

**ALVARO'S ADVENTURES**  
birding & nature tours



# Spectacular Chile – 2020

*Chile with the author of the field guide!*

*Sept 30 – Oct 21, 2020*

**Guided by Alvaro Jaramillo and Ricardo Matus**



**Paríacota Volcano and Lake Chungara - Lauca National Park in the north.**

Chile is a fantastic birding destination, with absolutely spectacular scenery! On this trip we bird this narrow nation from tip to tip, and visit the coast and the Andes on various occasions. As a survey trip, there are few nations where you can get such a complete vision of a country's avifauna as you can in Chile. Also the birding areas are often in some of the most spectacular scenic sites, such as Lauca National Park, Torres del Paine, Chiloe, Tierra del Fuego and the gorgeous coastline of the central zone. It is a trip where the camera shutters are going off all the time, sometimes photographing the landscape,

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other times a cooperative bird and there are quite a few of those. This is the type of trip where even your non-birding friends will enjoy the photos you bring back!

Chile is also a place that appeals to a broad spectrum of birders. For the new birder in Latin America it is a nation that has a smaller bird list and many species that are unique, large or colorful such that it is easier to really get to know the birds and not be overwhelmed by countless of little flycatchers and obscure songbirds. For the experienced world traveler, Chile's avifauna is almost like that of an island, it is distinctive and unusual with many birds either found nowhere else or narrowly shared with some of the forests in Argentina or habitats of southernmost Peru. It is the rare place where beginner and expert end up seeing a lot of lifers! As a guide, for me this is one of the most fun trips I do. Partly it is because I have a great love for the country I was born in, and I spent many years traveling throughout in my research for the Birds of Chile. It is a place where each time I get out there with a new group I can re-live my first times I encountered a Des Mur's Wiretail, a Humboldt Penguin, or a White-winged Diuca Finch. Co-guide Ricardo Matus is a Chilean birding expert with a particular knowledge of the avifauna of southernmost Chile, we have been traveling together for many years now and have a super time doing so. People have more than once mentioned we have a good chemistry and make the trip a lot of fun. You get to enjoy the country with guides who like to have a good time, but at the same time are experts of this country's birds. Regarding pricing and value, we book the tour directly, we are our own in country operator, as such we can offer the best value there is for a Chilean birding tour. We will be staying at quality accommodation, but our tour at a lower price than most tour companies can offer. We are confident that our tour is the highest quality Chilean birding tour there is, and perhaps it is even the most enjoyable! Join us for a fun time in Chile.

We have created a trip that is exceptional. It is comprehensive and detailed, yet we make sure that at the same time we experience the scenery and culture of Chile. We



**King Penguin in Magallanes - now a nesting species there!**

give you insight into what makes this country tick, why it is the way it is, a bit of background in a manner that only people who come from here can! We also try to allow you to sample some of the local food, particularly seafood, some of which is also endemic to Chile. Of course there are also the great wines, and the booming microbrew culture that makes dinner a touch more than "just food." On the birding end

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we incorporate some new birding highlights such as the recently established colony of King Penguins, and we focus time in the Chiloe area where some key species and habitats exist, if we are very lucky even the newly described Pincoya Storm-Petrel! Alvaro was involved in the description of this new species but admit it can be a difficult one to find on a tour. We also are keenly aware of the latest taxonomic issues, some of which we are directly working on and we incorporate this science and natural history as part of what we talk about while on the trip. We try to find forms that may in one day be considered good species, some of them surely to become Chilean specialties. But keep in mind that we guide the trip in an easy manner, this is not a scientific expedition or a daily science lecture, but instead more like a good conversation of the birds in Chile. This is a well-balanced trip where you can really get to know the birds, gain some biological background on the avifauna while enjoying the country and culture; although clearly this is a birding trip and that is the primary focus. Birder photographers have also found this trip to be a rather good one for bird photos taken while birding. Fortunately some of the birds down here like to pose.



**Flightless Steamerduck, those tiny wings can't get you in the air even with a 40 knot wind!**

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We divide up the country into four parts; the desert north and Altiplano; Santiago – Valparaiso, the central zone; Chiloe and the Lakes District; and Patagonian Magallanes. We spend several days in each of these regions, flying between them as distances are large here, Chile is over 2500 miles long! The way we have structured the trip we begin in the north and head southwards, and we try to have some redundancy such that if we miss key species in one section we can sometimes have a backup place for it in the next. We also give enough time to see the key species in each part of the country, although we also need to incorporate some rather full days and long drives in order to do all of this in a trip of this length. This trip is a balance between detail and time, and we think we have created a winning plan in order to see a great deal of the country in a three week span.

The north is where water is key, the Atacama is the driest place on earth. Some places are closer in appearance to the surface of Mars than to places you may have seen before. Yet, in Arica there are several green valleys, as well as the rich coast and of course the highlands where moisture from the Atlantic Ocean falls during the southern summer. These areas teem with life, although each is within or adjacent to the desert. From Inca Terns and Peruvian Pelicans on the coast, to Slender-billed Finches, Chilean Woodstars (now quite rare) in the valleys, and Giant Coots, flamingos, ground-tyrants, miners and earthcreepers in the highlands, it is a fantastic part of the country to visit.



