

Cheepers! News

www.cheepersbirding.com

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937-862-4505

February 27, 2013

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Welcome to Volume 4, Issue 2 of **Cheepers! News** issued by Jim Beckman with review, critique and photos provided by Cindy Beckman. If you are interested in reading previous newsletters, click [here](#).

As a reminder, the **Cheepers!** mission is to **bird the best birding locations using comfortable lodging and expert local bilingual birding guides while maintaining a lower per-day cost than comparable tours offered by the major birding tour companies.**

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Comments from Jim

This issue of the newsletter is being sent just 4 weeks after the previous issue but we have had a lot happen in the past several weeks and with our busy schedule ahead, I decided sooner is better.

We had great birding trips to Panama in January and Honduras in February plus we participated in the Space Coast Birding Festival. We only have 9 open slots for the remaining 2013 trips (1 for Birds & Broadway in May, 6 for Brazil in August and 2 for South Africa #2 in late October. We are very pleased to report that everything else is full.

We have started receiving registrations for our 2014 Ecuador and Honduras trips. 3 of the 10 January Ecuador spots and 6 of the 12 February Honduras spots are filled. Looks like these trips will fill quickly so don't delay in submitting your registration if you want to participate in either of these trips.

We also have received verbal commits for all of the Sep/Oct Australia spots. Let us know if you would like to be placed on the wait list for the Australia trip.

We also have a price roll back on the Mar 28 – Apr 6 2014 Panama Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands trip from \$2098 to \$1998 (the same price we offered in 2012).



SPACE COAST BIRDING FESTIVAL HIGHLIGHTS

Cindy and I had a great time at the festival this year. We traveled to Titusville from Panama where our **Cheepers!** birding group had just seen 358 species of birds in 8 days of birding. Hard to believe anything could top the Panama trip but the 2013 Space Coast managed to do just that.

From a business perspective, the festival was fantastic. Cindy and I had volunteered several months earlier to fill in for any cancelled/no show presenters or field trip co-leaders. Cindy ended up co-leading "North Brevard County Hotspots" from 6:30AM to 2:00PM on Wednesday and Friday and I filled in for three presentations, one each on Thursday, Friday and Saturday. Even better, we filled 10 open spots within 5 days of the close of the festival including 4 birders who verbally committed to the June 2013 Canopy Camp, Tower and Lodge trip while at the festival. The other 6 filled were for the March 2013 Honduras trip.

From a personal perspective, we visited with a lot of good friends, customers and fellow vendors.

Congratulations to the Space Coast organizers, volunteers and supporters. You run a great festival.

SAN DIEGO BIRD FESTIVAL - Here we come!

The San Diego Audubon Society invites you to San Diego for the 17th annual San Diego Bird Festival, being held at the Marina Village Conference Center. Festival headquarters, overlooking a picturesque marina, is just steps away from the San Diego's species-rich San Diego River estuary. From sea to desert to mountaintop, San Diego County has a lot of birding to offer, with more than 500 species. Our birding area encompasses diverse habitats ranging from desert to mountains, shore to coastal wetlands, urban, and suburban.

Cindy and I will have a vendor's booth in the festival's Birding & Optics EXPO. The Expo area is open to the public from 1 to 4PM Thursday thru Sunday, February 28 through March 3. A pre-registration mixer for festival attendees will be held in the EXPO area Wednesday, February 27, from 4 – 6PM. Social mixers for ticketed festival attendees will be held in the Expo area from 4 – 6PM Thursday and Friday.

If you are near the marina, please stop in and say hello and then check out all the goods and services offered in the EXPO area.

With afternoon hours at the EXPO, Cindy and I should have our mornings free to bird the area hotspots.

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Panama – Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands Trip Report Highlights: January 12 – 21, 2013

Cheepers! visited Panama from January 12 through January 21, 2013. Our counts were 358 species seen (a new record for this itinerary), 24 species heard but not seen, 1 species seen only by the guides, and 1 fly-by (did not see field marks so we do not count it as seen). **WHAT AN EXCELLENT COUNT FOR JUST 8 DAYS OF BIRDING!**

This was our 5th **Cheepers!** Panama Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands trip since January 2010 and as a group, we added 17 new species to our Panama Canal Zone and Chiriqui Highlands trip list bringing total seen for the 5 trips to 523 (almost 55% of the approximately 960 species in Panama). We have seen between 342 and 358 species on each of our 5 trips.

