokkaido Island) which arrives in the evening. Night in Tsurui.

Feb 11, 23. Day 6 –TSURUI TO LAKE KUSSHARO. We will begin our day with a pre-breakfast visit to the Otowa Bridge to see the cranes waking up from their roost. With warm morning light, we should have some nice opportunities for photography of the Red-crowned Crane. After breakfast, we will visit the Tsurui Crane Reserve where we will have more time with the cranes, to watch their dances, and displays and more photos of course. After another nice Japanese lunch, we will visit a site where we can find numbers of Whooper Swans, again another great photo and observation opportunity. Woodland birds in the area include Eurasian Jay, Eurasian Nuthatch, Eurasian Bullfinch, Great Spotted, Grey-headed and White-backed Woodpecker. At our hotel in the evening we will hope that the very rare (30 pairs occur in the northern Island) Blakiston's Fish Owl appears. Night at Yuyado Daiichi.

Feb 12, 23. Day 7 – LAKE FUREN & OCHIISHI NATURE CRUISE. We will be visiting Lake Furen where we will enjoy the spectacle that is the concentration of White-tailed and the mighty Steller's sea-eagles. Certainly, one of the highlights of the trip! In the afternoon, we will take a nature boat cruise in Ochiishi (weather dependent), here we

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



will be looking for numbers of Harlequin Duck and Long-tailed Duck, as well as various species of alcids including Spectacled and Pigeon Guillemot (including the *snowi* form, which may deem species status), Ancient Murrelet and perhaps the Least Auklet and Crested Auklet. Red-faced Cormorant is possible, as well as several northern species of gulls including Glaucous and Slaty-backed. Tonight, we have a second shot at the Blakinston's Fish Owl in case we did not find it previously. Night at Yuyado Daiichi.

Feb 13, 23. Day 8 – AKAN CRANE CENTER, KUSHIRO TO TOKYO. Morning will allow us to bird Yoroshi, where on the river we will look for Brown Dipper, and where the rare Solitary Snipe is a possibility. We will also be heading to the Akan International Crane Center where Red-crowned Cranes often dance and allow for great photography. We may see the White-tailed Eagle again today, along with the smaller fish eater, the Crested Kingfisher. We will fly this afternoon from Kushiro Airport to Haneda Airport. Night near Haneda Airport.

Feb 14, 23. Day 9 – YOKOHAMA. We will bird the Yokohama area by van today, looking for Chinese Bamboo Partridge, Brown-cheeked Rail, Japanese Green Pheasant, Eurasian Woodcock, Japanese Wagtail, Japanese Waxwing and Long-tailed Rosefinch. Night near the Haneda Airport.

Feb 15, 23. Day 10 – SNOW MONKEYS TO KARUIZAWA. In the morning, we will head west to the Japan Alps. We will then visit the world famous "Snow Monkeys" or Japanese Macaques in the snow and springs. This is a very popular site visited by locals and tourists. We will devote time to photographing the monkeys, more than birding although various tits, Eurasian Treecreeper and sometimes even Alpine Accentor can be found here. From the monkeys we continue driving to Karuizawa. Night in the mountains of Karuizawa.

Feb 16, 23. Day 11 – KARUIZAWA. The mountain forests of Karuizawa are great for various forest species such as Japanese Grosbeak, Hawfinch, Japanese Woodpecker, Japanese Pygmy Woodpecker, Eurasian Siskin, Brambling, Pallas's Rosefinch, and the attractive Copper Pheasant if one is very fortunate. The forest flocks are led by the Japanese versions of our chickadees, the tits. A total of four species can be found here, Japanese, Coal, Willow and Varied Tit. This is a reliable place to find wintering Japanese Waxwings, although they are nomadic, and in some years, they do not come down from the north. Some luck is required with them. Later on in the day, a visit to the Chikumagawa River will be focused on finding the Long-billed Plover, along with the striking Japanese Wagtail and perhaps Gray Wagtail. The nearby reservoir may have one of the world's most unique and gorgeous ducks – the Smew. We will scour the water

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



here for any unusual waterfowl among the more common Tufted Duck, and Common Pochard. Baikal Teal is possible here. Night in Karuizawa.

