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# Ushuaia – Antarctica Pretour – 2021

*Nov 5 - 8, 2021*

**Guided by Alvaro Jaramillo, Ricardo Matus and local  
guides**



**Flightless Steamer-Duck**

Ushuaia is Argentina's southernmost city, and where we will begin our Antarctic adventure. It is a beautiful city on the shores of the Beagle Channel and the Martial Range, which continues into Chile as the Darwin Range. Chile is close by, with the

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border both to the west of the city, near Tierra del Fuego National Park, as well as the Beagle Channel itself. As such, Ushuaia is almost at the corner of the triangle that is Argentina's section of Tierra del Fuego. Being this far south, you really are at the end of the Neotropical fauna. But the area is more diverse than you would think as several different habitats are found here, wetlands, coastline, Southern Beech forest as well as montane areas above tree line. This pre-tour aims to find a wide diversity of the birds, and to visit a wide diversity of the scenic wild areas near Ushuaia. It also will concentrate on finding and seeing the birds which we are unlikely to see during the Antarctica trip. Keep in mind that there is a bit of overlap between this part of the continent and the Falkland Islands.

## The Birding Sites We Visit



Magellanic Woodpecker - a male.

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**Tierra del Fuego National Park** – To most birders who have heard about this southernmost park in Argentina, the species that comes to mind as the specialty is the Magellanic Woodpecker. It is a great place to find the woodpecker, but it is by no means a certainty. Magellanic Woodpecker are big, really big, but they can be quiet, stealthy. We hope that local knowledge as well as our experience with this woodpecker will allow us to find him or her. This is a great time of year to look for the woodpecker as they are more vocal in the spring than other times of the year. The park is a mix of *Nothofagus* (southern beech) forest as well as rivers and ponds. The southernmost forest songbirds in South America are found here. The classic forest species, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, White-throated Treerunner, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, White-crested (Chilean) Elaenia, and Patagonian Sierra-Finch should be around in numbers. Other specialties, like Austral Pygmy-Owl, Magellanic Tapaculo and Ringed (Patagonian) Kingfisher may take some more time. Waterbirds are possible with the gorgeous Spectacled Duck a distinct possibility. We will have time to look for forest birds, and hopefully we shall be lucky with the woodpecker. We will be making a stop at the local garbage dump to find a pretty difficult species to find in much of its montane range, the White-throated Caracara.

**Paso Garibaldi or the Martial Glacier** – This is the highland day. Highland is a relative term, although we will be in the mountains, we are not going very high. It does not take very much elevation this far south to get above tree line. Where we go will depend on the local information and how much snow has fallen during the winter. Some of the species we will look for are variable in abundance and not always easy to find, the two rarest ones are the White-bellied Seedsnipe and the Yellow-bridled Finch. Other birds of the highlands we may find here include several ground tyrants, such as the Ochre-naped, and Dark-faced. The highland population of the Gray-flanked Cinclodes may be here, as is the more widespread Buff-winged Cinclodes. This is another day when we may find the White-throated Caracara, along with the Andean Condor and the oddly shaped and very short-tailed Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle.

**Ushuaia coastline** – One of the richest areas for birding, is right in the coastline by the city. The Beagle Channel is marine waters so seabirds and various other waterbirds are common here. Upland and Kelp geese are found on the shoreline, along with Kelp and Dolphin gulls. If we are lucky we will find both the Flying and Flightless steamer-ducks, along with Crested Ducks, Black-necked Swans, Chiloe Wigeons and Great Grebes. The Blackish and Magellanic oystercatchers are common, and perhaps migrant White-rumped Sandpipers will already be back. Three species of cormorants are here, two are rather attractive species, the Imperial and the Magellanic. If we hit a windy day, the ocean can have a lot of seabirds moving by, most commonly Black-browed Albatross and Southern

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Giant-Petrels, the Southern Fulmar should be here and if we are lucky we can scope a Magellanic Diving-Petrel.



Yellow-bridled Finch

## About the Physical Requirements & Pace

This is a short pre-tour before our Antarctica trip. It is not meant to be a difficult trip, and it will be downright relaxed on our visit to the National Park, on the coast and in our comfortable hotel. However, the highland day may involve an uphill hike of an hour or so, depending on the site we visit. We do not need to go at a fast clip, and we are near sea level even when in the mountains here so elevation will not be an issue. But you should be prepared with comfortable hiking shoes or boots with good tread, and a walking stick if you would like some extra help with balance. It is not a rigorous hike, but it is an uphill hike nonetheless in mountain terrain. In addition, as it is spring and within the timing of snow melt. We could encounter some snow, or we could see a very muddy trail (again depending on where we go, and the weather). As such, again I reiterate the importance of

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good shoes/boots, and perhaps a walking stick. Our aim is to have fun, see a wide diversity of birds and be able to take in the scenic wonder that is Ushuaia. One of the most beautiful towns in Argentina. Note that we may have a large group for the pre-trip, as most species we are looking for are not extremely shy, this should work, and we will add guides as the group size necessitates. But it may be a larger group size than you are used to for a bird trip.