**Andean (the big ones) and Puna flamingos in Chile's Altiplano.**

The Central Zone is where most people live in Chile, the capital Santiago is here, as well as the historically famous port city of Valparaiso. Santiago is a gem of a city, particularly for such a large one, it is clean and organized and a neat mix of old and new. It is quickly becoming the most modern city in South America, and mirrors the huge economic boom that Chile has been part of for decades now.

Valparaiso retains its

historical charm, haphazard with houses of varying sizes, shapes and structure all teetering on hillside ridges. This is a city built on hills, a Latin American version of San Francisco where all eyes focus on the bay and the port, the historical heart of this city. This famous port is where the HMS Beagle once anchored, allowing Charles Darwin to explore the coastal mountains! From here we will set out to experience some of the richest pelagic birding on earth. There are numbers of albatross, petrels, Wilson's Storm-petrel, diving-petrels, shearwaters, terns, gulls, boobies – and even penguins! It is quite a

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trip, and you do not need to be out all day to enjoy all of this, in fact we return for a late lunch on the pelagic day. The Central Zone allows us to explore the coast, wetlands packed with waterfowl, and the shrubby thickets of the foothills and open country of the high mountains in the Andes. The Andean Condor is common in the central Andes, Grey-breasted Seednipe sit quietly on rocks, unique Black-fronted Ground-Tyrants, and Yellow-rumped Siskins mix in, maybe with Mountain Parakeets and Mountain Caracaras. Here is also where we hope to find the very local and coveted “shorebird of all shorebirds,” the Diademed Sandpiper-Plover.



**Grey-breasted Seedsnipe, a handsome and intricately marked bird of the High Andes.**

The regions of the south, Chiloe, the Lake District and Patagonia are where much of the nature related tourism takes place in the country, no doubt because the scenery is spectacular. There are also superb places to stay, gorgeous southern beech forest and a lot of wildlife. Some of the tidal areas in Chiloe and Tierra del Fuego hold almost the entire world population of Hudsonian Godwit during the northern winter, a sizeable number of North America's Whimbrel as well as thousands of Brown-hooded Gulls, South American Terns and a sprinkling of three species of oystercatcher, masses of Southern Lapwings and a duck or two. Then there is the island of forest that is the Patagonian forest zone with species found nowhere else on the planet, Slender billed and Austral parakeets, Fire-eyed Diucon, the Patagonian Tyrant, and Chile's endearing but sometimes

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frustrating tapaculos. These birds are special! Tapaculos elsewhere tend to be drab, here they are colorful and big, the European Robin like Chucao Tapaculo is my favorite. The huge Black-throated Huet-Huet with its amazing voice is superb, and the elusive “coot-faced” Ochre-flanked is a neat one as well. Finally, the rugged southern Andes abut on the Patagonian Steppe, the southern grasslands where Upland, Ashy-headed and the now very rare Ruddy-headed geese roam around. Here Chilean Skuas can be seen tens of miles from the coast, Lesser (Darwin's) Rheas run about, and Least Seedsnipe serenade from dry mounds of gravel and rock. The grassland can be lit up by the bright yellow wings of a White-bridled Finch, or the almost edible rusty-brown of the Chocolate-vented Tyrant, while the coast may give us chances for two species of steamerduck, gorgeous cormorants, King Penguin, and of course the one of a kind Magellanic Plover.



**Chucao Tapaculo - a perky little guy, when not hiding in bamboo!**

This comprehensive trip takes us from the land of the highland Aymara people (the ladies with the bowler hats, more often associated with Bolivia), to the “Huasos” (Chilean Cowboys) of the central zone where the wine, fruit and big city centers are found, to the people of the sea, the Chilotes of Chiloé Island, and to the Gauchos of Magallanes (although usually associated with Argentina, gauchos live from S Brazil to S Chile). With each culture is a different habitat, and its corresponding one of a kind set of birds and fauna. This is a trip of a lifetime, in one of the most up and coming ecotourism

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destinations in the world. It is also a place where travel is straight forward, safe, roads are good, food is yummy, water is potable, hotels are superb, people obey traffic laws, and the planes leave on time – overall a great place to go birding where you can enjoy rather than worry or stress about logistics (that is our job). This is a great, fun and authoritative tour. Chile can be visited with others, but with Alvaro and Ricardo it is a fantastic experience – as we have been told. Sign up for some fun, penguins and tapaculos, we would love to see you with us. Great Travels and super birding to you all!