Feb 17, 23. Day 12 – KARUIZAWA TO TOKYO AREA. We will have a final bit of time in the mountain forests of Karuizawa to find anything we missed yesterday. On our way to Tokyo, we will stop for a birding stop at Uramyogi, where mountain scenery will surely get those cameras clicking away. Watching the river, we may spot the Brown Dipper, and perhaps we can find the Japanese Tit, and Japanese Accentor. Mountain Hawk-Eagle is a bird we will be looking for. We will drive back to Tokyo during the evening. Night in Hotel in Kasai Seaside Park.

Feb 18, 23. Day 13 – GREATER TOKYO AREA. We will be birding the Kasai Seaside Park in the morning where we could encounter large flocks of duck. Masses of Greater Scaup along with Great Crested Grebe along with Common Pochard, Tufted Duck, Eurasian Wigeon as well as Eastern Spot-billed Duck. If the tide is right, there may be some wintering shorebirds to look at as well. The park has good populations of some common Japanese birds such as the wintering thrushes, Dusky, Brown-headed and Pale, as well as Bull-headed Shrike, Daurian Redstart, Japanese Bush-Warbler, Japanese White-eye, Brown-eared Bulbul, White-cheeked Starling, Large-billed Crow and we have a very good chance of finding the Azure-winged Magpie here. Then we will visit the world renown gull watching port of Choshi, eat some seafood for lunch and then visit Kamisu Pond later in the afternoon. This will be a coastal day for sure! Choshi is internationally known for the gulls, which may include Slaty-backed, Black-tailed, Vega, “Kamchatka” Mew Gull, Glaucous, Glaucous-winged, Black-legged Kittiwake and perhaps the rarer Mongolian Gull or Taymir (Lesser Black-backed) Gull. This is the best spot in Asia to see Iceland (Thayer’s) Gull! The port is also great for studying the Japanese (Temminck’s) Cormorant, and Harlequin Ducks may be seen on the rocks. Night near Narita Airport.

Feb 19, 23. Day 14 – NARITA AREA. We will bird the Narita area by van today, visiting the Edosaki Reclaimed Land and rice fields, the Motono Swan Sanctuary and the Inbanuma Marsh or Ukishima Marsh. This will be a good day for waterfowl and some edge species. We hope to find the Taiga Bean Goose, the gorgeous Baikal Teal, Falcated Duck, Smew, and Bewick’s Swan in the waterfowl department. Land birds may include the Japanese Green Pheasant, Japanese Wagtail, Long-tailed Rosefinch, Brown-headed Thrush, Eastern (Japanese) Buzzard, Bull-headed Shrike as well as Rustic and Meadow buntings, and a last go at any local species we may have missed! In the late afternoon, marshes may gain us the opportunity to see some raptors, such as Hen Harrier, Eurasian Kestrel, Eastern Marsh Harrier and Eastern Buzzard. Night in Narita Airport area hotel (Narita View Hotel).

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



Feb 20, 23. Day 15 – DEPARTURE DAY. Departure from Narita Airport. Those who have ample time before departure could visit the time-honored Naritasan Shinshoji Temple near our hotel.



Varied Tit

Your Guides

Alvaro Jaramillo was born in Chile but began birding in Toronto, where he lived as a youth. He was trained in ecology and evolution with a particular interest in bird behavior. Research forays and backpacking trips introduced Alvaro to the riches of the Neotropics, where he has traveled extensively. He is the author of the *Birds of Chile*, an authoritative yet portable field guide to Chile's birds. Alvaro writes the Identify Yourself column in *Bird Watcher's Digest*. Among various projects he recently authored the ABA Field Guide to Birds of California, and the sparrow chapter for the *Handbook of Birds of the World*, he is also writing a photo guide to the birds and wildlife of Patagonia. Alvaro was granted the Eisenmann Medal by the Linnaean Society of New York, it is awarded occasionally for excellence in ornithology and encouragement of the amateur. Alvaro lives with his family in Half Moon Bay, California.