Note that the Patagonian wind can be relentless. You never know, sometimes it stops but there are other times when the wind is non-stop and strong. So even though it is relatively cold here, 40s – 50s F (5 – 10 C), it can feel substantially colder if it is cloudy and or windy. One needs to be prepared with warm clothing, layers, hat and gloves while in Ushuaia.

We will be staying at the comfortable Los Cauquenes Resort and Spa during our pre-trip (two nights). In a gorgeous setting, it is right on the coast and has some forested areas nearby. You can relax in the hot tub, or use the pool, in the evening after a great day out birding! On the night of Nov 4, we will be staying in town at the hotel booked for us by the ship. We do not yet know what hotel that will be.



Los Cauquenes resort in Ushuaia

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The rarely seen White-bellied Seedsnipe

## **Itinerary for Ushuaia 2021**

**Nov 5, 2021 (Day 1) – Arrival in Ushuaia.** Please book flights to arrive into Ushuaia any time today. Flights essentially all go through Buenos Aires and note that in most cases you will be arriving at the International Airport, Ezeiza but flights to Ushuaia likely will depart from Aeroparque which is close to downtown. There is a shuttle bus service between the two airports that takes approximately 1.25 hours travel time, a taxi (remise) will take approximately 45 minutes but keep in mind that this is without traffic issues.

The bus costs ARS 580, roughly US \$9 (March 2020 exchange rates). This is the website for the bus service. - <http://www.tiendaleon.com/home/>

If you consider arriving the previous day in order to be better rested and to allow for any travel delays, we can help you book an extra night at the hotel in Ushuaia. Or you may choose to overnight in Buenos Aires, before taking the flight to Ushuaia on the 2<sup>nd</sup>. We will have dinner as a group, but no birding is scheduled for today. Night in Ushuaia.

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**Nov 6, 2021 (Day 2) – Tierra del Fuego National Park.** Just to the west of the city is Tierra del Fuego National Park. This is a gem of a park, and we are lucky it is so close to Ushuaia. We will spend the full day at the park and will have a picnic lunch there. Night in Ushuaia.

**Nov 7, 2021 (Day 3) – The Highlands.** Today we will either visit Paso Garibaldi or the Martial Glacier, depending on which has been most productive for highland species. We will spend the afternoon looking for birds along the Ushuaia coast. Note that during this day we will likely have to transfer to the hotel reserved for us by the ship. We officially end the tour with dinner tonight. Night in Ushuaia.

**Nov 8, 2021 (Day 4) – Board the Ocean Diamond.** We will obtain our instructions and schedule from Rockjumper for boarding the ship today. Current schedule is that we set off in the afternoon. As such you will have the morning to visit Ushuaia town, or do as you would like on this free morning. Night on the Ocean Diamond.

## 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*. Alvaro recently wrote a large part of the



sparrow chapter for the *Handbook of Birds of the World* and is writing a photo guide to the birds and wildlife of Patagonia. He was recently 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.

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**Ricardo Matus** is a naturalist born and raised in Punta Arenas, Chile, on the shores of the Straits of Magellan. As a youngster, Ricardo became interested in birds and marine mammals and started reading about them and examining the skin collection at the Instituto de la Patagonia (a research center now part of the local university). He is widely regarded as the expert on the birds of Patagonian Chile! Ricardo participates in research and conservation projects locally in the southern extreme of Patagonia. Most recently, his work has focused on the breeding biology and conservation of the Ruddy-headed Goose as well as the wintering ecology and banding of Red Knots at Bahia Lomas. As an artist he paints birds in watercolors and has illustrated scientific papers and a book on the birds of southernmost Chile (*Aves de Magallanes*). He has been guiding in Patagonia for over 25 years. Ricardo lives still in Punta Arenas with his wife, Olivia, and their sons, Alonso and Antonio.



## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$890 from Ushuaia.

**DEPOSIT:** \$250 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** July 8, 2021

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$200

**LIMIT:** 20.

## Additional Information

**DOCUMENTS:** A current valid passport is necessary for US citizens to enter Argentina; it is recommended as well that it be valid three months beyond the date of your return. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey, Argentina requires one blank page for their stamp. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Argentine 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 help look this up.

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**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Please plan to arrive in Ushuaia any time on Nov 5, 2021, if you plan on arriving a day early to rest up and avoid the stress of missed connections is always recommended and we can arrange an extra hotel night for you. Our trip ends after dinner on Nov 7<sup>th</sup>, we board the ship on the 8<sup>th</sup> for the Antarctica Tour. 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 \$890 for one person in double occupancy from Ushuaia. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 3 (night on day 3 will be reserved by the Ocean Diamond), all meals from dinner on Day 1 through dinner on Day 3, all ground transportation, entrance fees, tips for baggage handling 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 Ushuaia, airport taxes, visa fees, optional tips to local drivers and guides, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement for the tour is \$200. 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 enclosed Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$250** 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 July 8, 2021. 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

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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's 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 119 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.

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Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

Note that World Nomads has insurance that protects your investment even due to epidemics/pandemics. But do read the fine print. <https://www.worldnomads.com/>

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.

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

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UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

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