## The Birding Sites We Visit

**Patagonian Steppe and Tierra del Fuego** – Steppe refers to a temperate, as opposed to tropical, grassland. The North American Great Plains and Prairies are steppes, and so are the grasslands of Patagonia. Patagonia is hard to define, but it is that southern windswept land of forest, shrub and steppe of the far south of Chile and



**Ruddy-headed Goose, sadly a rapidly disappearing species in Patagonia. But fortunately, people like Ricardo Matus, are feverishly working to keep them from declining further.**

Argentina. It is a land that in the recent past has been dominated by sheep, and the gauchos, although tourism is fast becoming a major industry in Patagonia. The grasslands are relatively dry, yet many lakes and ponds exist here, so it is a place where we may find a variety of water birds, including the Silver Teal a species more common in Argentina along with flocks of Silvery Grebes and lots of Chiloe Wigeon and Crested Duck. Terrestrial waterfowl include the abundant Upland Goose, and nearer to forest the pretty Ashy-headed Goose. One goose that is becoming rarer and rarer each year is the Ruddy-headed Goose, a species troubled by its less aggressive nest defense strategy against introduced (to Tierra del Fuego) foxes. Ricardo Matus, is the key person in the conservation of Chile's population of Ruddy-headed Goose. While birding down here, if you see a field of sheep and a gangly one has only two legs – well you have found the Darwin's Rhea, a bird that

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loves hanging with the sheep. Small land birds also are to be found here, and some are showy like the gorgeous White-bridled Finch, the handsome Chocolate-vented Tyrant and range restricted Short-billed Miner, or just plain pretty, perky and common like the Austral Negrito. The waters here come alive with Black-browed Albatross, Southern Fulmar, Chilean Skua, Dolphin Gull, and colorful Magellan and Imperial cormorants. The Magellanic Penguin is common, and the elusive Magellanic Diving-Petrel is fortunately findable most of the time. Most exciting is that we now have a brand new colony of King Penguins that has established and we will visit them. Additionally, this is the part of the trip where we look for the singular Magellanic Plover, a bird in its own family. It is the size of a plover but looks more like a grayish water loving dove!



**The Chilean Skua and its cinnamon underwings.**

**Torres del Paine National Park** – The name Paine refers to a color, not a person's name. In one of the native languages paine is blue, as in the blue of the glaciers in these mountains. This park has widely been considered one of the most scenic places in the Americas, well the entire world for that matter! If weather cooperates and we see the entire mountain range, it really does wow you. Not only are the mountains massive, they are full of character and variety! We will make sure to stop many times for photos of this gorgeous place. There is also some birding to be done here, looking for the Austral Parakeet and Austral Blackbird, and it is a top spot for seeing the very pretty Spectacled Duck. If we are a lucky group we might find the Austral Rail, a species only rediscovered just over a decade ago, and first found in Torres del Paine by Alvaro. With Ricardo we found one of the few nests ever discovered of this species, again in Torres del Paine. On our way to Torres del Paine we shall stop at another amazing range, the Sierra Baguales. Where if we are lucky we may find the White-throated Caracara and the Yellow-bridled Finch among other great birds, and more awesome scenery. Most birding tours stay one

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night at Torres del Paine, we stay there for two nights giving a really good opportunity to see the mountains, and the birds of this awe inspiring park. If we are truly lucky, we could find the Puma here!



**Lago Pehue in Torres del Paine National Park.**

**Puerto Montt and Chiloe** – Puerto Montt is the gateway city to this region, and Chiloe is a large island. Chiloe is a unique place with a slightly different culture than the mainland, like a Chilean version of Newfoundland. Chilotes are hardy folks, used to rain and cold, yet are friendly and welcoming people. These are people who have historically lived off the sea, and we will make sure to try some of the unique endemic seafood of this part of the world such as the giant goose neck barnacle! Chiloe has become more and more popular with European tourists as a picturesque and pleasant destination with a definite marine character. Famous are the “palafitos” houses on stilts in sheltered tidal bays. One of the attractions for us here is a mixed colony of penguins, both Magellanic and Humboldt! Here we also look for the oh so cute Marine Otter, as well as Kelp Goose, and Flightless Steamer-Duck. We will have an opportunity to see the endemic race, with a cinnamon belly, of the Thorn-tailed Rayadito. As well, on the ferry crossings we will have a chance to see the Pincoya Storm-Petrel, a new species described in 2013! This little tubenose is restricted to the inland waterways of the Puerto Montt – Chiloe area, and went unnoticed for years until traveling birders photographed this oddity. This made several experienced observers re-think what they had been seeing there in the past, and

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little by little the thought that a new species might be involved dawned on them. There is a bridge being built to connect the mainland to Chiloe, sadly this may be the last few years where we will have the pleasure of traveling in the ferry.



**The lord of the southern forest - a Magellanic Woodpecker**

luck the world's smallest deer, the Pudu. The star of the show though is the forest itself, moist and tall, with some huge *Nothofagus* trees – a wide assortment of temperate frog species, odd weevil beetles, and even colorful tree lizards are here to be enjoyed.