Around the Canal Zone, we birded in Gamboa, the Ammo Dump entrance and Ponds, Pipeline Road, Rainforest Discovery Center, the grounds and marina of the Gamboa Rainforest Resort, Old Gamboa Road, Summit Ponds, Juan Diaz Wetlands

In the Chiriqui Highlands, we birded the grounds of the Dos Rios Hotel in Volcan, LaAmistad International Park, Smithsonian Field Station (Fortuna), Palo Seco Reserve, the Continental Divide, the grounds at Cielito Sur B&B, the Santa Clara area, Baru Volcano National Park, Volcan Lakes, and Cuesta de Piedra.

We also made a day trip about 2 hours east of Panama City to Bayano Forest and Lake and the San Francisco Reserve near Torti.

Trip highlights included:

- 47 species of Tyrant-Flycatchers
- 27 species of Hummingbirds
- 20 species of Wood-Warblers
- 20 species of Tanagers & Honeycreepers
- 19 species of Kites, Eagles, Hawks, Osprey, Falcons & Caracaras
- 17 species of Typical Antbirds
- 14 species of Seedeaters, Finches and Sparrows
- 13 species of Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers
- 11 species of Herons and Egrets
- 11 species of New World Orioles and Blackbirds
- 10 species of Pigeons and Doves
- 10 species of Woodpeckers
- 9 species of Cardinals, Grosbeaks and Allies
- 9 species of Goldfinches and Euphonias
- 8 species of Vireos
- 8 species of Wrens
- 8 species of Parrots
- 7 species of Trogons including Resplendent Quetzal
- 5 species of Becards and Tityras
- 5 species of Cuckoos and Anis
- 5 species of Thrushes

News species for the trip were Lesser Scaup, Least Sandpiper, Mottled Owl, Common Nighthawk, Collared Trogon, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Buff-throated Foliage-Gleaner, Streaked Xenops, Pacific Antwren, Rufous-winged Antwren, Olive-striped Flycatcher, Rufous-browed Flycatcher, Pied Water-Tyrant, Golden-bellied Flycatcher, White-eared Conebill, Indigo Bunting, and Yellow-throated Euphonia.

During the last night of the trip, we visited the Miraflores Locks and enjoyed a scrumptious buffet dinner at the Miraflores Locks Restaurant. Everyone enjoyed watching the big ships pass through the canal locks. Dinner at the Miraflores Locks Restaurant is a wonderful finale on this itinerary and on our Canopy Tower itinerary..

Visit the **Cheepers!** website for more photos and checklists of species seen.

**Broad-billed
Motmot**



Barred Antshrike



Three-toed Sloth



**Rufous
Motmot**



**Blue-diademed
Motmot**



Ocellated Antbird

**Green
Iguana**



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Honduras – Pico Bonito and More Trip Report Highlights: February 2 – 9, 2013

Our *Cheepers!* group birded the grounds of Panacam Lodge and nearby locations on the afternoon of the 2nd and the morning of the 4th and several sites around Lake Yojoa on the 3rd. Key species seen by the group included Resplendent Quetzal (3 individuals), Swallow-tailed, White-tailed and Snail Kites, Black-crested Coquette*, Keel-billed Motmot*, Smokey-brown Woodpecker, 16 species of flycatchers including Eye-ringed Flatbill* and White-throated Flycatcher*, Bushy-crested Jay*, Rufous-browed Wren*, Slate-colored Solitaire*, 17 species of New World Warblers, and Prevost's Ground Sparrow*. In total, we saw 155 species of birds during our short stay at Panacam Lodge.