Kaz Shinoda was born in Yokohama, Japan, in 1957. From the age of eleven to fourteen he lived in South Africa with his family and often went on safari where he learned about

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



the fascinating world of wildlife. He later became a birdwatcher and has now been a keen birder for nearly twenty years, and has travelled throughout Japan in search of birds. Kaz graduated from Waseda University in Tokyo, then taught English to high school students for more than two decades before dedicating himself to guiding visiting birders in the Tokyo area and around Japan. As a birding guide with more than a decade's experience he has led birders throughout the Japanese Archipelago. As a nationally licensed English-speaking Tour Guide, Kaz is knowledgeable not only about birding in Japan, but also about Japanese geography, history, and especially culture, important subjects that help enhance a birding trip to this culturally unique country. His guiding experience has taken him throughout the country from Hokkaido to Okinawa and many places in between including Tobishima, Karuizawa, Hachijo-jima, Kyushu, and Amami. Kaz's considerable organizational and logistical skills are key to our tour, which he has planned and organized for us. His philosophy, of giving clients an enjoyable and rewarding birding experience in Japan, makes him an extremely popular guide.

Financial Information

FEE: \$7400 from Tokyo. This does not include "Visit Japan" domestic airfare tickets. These needs to be bought outside of Japan, by non-Japanese residents, and we will give guidance on their purchase. In 2020, internal flights cost \$390.

DEPOSIT: \$500 per person.

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: October 9, 2022

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$650. Singles may not be available at traditional Japanese style hotels.

LIMIT: 8.

Additional Information

***** We do not yet know the details of what the requirements will be next year for entry to Japan. We expect that full vaccination will be required as a minimum, and perhaps testing before arrival ******

DOCUMENTS: A current passport valid for the dates of your stay is necessary for US citizens to enter Japan. Your passport must have at least one blank page for the stamp. No

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



visa is necessary if you are staying less than 90 days. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Japanese consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or phone or e-mail Alvaro's Adventures and we can look this up.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: Please plan to arrive in Tokyo by February 6, 2023. Arriving a day early to rest up and avoid the stress of missed connections is always recommended and we can arrange extra nights at the hotel for you. Please schedule to leave Japan on Feb 20, or later if you want more time to see Tokyo on your own. Be sure to check with Alvaro's Adventures to confirm that the flights you have chosen will work with our itinerary and to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. We are not responsible for these fees.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$7400 for one person in double occupancy from Tokyo, Japan. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 14, all meals from dinner on Day 1 through breakfast on Day 15, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling, drivers and meal service, and the guide services of the tour leaders. Alcoholic beverages and items of a personal nature are not included. The above fees do not include your airfare to and from Japan, internal airfare, airport taxes, visa fees, optional extra tips to local drivers or guides, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is \$650 but note it may not be possible to have a single room at traditional Japanese hotels (at least two on our itinerary). If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee.

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$500** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit and the Release and Indemnity form must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by October 9, 2022. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.** Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

SMOKING: This is a non-smoking tour.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Alvaro's Adventures for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of the insurance is not refundable so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute another guide for the original one. Where this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members, and they will have the right to cancel their participation and receive a full refund.

Alvaro's Adventures is a Registered Seller of Travel in the State of California (CST # 2105497). Registration as a seller of travel does not constitute approval by the State of California. This ensures your right to a prompt refund: Upon cancellation of the transportation or travel services, where the passenger is not at fault and has not canceled in violation of any terms and conditions previously clearly and conspicuously disclosed and agreed to by the passenger, all sums paid to the seller of travel for services not provided will be promptly paid to the passenger, unless the passenger advises the seller of travel in writing, after cancellation. This provision does not apply where the seller of travel has remitted the payment to another registered wholesale seller of travel or a carrier, without obtaining a refund, and where the wholesaler or provider defaults in providing the agreed-upon transportation or service. In this situation, the seller of travel must provide the passenger with a written statement accompanied by bank records establishing the disbursement of the payment, and if disbursed to a wholesale seller of travel, proof of current registration of that wholesaler.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 89 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. US medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES

birding & nature tours



When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Alvaro's Adventures, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the reverse side of the registration form. Alvaro's Adventures acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. Alvaro's Adventures accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Alvaro's Adventures reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, and other pertinent matter provided by Alvaro's Adventures. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

ALVARO'S ADVENTURES
birding & nature tours



Olive-backed Pipit

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

4/22 AJ