**Santiago and the Andes** — Santiago is where we begin and where we pass through on several parts of this tour; it is the largest city and capital of Chile. Although it is at the base of the Andes, the city is only about 1500 feet in elevation. It is large; over 4.5 million people live in the area, about a third of the population in Chile. Yet, there is plenty of amazing birding near and even within the city limits. In Santiago we will bird the Andes, the foothills and the wetlands of the lowlands. Here the Andes are very high and rugged, yet it is not all that difficult to ascend to areas between 4000 and 10000 feet, gaining access to some fantastic habitat! The lower elevations are typical arid Mediterranean scrub known as Matorral, mixed with dry forest. But as you go higher up the taller vegetation gives to rugged rocky slopes, and eventually open alpine habitats surrounded by snowcapped peaks...even in summer! Lower down we may find Moustached Turca (a huge and charismatic tapaculo), Chilean Mockingbird, Mourning Sierra-Finch, California Quail and perhaps even a Chilean Tinamou. In the higher reaches there are Creamy-rumped Miners, the more common Rufous-banded Miner, Sharp-billed Canastero, White-sided Hillstar and maybe even Mountain Parakeets. There is a diversity of ground loving flycatchers here such as the various ground-tyrants, like the White-browed, Ochre-naped, Cinereous (rare), and the large Black-fronted. What were thought of as New World Sparrows (Emberizids), the Andean Finches, are now considered finch-

In the region we shall also visit some lowland forests, perhaps at Nahuel Ñadi National Park. This is *Nothofagus* (southern beech) forest, which is most extensive and diverse in Chile, although some extends to similar latitudes in Argentina, although here the important Alerce (*Fitzroya*) tree can be found. This is where we look for the Magellanic Woodpecker, Black-throated Huet-Huet or the elusive Ochre-flanked Tapaculo. We also hope to find the Chilean specialty Slender-billed Parakeet. While in Chiloe we may encounter nocturnal Rufous-legged Owls, diurnal Austral Pygmy-Owls the one of a kind Des Mur's Wiretail, and with

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like tanagers and they are diverse up here. There are Greater Yellow-Finches, Band-tailed



and Grey-hooded as well as the Plumbeous sierra-finches. The more we learn the less we know! Some of these sierra-finches are not closely related to each other it seems, while the yellow-finches are genetically close to some of the sierra-finches – go figure. As we bird, and enjoy the outdoors we will

**Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**

also talk about and learn of these findings and what they mean regarding the evolution of Andean and southern South American bird communities. At any time in the mountains we may find the master of the Andes, the Andean Condor. They are not only regular here, they can be relatively common! It is not unheard of to see 10, 20 or even 30 condors while birding the mountains of Santiago. Appropriately this is the national bird of Chile, and one of the most impressive raptors in the world. Another particularly charismatic bird of the Andean Slopes is the Crag Chilia, a bird of the “ovenbird” family that is in some ways like a South American version of the Canyon Wren. But perhaps the most sought after and amazing bird of this region of the Andes is the rare and little-known Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, a colorful plover with the bill of a sandpiper that is both rare and restricted to very specific wetlands in the high Andes. The Yeso Valley above Santiago is one of the most reliable places to find this species.

Santiago itself is a beautiful and historic city, many buildings in the historical downtown may recall Paris, France that other South American cities. The modern section of Santiago now holds the tallest two skyscrapers in South America. Chile has been booming for decades, and in terms of infrastructure and ease of travel you may be surprised to find out how European this city seems.

**The Matorral (La Campana National Park)** – During several parts of the trip we may be birding in the lowland shrub habitat known as Matorral in Chile; the equivalent of California’s Chaparral. La Campana National Park is certainly one of the best examples of this habitat and we will visit here for a morning. Areas in the foothills of the Andes, near Santiago will also effectively be in this zone and may allow us other opportunities to see the birds of the Matorral. La Campana is where in 1834 Charles Darwin explored on

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one of his outings from the port of Valparaiso, as this was the highest and most prominent mountain on the coastal range, he decided to venture here to see what he could find. As such we shall be birding in the footsteps of Darwin! To think he may have walked in these very areas, and maybe seen some of the same birds is a real kick! Many species of the Matorral are found in Chile and in Chile only; this particularly applies to plants and insects, but also to birds. The Chilean Tinamou, White-throated Tapaculo, Moustached Turca, Dusky Tapaculo, Dusky-tailed Canastero and Chilean Mockingbird are all endemics or near endemics which live in this area. The White-throated Tapaculo is



"Big Foot" also known as the Moustached Turca.

particularly difficult to find and we shall spend some effort trying to locate one here. There are other outstanding birds in the Matorral, such as the awesome Giant Hummingbird! A hummingbird so large it resembles a swift more than a hummingbird. Overhead Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles, or Harris's Hawks may patrol in addition to the more common Variable Hawk. A bird that is really a voracious predator but does not

necessarily look like it at first glance is the Great Shrike-Tyrant, the largest of the American flycatchers. It is so big it can eat lizards with the hook-tipped bill it has! This flycatcher is not common, so we shall need some luck and careful looking to find one. Chilean Pigeons, White-throated Treerunner, and Thorn-tailed Rayaditos may show up in the taller dry forest of La Campana, species that are typically much more common farther south!

