



# CHEEPERS! NEWS

Volume 1, Issue 5

July 31, 2010

## WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Volume 1, Issue 5 of **Cheepers! News** issued by Jim and Cindy Beckman.

We have been hard at work finalizing our 2011 schedule. We are repeating several of our successful 2010 trips plus adding trips to SW Ecuador, the Galapagos, Peru, and South Africa (see page 2 for a complete list of all currently scheduled **Cheepers!** 2010 and 2011 trips).

We enjoyed our down time in May and spent a lot of time birding at Magee Marsh and Ottawa Wildlife Refuge (just east of Toledo OH). To help promote our birding tour business to the thousands of birders who participated in the Biggest Week in American Birding at Magee, we advertised on two highway billboards near Magee from April 27 through May 25.



One billboard was about five miles west of Magee eastbound on Route 2 near the Metzger Marsh turnoff and the second billboard was opposite Camp Perry westbound on Route 2 out of Port Clinton. We received quite a few positive comments about our billboards.

We placed 6' banners on Route 2 across from the Magee and Ottawa exits. Unfortunately, the Magee exit banner was vandalized/stolen but we had an extra banner and posts with us.

To maximize **Cheepers!** visibility in the parking lot, we displayed magnetic **Cheepers!** signs on our car and truck which we were typically able to park very close to the main boardwalk entrance at Magee. We talked with hundreds of birders over the course of 2 weeks and look forward to having many of them travel with us in the future.

## "Lucky Ladies" June Trip to California

In June, we led a group of eight North Carolina and Virginia birders who call themselves the "Lucky Ladies" on a custom San Francisco to Los Angeles birding trip seeking California specialties.

Birding locations included the San Francisco area, Marin County, Point Reyes, the Sierra foothills, Calaveras Big Trees State Park, Monterey Bay, Big Sur, Santa Cruz Island, Newport Beach Back Bay, and Bolsa Chica.

Key species seen included the "California" species (Condor, Gnatcatcher, Gull, Thrasher, and Towhee), Belding's (Savannah sub-species) Sparrow, Elegant Tern, Island Scrub-Jay, Nuttall's, Lewis's and White-headed Woodpeckers, Pacific Wren (recently split from Winter Wren), Red-masked Parrot, and Wrentit. The group saw 165 species, 4 Santa Cruz Island sub-species and heard 2 more species for a grand total of 171 species seen and heard.

### Special Interest Articles:

- Welcome to our Newsletter
- "Lucky Ladies" June Trip to California

### Individual Highlights:

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## CHEEPERS! - Birding Tour Schedule

### 2010

November	Nov 20-Dec 4 2010	<b>Ecuador</b> Part I: Andes Eastern and Western Slopes	<b>SOLD OUT</b>
December	Dec 4-Dec 8 2010	<b>Ecuador</b> Part II: Amazon Basin Extension	<b>SOLD OUT</b>

### 2011

January	Jan 11-Jan 19 2011	<b>Costa Rica</b> 9-day Highlights	\$2185
February	Feb 11-Feb 19 2011	<b>Galapagos Islands</b> Island Hopping	\$3230 <b>NEW!</b>
	Feb 18-Feb 27 2011	<b>Panama</b> Canal Zone and Chiriqui Highlands	\$1798
	Feb 19-Mar 5 2011	Southwest <b>Ecuador</b> Tumbesian Endemics	\$2895 <b>NEW!</b>
March	Mar 11-Mar 20 2011	Best of <b>Belize</b> with Glenn Crawford	\$2485
April	Apr 5-Apr 16 2011	<b>Panama</b> Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge	\$2285
July	Jul 15-Jul 23 2011	<b>Costa Rica</b> Families with Young Birders	\$2190 adults - \$1850 children
August	Aug 20-Sep 6 2011	<b>Peru</b> Machu Picchu and Manu	\$4454 <b>NEW!</b>
October	Oct 1-Oct 12 2011	<b>South Africa</b> Part I: 12-day Cape Tour	26,019 ZAR
	Oct 12-Oct 27 2011	<b>South Africa</b> Part II: 16-day Subtropical Tour	32,236 ZAR
November	Nov 11-Nov 19 2011	<b>Galapagos Islands</b> Island Hopping	\$3260 <b>NEW!</b>
	Nov 19-Dec 4 2011	<b>Ecuador</b> Part I: Northern Ecuador	\$3195
December	Dec 3-Dec 8 2011	<b>Ecuador</b> Part II: Amazon Basin Extension (Napo Wildlife Center)	\$990

**Max group size for any trip is 12 including trip leaders Cindy and/or Jim Beckman. Some trips may be limited to 8 participants including trip leaders Cindy and/or Jim Beckman.**

Established to provide affordable options for international birding during challenging economic times, *Cheepers!* strives to provide the best birding experiences at the best prices. *Cheepers!* has been able to offer outstanding birding trips to world-renowned birding sites at a much lower cost than comparable trips offered by the major tour companies.