We traveled from Panacam Lodge to the Lodge at Pico Bonito on the 4th arriving in time to check-in and have dinner. Over the next 4 days we birded the grounds of the Lodge at Pico Bonito, Cuero y Salado National Park, Rio Aguan Valley (near Olanchito), Lancetilla Botanical Gardens, and Rio Santiago Nature Resort. Key and/or uncommon species seen by the group included Lovely Cotinga, Highland Guan, Reddish Egret, Agami Heron, Lesser Roadrunner, Middle American (Vermiculated) Screech Owl*, Lesser Nighthawk, Honduran Emerald, Paltry Tyrannulet, Lovely Cotinga, Gray-breasted Martin, White-bellied Wren*, White-lored Gnatcatcher, Golden-crowned and Blue-winged Warblers, Louisiana and Northern Waterthrushes, and Black-striped Sparrow*. In total, we saw 172 species of birds during our stay at the Lodge of Pico Bonito of which 83 were new for the trip.

Kenn and Kim Kaufman were our special guests on this trip. Bushy-crested Jay, Honduran Emerald and Keel-billed Motmot were lifers for Kenn. Kim actually saw the Honduran Emerald about 15 minutes before Kenn and this was probably the first time Kim had a lifer on her life list that wasn't yet on Kenn's.

Our group total for the trip was 238 species seen and another 21 species heard only. The 10 species marked above with an asterisk are lifers for Jim and Cindy.



What a picture!
Five male Lovely Cotingas in one shot.
Many thanks to John Ogburn for this great photo taken on the grounds of
The Lodge at Pico Bonito.

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Cheepers! - Escorted Tour Schedule

2013

- Feb 2 – Feb 9 **HONDURAS** Pico Bonito and More – \$2250 **SOLD OUT**
- Mar 9 – Mar 16 **HONDURAS** Pico Bonito and More – \$2250 **SOLD OUT**
- Mar 22 – Apr 5 **THAILAND** Familiarization Trip **SOLD OUT**
- Apr 20 – May 1 **PANAMA** Canopy Tower & Canopy Lodge – \$2795 **SOLD OUT**
- May 14 – May 19 **NEW YORK CITY** Birds & Broadway – \$935 **1 spot available for a male traveler willing to share a room with another male traveler**
- Jun 16 – Jun 24 **NORTH DAKOTA** Potholes and Prairies – \$1954 **SOLD OUT**
- Jun 26 – Jul 9 **PANAMA** Canopy Camp, Tower & Lodge – \$3595 **With special guests Kenn and Kim Kaufman**
SOLD OUT
- Jul 9 – 17 **PANAMA** Canal Zone & Eastern Panama Province Budget Trip – \$1095 **SOLD OUT**
- Aug 12 – Sep 3 **BRAZIL** **6 spots available**
- Aug 12 - 15 Iguazu Falls (Pre-trip Extension) – \$1385 **Accepting registrations**
- Aug 15 – 28 Amazon, Pantanal & Cerrado – \$4895 **Accepting registrations**
- Aug 28 – Sep 3 Atlantic Forests (Post-trip Extension) – \$1695 **Accepting registrations**
- Oct 6 – Oct 29 **SOUTH AFRICA #1**
- Oct 6 – 22 Subtropical Tour #1 – 46,500 ZAR **SOLD OUT**
- Oct 22 – 29 Western Cape Tour #1 – 21,000 ZAR **SOLD OUT**
- Oct 22 – Nov 14 **SOUTH AFRICA #2**
- Oct 22 – 29 Western Cape Tour #2 – 21,000 ZAR **SOLD OUT**
- Oct 29 – Nov 14 Subtropical Tour #2 – 46,500 ZAR **2 spots available**
- Nov 30 – Dec 13 **COLOMBIA** Colombian Andes & Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta – \$3985 **SOLD OUT**

If you are interested in being wait-listed for one of our sold out 2013 trips in case we get a cancellation, please call or email us.