**Valparaiso and the Coast** — The Humboldt Current region is amongst the most productive, if it isn't actually the most productive part of the world's oceans. Here we have an effect of a cold-water current that sweeps north, as well as winds that cause an upwelling effect off the coast of Chile. Both of these elements create a heck of a lot of nutrients to be thrust into areas with ample sunshine, allowing various creatures to feast, grow, multiply and feed other creatures. Up at the top of the food chain are the birds, and wow, are there lots of them. Here we could go out and see up to five species of albatross, and sometimes hundreds of individuals! Even the huge Northern Royal Albatross is a

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regular, although uncommon component of the feeding flocks. Thousands of Sooty and Pink-footed Shearwaters may be around along with Cape (Pintado) Petrel, the two species of Giant Petrel, Westland and White-chinned Petrels as well as “Fuegian” Wilson’s Storm-Petrel. A rare but regular species we look for is the alcid-like Peruvian Diving-Petrel. Closer to shore we can enjoy groups of Peruvian Booby, both Guanay and Red-legged Cormorants, Franklin’s Gulls, and often lots of the gorgeous Inca Tern. We always hope for a Masatierra or Juan Fernandez petrel, although these require luck.

Coastal birding in the area is fantastic, for one the scenery is nice, and Valparaiso and Viña del Mar are interesting and picturesque cities. Any spot that has a number of



**Male Spectacled Tyrant**

rocks at the shore may hold the most unlikely of seabirds, the Seaside Cinclodes. This is a member of the ovenbird family which has chosen to spend all of its life right at the shore of the ocean, it is as much a seabird as many gulls and cormorants. Otherwise there are several wetlands and estuaries in the area where we will have a chance to see various migratory shorebirds, gulls and terns, the “Amazon” Black Skimmer, and maybe even a Spectacled Tyrant or the uncommon Great Shrike-Tyrant.

### **Arica and the Atacama Desert and Oases –**

The Atacama Desert is the driest desert on earth! Some places here have not received rainfall ever. Arica is moist as far as the Atacama goes, even so it makes most deserts birders have visited look like lush rainforests. The saving grace, for the birder anyway, in Arica is that it is crossed by several valleys that bring water from the Andes to the ocean, and along these valleys are green

oases full of life. Also full of life is the coast where gulls, shorebirds, and seabirds congregate. The oases are farmed, but enough vegetation remains that we can find Slender-billed Finches, perhaps a Peruvian Pygmy-Owl, and the elusive “Rufescent”

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Bran-colored Flycatcher, which based on voice and appearance is surely a species separate from the standard Bran-colored Flycatcher. The valleys have Vermilion Flycatcher, and the equally red-breasted Peruvian Meadowlarks, sleepy looking Peruvian Thick-knees and three species of hummingbird! These are the Oasis Hummingbird, Peruvian Sheartail and the Chilean Woodstar. The Woodstar is becoming very rare, if it ever existed in Peru it is absent from there now, effectively becoming a Chilean endemic. It is also Chile's smallest bird, and one that is restricted to only three valleys worldwide! It may be tough to find the woodstar, but we shall look hard. The coast boasts flocks of Belcher's and Grey Gulls, gorgeous Inca Terns, migrant shorebirds and maybe a lost vagrant or two. Since water is scarce up in the north, lost birds tend to show up in the verdant spots we visit. You will marvel at Arica though, a bustling town with quite a lot of history, nestled between heaps of sand, rock and lifeless desert. This is a harsh looking, but interesting place.



**Male Peruvian Sheartail showing that fantastic whitish tail.**

**Putre and Lauca National Park** – As mentioned above, there is water in the Andes. And where there is water, there is life, sometimes abundant life! The highlands, or Altiplano, of Northern Chile are one such place. Here the lakes are absolutely teeming with flocks of Puna Teal, Silvery Grebe, Ruddy (Andean) Ducks and scattered among them are the Andean Coot and the king of all coots, the massive Giant Coot. A multicolored and belligerent specimen of a coot! Three species of flamingos can be found here, can you believe it? It's the Andes where flamingos rule, not the tropics. A huge number of the birds here are called Andean this or that or Puna this or that, from miners to flickers to ground-tyrants, ibis, hillstars, or even lapwings. Many of the birds up here are restricted to the highland plains in the Andes, the Altiplano and are found nowhere else. It is a wonderful area for earthcreepers, finches, siskins, cinclodes and maybe even the uncommon Puna Rhea or Puna Tinamou. Additionally it is a grand place for mammals, with all four (the two domesticated and the two wild) South American camels – the Llama, Alpaca, Vicuña and Guanaco. We could find the rare Andean Deer, and more likely the odd Vizcacha. It really is an amazing place to visit, the only down side is that you are at a very high elevation and really need to take it easy up here! We will try to keep our activities to the minimum needed to see the birds.