*Best Birding Locations*

*Comfortable Lodging*

*Expert Local Guides*

*Lower Per Day Cost*

## **CHEEPERS!** - Birding Tours by Country

### **Belize**

#### **Mar 11 - Mar 20 2011: Best of Belize with expert guide Glenn Crawford**

An excellent introduction to tropical birding with Glenn Crawford, Belize's best birding guide. We will bird 3 distinct geographical areas of Belize: 1) in and around the Crooked Tree Wildlife Sanctuary, the Mayan ruins at Lamanai, and Monkey Bay Sanctuary, 2) Blue Hole National Park, the Mayflower-Bocawina National Park, Cockscomb Jaguar Preserve, coastal lagoons and mangroves and 3) the Mountain Pine Ridge National Park, the Mayan ruins at Caracol, and the Hidden Valley Falls. We saw 289 species and heard another 12 species during our sold-out March 2010 Belize trip.

### **Costa Rica**

#### **Jan 15 - Jan 23 2011: 9-day highlights of Costa Rica**

La Selva. SaVegre. Monteverde. Carara. If you've dreamed of birding in Costa Rica, you've heard these names! These sites are visited by most birders who visit Costa Rica for one very simple reason - BIRDS. All of these sites offer distinct habitats and all boast impressive bird lists. Join us as we visit Costa Rica's most renowned birding sites. We expect to see 300+ species during this trip.

#### **Jul 15 - Jul 23 2011: Families with Young Birders**

Enjoy a full morning of birding each day followed by an afternoon of more traditional vacation activities such as rafting, horseback riding, ziplines, etc. Our expert birding guide, Marcos Soto, will provide optional short classes on tropical bird identification as well as some basic plant, reptile, amphibian, and mammal identification each evening. We will bird in and around Savegre Mountain Lodge and Cerro de la Muerte, Villa Lapas and Carara National Park, Monteverde Cloudforest, and La Selva Biological Station. We expect to see 250+ species during this trip.

### **Ecuador**

#### **Feb 11 - Feb 19 2011: Galapagos Islands - Island Hopping**

We will be island hopping, staying on land each night, as we visit San Cristobal Island, Wolf Island, Kicker Rock, Punta Pitt, Floreana Island, Isabela Island, and Santa Cruz Island. During our island hopping, we will bird, swim with penquins, sea lions and sea turtles, snorkle with rays and reef sharks, and visit the Charles Darwin Research Station.

#### **Feb 19 - Mar 5 2011: Southwest Ecuador Tumbesian Endemics**

We will bird in and around Manglares-Churute Ecological Reserve, the Jocotoco Reserves at Buenaventura, Jorupe, Utuana, and Tapichalaca, Podocarpus National Park, and the Zamora-Loja Road. As February is the peak of breeding season in southern Ecuador, we expect to see 425 to 450 species on this trip.

#### **Nov 11 - Nov 19 2011: Galapagos Islands - Island Hopping**

See description above (Feb 11 - Feb 19 2011: Galapagos Islands - Island Hopping).

#### **Nov 19 - Dec 4 2011: Part I: Northern Ecuador**

We will bird the best that Northern Ecuador has to offer: Yanacocha Reserve, Old Nono-Mindo Road, Upper and Lower Tandayapa Valley, the Angel Paz Antpitta Reserve, an Oilbird roost, Mashpi Reserve, Pacto-Pachijal Road, Silanche Bird Sanctuary, Milpe Bird Sanctuary, the Calacali area, Antisana Reserve, Papallacta Pass, Guango, San Isidro, Guacamayos Ridge, and Wild Sumaco Lodge. Combined with the Amazon Basin Extension, we saw 661 species and heard another 67 species during our sold-out February 2010 trip.

#### **Dec 3 - Dec 8 2010 - Part II: Amazon Basin Extension**

Join us as we travel by boat from Coca down the Napo River to the entrance of the Napo Wildlife Center Reserve where we switch to smaller, dugout canoes and are paddled up the blackwater creek to the lake and lodge. The lodge is owned and managed Quichua Indians on their tribal land. During our days at Napo Wildlife Center, we will be birding in several ecosystems which only occur lower than 300 masl: Terra Firme and Riparian forests, Varzea and Igapo flooded forests, and the River Islands, plus we will visit the famous Yasuni National Park Parrot Clay Licks.

**CHEEPERS!** - Birding Tours by Country (continued)**Panama**Feb 18 - Feb 27 2011: **Canal Zone and Chiriqui Highlands**

Our itinerary offers opportunities to bird in most of the habitats that Panama has to offer. We will search the protected wet rainforests, mangroves, wetlands, and dry forests of the Canal Zone before we fly to the Chiriqui Highlands to search for Resplendent Quetzels and other birds of the cloud forest. During our sold-out January 2010 trip following a similar itinerary, we saw 349 species, heard an additional 22 species plus 4 species were seen by one person only for a total of 375 species heard and seen.