2014

Accepting registrations for all trips

- Jan 2 – 21 **ECUADOR**
- Jan 2 – 17 Northern Ecuador - \$3585
- Jan 16 – 21 Napo Wildlife Center Extension - \$1385
- Feb 8 – 15 **HONDURAS** Pico Bonito and More – \$2250 **With special guests Jeffrey and Liz Gordon**
- Mar 28 – Apr 6 **PANAMA** Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands – ~~\$2008~~ \$1998 **Price rollback to 2012 price**
- Apr 7 – Apr 23 **PANAMA Canopy Family #1 & #2**
- Apr 7 – 23 Canopy #1 (Camp/Tower/Lodge) – \$3485
- Apr 7 – 19 Canopy #2 (Tower/Lodge) – \$2795
- Apr 19 – 23 Canopy# 2 Extension (Camp) – \$690
- Jul 4 - 12 **PANAMA** Canal Zone & Eastern Panama Province Budget Trip – \$1195
- Aug 12 – Sep 3 **BRAZIL**
- Aug 12 – 15 Iguazu Falls (Pre-trip Extension) – \$TBA
- Aug 15 – 28 Amazon, Pantanal & Cerrado – \$TBA
- Aug 28 – Sep 3 Atlantic Forests (Post-trip Extension) – \$TBA
- Sep 30 – Oct 22 **AUSTRALIA**
- Sep 30 – Oct 18 Eastern Australia – AUD 5795
- Oct 18 – 22 Tasmania (Post-trip Extension) – AUD 1485
- Dec 6 – 13 **HONDURAS** Pico Bonito and More – \$2250

Probable 2014 schedule additions

Nepal
Thailand

Stay tuned

Visit the *Cheepers!* website www.cheepersbirding.com for prices, detailed itineraries & registration forms. If you have questions or need more information regarding our trips, please email us at cheepers@sbcglobal.net or call us at 937-862-4505.

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WHAT IS THE BIGGEST WEEK IN AMERICAN BIRDING?

The Biggest Week in American Birding is a 10 day "week" of some of the best birding North America has to offer. If you are anywhere else in the world in mid-May, you are in the wrong place. Think about it: A 10 day birding event featuring workshops, guided birding activities, half-day birding bus tours, keynote speakers, and more. Among the myriad of events offered during the festival are workshops, Woodcock extravaganzas to observe the extraordinary displays of these woodland shorebirds, daily walks at the world famous Magee Marsh boardwalk and other area birding hotspots, evening keynote presentations, birding by ear workshops, and presentations on world birding. On top of all of that, birding guru Kenn Kaufman will be teaching several bird identification workshops!



It all takes place in Northwest Ohio "The Warbler Capital of the World." The festival headquarters is at Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center, with additional vendors and activities at Black Swamp Bird Observatory and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge.

YOUR HOSTS...

The Biggest Week is organized by Black Swamp Bird Observatory, with support from our co-hosts at Maumee Bay Lodge & Conference Center, Lake Erie Shores and Islands (Ottawa County and Erie County Visitors' Bureau) , and Destination Toledo (Lucas County Visitors' Bureau).

WHY ARE THE BIRDS HERE...

The southern edge of Lake Erie acts as a barrier that the birds are reluctant to cross during migration. The birds tend to "pile up" in the woodlots surrounded by marshland on the lake's southern edge to rest and refuel before crossing the Lake.

THE BIRDING IS REALLY SENSATIONAL...

The timing of their arrival is early enough in spring that the trees have not leafed out, there are no bugs, and the birds are incredibly low and accessible. No such thing as "warbler neck" around here! We get HUGE numbers of birds, much like a fallout, only better! Fallouts occur when a weather event pushes birds down, and what birders find are the weary survivors. Here in NW Ohio, we get the same huge numbers of birds as you'd see in a fallout, but the birds are active and vibrant, and by the time they get to this latitude, the males are actively singing!

A bird list is provided for the area with likely species during this time. Click [HERE](#) for the list. But in short, you should expect to see at least 20 warbler species every day, along with masses of thrushes, vireos, flycatchers, orioles, and other migrants in the woods, plus shorebirds and others in the more open areas.

IT'S REALLY ALL ABOUT PROMOTING CONSERVATION

For Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO), the effort we put forth on the festival is worth it because the event raises awareness and appreciation for birds and habitat conservation in a major way. The bottom line is this: we want to help people fall in love with birds, and this is a perfect place to do that! We believe that connecting people to the joys of birding is the first step in building support for conservation; people care more about the things they love.

And when spring migration has winged its way through the area, and the Magee Marsh Boardwalk is once again draped in quiet shadows, the folks at BSBO will gather up the economic impact you helped generate during your visit and we will trumpet that to all those who will listen. The heart of conservation keeps beating!