## About the Physical Requirements & Pace

This is a tour of Chile's major habitats, amazing scenery and the full diversity of its birds. There are few tours where you can visit a single country and see a rather impressive proportion of the nation's regularly occurring birds, this trip is one of them. Although Chile looks small and skinny on a map, it is very long. This means we have several days where we are spending part of the day on a plane getting from one region to another. Fortunately, we find time to get some birding and more enjoyable activities in during the travel days. The pace of the tour is moderate; and in general, the day-by-day physical pace is easy, though there are often long days in the field and days where we will be doing much traveling on the bus. This is particularly true in Patagonia where distances by road are great, but the birding is fantastic there. Therefore, the strenuous part of the trip will not be in physical excursions or rugged and difficult trails, instead it will be in some long days and travel. Most of our birding will be in fairly easy terrain or along roadsides and trails, although birding in the Andes may involve trails with a slope to them. Walks with noticeable slope are not long, and we will take our time. The exception is when we are at higher altitudes in the Andes, at which point we may reach elevations to nearly 15,000 feet (in Lauca National Park), in Putre we shall be sleeping at 11,000 feet. Altitude sickness affects some visitors to these elevations, and physical or health problems can be exacerbated. We will take care to move at a reasonable pace, but participants must be aware of their limitations and the challenge birding at such an altitude presents. You may want to consult with a doctor, as there are now medicines that control the effects of high elevation.

The tour includes a morning pelagic trip off Valparaiso. The ocean is seldom flat calm in central Chile, in November we hope for a calm morning and if wind builds up later on in the day we will be heading back to port by then. Ocean swell, no matter how light or smooth can cause discomfort to some; it is quite an individual response in how the ocean affects you. If you are susceptible or think you might be susceptible to "mal de mer" (seasickness) do consider taking either an over the counter or going to your doctor to obtain a prescription seasickness medicine. If you absolutely do not do boats, the option of staying back at the hotel will be available. The ferry heading to Tierra del Fuego, and the one to Chiloe are very stable and we have not had any seasickness issues there. The Arica pelagic is usually calm as up there ocean swells are low, and mornings have very low wind.

Note that restaurants in Chile typically open later than most birders would prefer, often at 8:00 p.m. In order to get earlier in some cases it will be necessary to pre-arrange a set menu. This facilitates the evening meal immensely as well as allowing us to sample a broad selection of cuisine over the course of the tour. Even so, we still are unlikely to eat dinner any earlier than 7:00 p.m. at most sites, and sometimes 8:00 will be the earliest

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we can obtain dinner. Be prepared for late lunches and late dinners to be routine, it is just the way things are in the Southern Cone, and one needs to adjust to this situation. Note also that restaurant meals, tend to be three course meals in Chile. So, if you like to eat light, keep this in mind. If you have let us know about any dietary concerns, these will be forwarded to the hotels before the tour. Most of our hotels will have a buffet breakfast. Breakfasts might be continental, although in most hotels eggs are available. Lunches will vary from sit-down lunches at restaurants, to picnics made by the guides, to box lunches provided by hotels. Chile has great fish and seafood which we will try to sample, although commonly chicken and beef are staples.



Aplomado Falcon

## Itinerary for Chile 2020

**September 30, 2020 (Day 1) – Arrival in Santiago.** Please book flights to arrive into Santiago by early this morning, or you could consider arriving the previous day in order to be better rested and to allow for any travel delays. In the afternoon we will visit the wetlands near Batico looking for waterfowl and common land birds. Night at Santiago airport hotel.

**October 1, 2020 (Day 2) – Farellones.** We will cross Santiago early in the morning, and then head up into the Andes. We will visit a ski area this time, and one of our goals will be to find the uncommon Creamy-rumped Miner. This will be our first venture into the Andes, and many species will be novel. We hope to sample a wide variety today, from lower elevation to higher elevation species. In the lower reaches, we will look for Dusky-tailed Canasteros and other matorral species such as Chilean Tinamou, as well as White-throated Tapaculo and Moustached Turca. Unfortunately to get to Farellones, we have to cross part of Santiago, this can be frustrating due to traffic, but we plan to leave the hotel early. Night at the airport hotel.

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**October 2, 2020 (Day 3) – Fly to Arica. Birding the Lluta to Putre.** We will take an early morning flight to the northern city of Arica where we are just a few miles from the border with Peru! We have the whole day today to bird the Lluta Valley, on our way to the highland town of Putre. We will be stopping along the way, aiming to reach the highland town of Putre by evening. Peruvian Thick-knee will be searched for, Andean Swift, “Rufescent” Flycatcher and Peruvian Pygmy-Owl among others. Once at elevation we will take it easy, as we will be at 11,000 feet in Putre. Night in Putre.

**October 3, 2020 (Day 4) – Lauca National Park.** There are many highlights of this tour, but seeing Lauca National Park in spring is one of them! It is a gorgeous place, full of life, and some of the most striking scenery anywhere in the Altiplano. The birding can be incredible, we will see all kinds of species that will be new for the tour, many of them named Andean or Puna this or that. Among these are three species of flamingo, the Giant Coot, and a great diversity of highland finches, ground tyrants and water birds. If we are lucky a trio of Puna Tinamous (they almost always are in threes!) might walk by, or its giant relative the Puna Rhea, you never know. Night in Putre.