Apr 6 - Apr 17, 2011: **Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge**

Come with us to one of the most famous birding destinations in the world - the renowned Canopy Tower in Central Panama. Our tour includes five nights at the Tower and five nights at the Tower's sister facility, the lovely Canopy Lodge in El Valle de Anton. Birding at different elevations and in a variety of habitats affords us the opportunity to see a more diverse array of species. Our last afternoon and evening will be spend at the Miraflores Locks where we will tour their Panama Canal Museum, watch ships transit the locks and enjoy a scrumptious buffet dinner overlooking the locks. For convenience, our last night will be spend near the airport. During our sold-out April 2010 trip following this itinerary, the group saw 320 species, heard an additional 7 species and our guides saw 4 species that no one else saw for a grand total of 331 species seen and heard.

**Peru**Aug 20 - Sep 8 2011 **Machu Picchu and Manu**

Peru has more bird species than found in all of North America and Europe combined, including well over 100 endemic species. It holds the record for the most species found in a single place (650) and for the highest number of species seen in a single day (361). The Manu Biosphere Reserve has arguably the highest diversity of life anywhere on earth, making it one of, if not THE, best birding destinations in the world. With something in the neighborhood of 1800 species (depending on the reference you use), Peru is a birder's dream destination. Come with us and share the trip of a lifetime.

**South Africa**Oct 1 - Oct 12 2011 **Part I: 12-day Cape Tour**

This epic tour begins with 12 days of birding the scenically spectacular Western Cape Province of South Africa. Here in the Cape, there are more endemic birds than anywhere else on the entire African continent, and pelagic trips off Cape Town rank amongst the finest in the world. Key areas we visit during this leg of the tour include the fynbos biome (the richest biome for plants on the planet – even more diverse than the Amazon - and with attendant endemic birds), the West Coast, Karoo, Overberg (Agulhas Plains) and the Garden Route.

Oct 12 - Oct 27 2011 **Part II: 16-day Subtropical Tour**

After the Cape trip, we fly to Durban to begin birding Subtropical South Africa for 16 days. This part of South Africa provides a representative sample of the very best that African birding can offer. Huge numbers of bird species are seen on this leg of the tour, and we will also find a plethora of endemics, including a great number of birds restricted to the imposing Drakensberg escarpment. Apart from yielding a big bird list, this dream African experience also provides the possibility of seeing Africa's big (and small) mammals, such as lion, cheetah, leopard, elephant, rhino, giraffe, crocodile and all the others, and spectacular, diverse, scenery. Key sites we visit during this leg of the tour include Sani Pass into Lesotho, Wakkerstroom and other highland areas, temperate and subtropical forests at varying altitudes, Zululand with its mega-diversity of birds and big animals, the Kruger National Park, and many other sites.

Please visit our website at [www.cheepersbirding.com](http://www.cheepersbirding.com) for itineraries and registration materials.

## CHEEPERS! - 2010 / 2011 Birding Festival

Stop by if you are at the festival. Fill out our Birders Survey for a chance to win a birding Field Guide or a birding book.

From	To	Destination	
08/05/10	08/08/10	Southwest Wings Birding Festival	Sierra Vista, AZ
09/23/10	09/26/10	Monterey Bay Birding Festival	Watsonville, CA
11/10/10	11/14/10	Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival	Harlingen, TX
01/26/11	01/31/11	Space Coast Birding and Wildlife Festival	Titusville, FL
03/03/11	03/06/11	San Diego Bird Festival	San Diego, CA
Sep 2011		Monterey Bay Birding Festival	Watsonville, CA
Nov 2011		Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival	Harlingen, TX

### CHEEPERS!

#### Binding on a Budget

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### 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.

### CHEEPERS! - Testimonials from Customers

#### 2010 April Panama Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge - 331 species seen and heard

*I had high expectations for the Panama trip and was not disappointed! The tour leaders Jim and Cindy were organized, knowledgeable, and great fun to travel with. The itinerary, lodging and local guides were terrific. I couldn't recommend a trip more, and hope to be travelling with Cheepers! Birding again soon!!*

*Christine S, Ossining, NY*

*Twenty four hours ago I was in the jungle and now I'm sitting here at work. Hard to believe! We just wanted to thank you again for putting together a fantastic trip. We had a great time. We logged 307 birds (183 of which were lifers!) The trip exceeded our every expectation. The guides, the food, the lodges ..... all terrific. Couldn't have asked for more. **We would certainly recommend Cheepers to anyone and, of course, we'd love to hook up with you guys on another trip someday.** Good luck with the business and keep up the good work.*

*Matt & Cathy M, Mastic, NY (Panama, April 2010)*

*I got the photo CD in yesterday's mail and looked at each pic last night. Wow! Terrific, and quite a few should be guaranteed prize winners--hope you submit a few. . . . Loved the Canopy Lodge, saw some marvelous birds (including over 136 lifers!), and enjoyed the company of everyone in the group. **I've been on trips with VENT, Wings, Field Guides and local groups, and Cheepers measures up beautifully!** I'll definitely recommend you to other birders and look forward to getting the chance to bird with you again some day. (Easy Costa Rica, perhaps?) Thanks for everything!*

*Sarah S, Cincinnati, OH (Panama, April 2010)*