For Black Swamp Bird Observatory (BSBO) and our partners, the effort we put forth on the festival is worth it because the event raises awareness and appreciation for birds and habitat conservation in a major way. The bottom line is this: we want to help people fall in love with birds, and this is a perfect place to do that! We believe that connecting people to the joys of birding is the first step in building support for conservation; people care more about the things they love.

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WE HOPE YOU HAVE A FABULOUS TIME!

Information courtesy of

The Biggest Week in American Birding website:

<http://dev.biggestweekinamericanbirding.com/HOME.aspx>

REGISTRATION WILL OPEN BY THE END OF FEBRUARY!

The 2013 registration fee is \$30 and will gain participants access to many free activities during the festival. Your festival badge will also entitle you to special discounts at many local businesses. Please note that many of the field trips, programs, and workshops have additional registration fees.

With a 10-day festival packed with so many options, reading this will really help you prepare for navigating the registration system!

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You might be a birder if.....

You might be a birder if covert doesn't mean undercover to you.

You might be a birder if empids bug you.

You might be a birder if you know the name of the last Passenger Pigeon and what year it died.

You might be a birder if better hearing makes your "Top Five Wish List."

You might be a birder if "today's trash bird" means something to you.

You might be a birder if you look forward to hard northern winters so you can get frostbitten while looking for northern owls.

You might be a birder if you can find Pt. Pelee, Pt. Reyes, and Cape May on a map in less than five seconds.

You might be a birder if you bought your three-year old binoculars for his birthday.

You might be a birder if you think kettle can be a verb.

You might be a birder if you're happy with your exit pupil.

Birding Festival Schedule

Cheepers! is currently planning to participate in the following birding festivals:

Mar 2013 – **San Diego Birding Festival** - San Diego CA

May 2013 – **Biggest Week In American Birding** - Oak Harbor OH

Sep 2013 – **Midwest Birding Symposium** - Lakeside OH

Jan 2014 – **Space Coast Birding Festival** - Titusville FL

If you attend one of these festivals, please look for us at our vendor's booth or say hello to us on the boardwalk at Magee Marsh.

Trip Cancellation Policy

Sometimes, you have to cancel out of a trip after you have registered for the trip. If this happens, please notify **Cheepers!** in writing, either USPS snail mail or email.



If notice of cancellation is received at **Cheepers!**

- at least 6 months in advance, your deposit is fully refunded.
- between 4 and 6 months of the trip, 50% of your deposit is refunded.
- less than 4 months prior to your trip, 0% of your deposit is refunded

If cancellation occurs after full payment is made, a refund will be given only if the vacant spot is filled.

Cheepers! Promotions and Discounts

Cheepers! is offering a repeat customer discount of \$100 off the price of your next **Cheepers!** trip if you register at least four months prior to trip departure.

If you complete the **Cheepers!** Birding Survey at our booth at any of the bird festivals we attend and then register for one of our trips within 30 days of the festival, we will reduce your trip price by \$100.

Limit of one discount per registration.

Cheepers! - Custom Tours

If you have a group or organization interested in a birding destination, please allow us an opportunity to present a proposal. To develop a proposal, we need the following information:

- Where do you want to go (country or state)?
- Any specific sites?
- Any target species you want to see?
- When do you want to go?
- How many days should the trip be?
- What is your expected group size?
- If you are a non-profit organization, would you like this trip to be used as a fund-raiser?
- Do you want **Cheepers!** representatives to lead this trip?

Email or call for more information.

cheepers@sbcglobal.net

937-862-4505 or 937-974-0802

Itineraries are available for the following destinations:

Alaska	Galapagos
Argentina	Guyana
Arizona (Southeast)	Honduras
Belize	Maine
Bolivia	Namibia
Brazil	Nepal
California (CA Specialties)	North Dakota
Colombia	Panama
Costa Rica	Peru
Ecuador (Amazon Basin)	South Africa
Ecuador (Northern)	Texas (Gulf Coast)
Ecuador Photographer's Tour	Texas (High Country)
Ecuador (Southwest)	Texas (Rio Grande Valley)
Florida	Thailand

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Do you need a guest speaker for a local chapter/club meeting?