**October 4, 2020 (Day 5) – Putre and return day to the coast.** We will bird in the morning in Putre, before descending to Arica. We will bird in the afternoon in the valleys near Arica where we are hoping to find two of the three hummingbirds of the north including, and at the Lluta River Mouth where it can be chock full of shorebirds, gulls, terns and other waterbirds. Night in Arica.

**October 5, 2020 (Day 6) – Arica pelagic and Valley Birding.** In the morning we shall take a half day trip out into the ocean to try our luck with northern storm petrels, jaegers and maybe a surprise or two. The north is better for whales and other cetaceans than Valparaiso, and we shall be on the lookout for them; the sea here tends to be calm. In the afternoon we shall finish up our desert oasis valley birding, heading south of the city where we may turn up the rare Tamarugo Conebill if we are lucky. If the right conditions allow we may venture into the desert to visit a Markham’s Storm-Petrel colony. No guarantees that we will see one, but it promises to be an interesting adventure. Night in Arica.

**October 6, 2020 (Day 7) – Return day to Santiago.** Depending on the time of our return flight we may have some time for morning birding around Arica. What we do on this day will depend on the plane schedule. If the flight is late in the day, we may have ample time to try and find more species of the north. Night at Santiago Airport hotel.

**October 7, 2020 (Day 8) – Maipo Valley.** An early start will be necessary to avoid rush hour traffic in Santiago, and to get to the Maipo Valley with plenty of time for birding. All day in the Maipo Valley where we will look for many high elevation species,

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including the Crag Chilia and Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, as well as sierra-finches, yellow-finches, and ground-tyrants of various persuasions. Night in Maipo Valley.

**October 8, 2020 (Day 9) – To the Coast.** Today we out west towards the Pacific Ocean! The coast is approximately a two and a half our trip. Our morning will be spent looking for shorebirds, waterfowl and coastal birds as well as some marsh specialties, including the Ticking Doradito. We may find the Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, and many ducks, grebes and even swans. Some land birding will sneak in here, with possibilities of White-throated Tapaculo and Dusky Tapaculo if we have not found one yet during the trip. Night in Viña del Mar.

**October 9, 2020 (Day 10) – Pelagic.** One of the highlights of a visit to Chile is to get out on the ocean to experience some of the richest pelagic birding on earth. Here we may encounter up to five species of Albatross, White-chinned and Westland petrels, Pink-footed and Sooty shearwaters, Peruvian Diving-Petrel, Chilean Skua, “Fuegian” Wilson’s Storm-Petrel and many more. If we are very lucky the Masatierra Petrel might make an appearance. But on a good day what astounds is the sheer number of birds that are out there, it can get into the thousands! Our pelagic will start early in the morning and we shall be back on land for a late lunch. After a post-lunch break we will have an optional coastal outing nearby for those who want more birding time. Night in Viña del Mar.

**October 10, 2020 (Day 11) – La Campana National Park, evening in the Andes.** After breakfast we head east to La Campana National Park, an area of dry forest typical of the foothills of central Chile, with a mix of the shrubby Matorral that typifies Chile’s Mediterranean zone. We hope to find the elusive White-throated Tapaculo, the Dusky Tapaculo, Giant Hummingbird and perhaps the Great Shrike-Tyrant. Night in Airport Hotel, Santiago.

**October 11, 2020 (Day 12) – Fly to Puerto Montt, cross to Chiloe.** Today we take an early flight to Puerto Montt. After arrival, we will first bird on the mainland side, looking for forest species. After lunch we shall then cross the Chacao Channel to Chiloe on a 20-minute-long ferry ride. Seabirds are possible, including Magellanic Penguin and the Pincoya Storm-Petrel (although rare). We will then drive a couple of hours to the hotel in Castro. Night in Chiloe.

**October 12, 2020 (Day 13) – Chiloe.** We have a full day to explore the forest in Chiloe, at a site called Bosque Piedra. We will search for many of the forest specialties, including Chucao Tapaculo, Slender-billed Parakeet, the endemic cinnamon bellied subspecies of the Thorn-tailed Rayadito, as well as Patagonian Tyrant, Black-throated Huet-Huet and the very cool DesMur’s Wiretail. If extreme luck is with us, we may encounter the miniature deer, the Pudu here. Night in Chiloe.

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**October 13, 2020 (Day 14) – Visit penguin colony on Chiloe, return to mainland.** We cross back to the mainland today, hoping that on this or the previous crossing we will have spotted the recently described Pincoya Storm-Petrel. Before that we will visit the mixed penguin colony of Puñuhuil, both Magellanic and Humboldt penguins nest here! This will be an excellent place to see some other specialties including the Kelp Goose, perhaps the endearing Marine Otter, and Flightless Steamerduck. Night in Puerto Varas.

**October 14, 2020 (Day 15) – Punta Arenas.** We will take a morning flight to Punta Arenas, allowing us to grab lunch at the airport and then continue to bird along the Strait of Magellan. Many waterfowl should be about, including Flightless Steamerduck, and as many as three species of geese, Upland, Ashy-headed and the extremely rare Ruddy-headed. Depending on the weather we may also see some seabirds, such as Chilean Skua, Southern Giant Petrel, Southern Fulmar as well as Imperial and Magellan cormorants. Night in Punta Arenas.

**October 15, 2020 (Day 16) – To Porvenir.** We begin our day by heading to Tierra del Fuego on a ferry crossing that takes approximately 2 hours. Birding can be good on the ferry, we hope to see a few pelagics, although from a decently stable platform. Key will be finding the Magellanic Diving-Petrel. We will travel across with the bus, and begin birding immediately after lunch! During the afternoon we will concentrate our time on finding the single species family of the Magellanic Plover, exciting!! Night in Porvenir.

**October 16, 2020 (Day 17) – King Penguins.** Our quest today will be a recently established colony of King Penguins, the only one in the South American mainland! Driving the roads here is good birding. Here birds can show up anywhere, and our drive will surely turn up something. There is little traffic here and very few people, you can stop anywhere on the roads and do a bit of birding, and this is just what we shall do. After visiting the Kings, we will bird our way north to Cerro Sombrero, hoping to find Guanacos and Short-billed Miners on the way. Night in Cerro Sombrero.

**October 17, 2020 (Day 18) – Steppe Birding – To Puerto Natales.** This is a long day but a good day. We start off the day with a short ferry crossing this time, back to the Chilean mainland, with more opportunities for a few seabirds. Then we head north and west through some of the highest quality Steppe in Magallanes as we head towards Puerto Natales. We hope to find Tawny-throated and Rufous-chested dotterels, and perhaps the Commerson's Dolphin on the ferry crossing. I repeat that this is a long day on the road, we stop and bird throughout, through some great countryside, but it is a long driving day. Night in Puerto Natales.

**October 18, 2020 (Day 19) – Sierra Baguales, Torres del Paine.** Today is an incredible day. We begin at gorgeous Last Hope Sound (Seno Ultima Esperanza) and then move north to the little visited isolated mountains of Sierra Baguales. The beauty of the scenery is

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striking, with some interesting possibilities here for birds including the Yellow-bridled Finch and White-throated Caracara. After a picnic lunch we head to Torres del Paine, birding along the way as we head to our hotel, including a search for the rare Austral Rail. The drive into the park is over a bumpy dirt road, and we may end up arriving rather late in the day as it takes time, perhaps 7 pm or so. We will make many stops to photograph the mountains, so let's just hope for good weather. Night in Torres del Paine.

**October 19, 2020 (Day 20) – Torres del Paine.** We have time today to spend the morning birding the forested areas adjacent to our hotel, as well as the Lago Grey area of the park. Here we have our first good chance of seeing some Southern Beech (*Nothofagus*) forest birds, and have a good shot at the magnificent Magellanic Woodpecker and the endearing Austral Parakeets. There will be more birding and photo opportunities this afternoon in the park. For those who wish, you have the option to take the afternoon boat to the Grey Glacier; this cost is not included in the tour. Night in Torres del Paine.

**October 20, 2020 (Day 21) – Torres del Paine to Punta Arenas.** We have all day to bird our way back to Punta Arenas, stopping at likely sites for species we may have not found yet, or for that extra scenery photo or what have you. Although mainly a traveling day, this is great country to travel in, and we will certainly see something of interest. Night in Punta Arenas.

**October 21, 2020 (Day 22) – Return Home.** We will schedule a mid-day flight back to Santiago, allowing for time to connect to evening and night flights back to the north. Good travels!

## 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

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and encouragement of the amateur. Alvaro lives with his family in Half Moon Bay, California.

**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:** \$7700 from Santiago. Price includes multiple internal air flights.

**DEPOSIT:** \$500 per person

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** June 6, 2020

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$1300

**LIMIT:** 14.



**Ticking Doradito – a rare, warbler like flycatcher.**

## **Additional Information**

**DOCUMENTS:** A current passport valid three months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Chile. If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Chilean 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. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** Please plan to arrive in Santiago by early morning on Sept 30, 2020, 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. Flights back home at the end of the tour can be booked for in the evening of October 21, 2020, on that day we will be returning to Santiago from Punta Arenas in the afternoon but given that most flights back to North America depart after 8 pm, we plan on being back for those departure times. **Do not book a flight back to the US, before 8 pm.** If you are concerned about having an international flight on the same day as our return flight from the south, we can arrange an extra night at the airport hotel for you. Various North

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American airlines as well as Latam airline, fly to Santiago, from several different hubs. Flights tend to be overnight, arriving in the morning in Santiago. 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 \$7700 for one person in double occupancy from Santiago. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 21, all meals from lunch on Day 1 through lunch on Day 22, all ground transportation, internal flights, 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 Chile, 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 \$1300. 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 \$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 June 6, 2020. 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 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.

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

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

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

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