Depending on our schedule and the proximity of your group to one of the birding festivals we plan to attend or if you are in Ohio or in a state bordering Ohio, we are available as guest speakers for your local group. We have the following presentations available:

- Birding in Brazil Plus Jaguars Too
- Birding in Ecuador (covers 5 trips)
- Conservation in Action
- Quest For a Harpy Eagle in Panama
- The Natural History of South Africa

Guest Speaker Schedule

Jim has the following presentations scheduled:

- Feb 21 2013 - **Birding in Ecuador**
Glen Helen Nature Reserve, Yellow Springs OH
- Apr 8 2013 - **Birding in Brazil Plus Jaguars Too**
Bruckner Nature Center, Troy OH
- May 2013 - To Be Determined
Biggest Week In American Birding, Oak Harbor OH
- Sep 2013 – To Be Determined
Midwest Birding Symposium, Lakeside OH
- Jan 2014 – To Be Determined
Space Coast Birding Festival, Titusville FL

PRESENTATION DESCRIPTIONS

BIRDING IN BRAZIL PLUS JAGUARS TOO

Join us as we take you through 4 biomes in Brazil, from the world-famous Cristalino Lodge in Amazonia, to the Pantanal (the largest freshwater wetlands in the world and home to Jaguars), to the Cerrado savanna which covers 1.2 million square miles, and finally to the Atlantic Forests (home of more endemic bird species than anyplace on earth).

Take a tour of this amazing country with Jim, exploring its truly breathtaking scenery, amazing wildlife, and abundant birdlife through photographs and stories. See Jaguars, Harpy Eagles, Hyacinth Macaws and much more

BIRDING ECUADOR

Ecuador is a birdwatchers' paradise. This South American country, roughly the size of Nevada, harbors amazing diversity in habitat and wildlife. Over 1640 species of birds inhabit Ecuador, including an incredible 131 species of Hummingbirds! Jim and Cindy Beckman, owners of **Cheepers! Birding on a Budget**, will share their Ecuadorian birding adventures with you. From the elfin forest of Yanacocha to the bird-rich Tandayapa Valley to the paramo of the high Andes, and on to the montane forests of the eastern slopes and the Amazon Basin, each change in habitat offers new bird species to see as new adventures unfold.

CONSERVATION IN ACTION: HOW ECO-TOURISM LODGES IN CENTRAL AND SOUTH AMERICA ARE FIGHTING DEFORESTATION AND HABITAT LOSS

Millions of acres of forest are lost each year and more and more birds and wildlife are facing extinction. Logging, deforestation, fire, hunting, and invasive species are all contributing to habitat loss.

Acquisition of land, employment alternatives and education are effective tools to reduce and offset the slash and burn of forests and the resulting bird and wildlife habitat loss.

Jim and Cindy Beckman, owners of Cheepers! Birding on a Budget, have completed over 20 personal and business birding trips to Central and South America in the last 5 years. They have stayed and birded at many lodges that are expending considerable time, effort and money to counter deforestation and habitat loss. Join us as Jim shares the stories and accomplishments of several Central and South American eco-tourism lodges in their efforts to save and protect habitat.

HARPY EAGLE QUEST INTO THE DARIEN PROVINCE OF PANAMA

Join us as we take you from the rainforests of Central Panama, to the historic ruins of Panama City, to the Panama Canal, and to the jungles surrounding a remote native village, while enjoying the spectacular avian fauna for which Central America is renowned.

This is the story of a group of birders on their quest to observe a young Harpy Eagle that had not yet left its nest in the Darien Province of Panama. Jim and Cindy Beckman led a group of 11 birders to one of the most remote areas of Central America, and they have many anecdotes and photos to share. The group had the good fortune to live for several days among the Embera tribe in a primitive village, the closest site to begin the 7-hour hike to the nest site.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF SOUTH AFRICA

South Africa is one of the most exotic and captivating places in the world. Its stunning combination of culture, history, people, and landscapes have made it a dream place to visit for large numbers of tourists. For birders and wildlife enthusiasts, this unquestionably gorgeous country at the most southern point of the dark and mysterious African continent offers a once-in-a-lifetime experience. Jim Beckman will share his experiences on the **Cheepers! Birding on a Budget** South African tour taken in October 2011. Take a tour of this amazing country with Jim, exploring its truly breathtaking scenery, amazing wildlife, and abundant birdlife through photographs and stories.