



Cheepers! News

Volume 1, Issue 6

September 10, 2010

WELCOME TO OUR NEWSLETTER

Welcome to Volume 1, Issue 6 of Cheepers! News issued by Jim and Cindy Beckman.

OUR GUYANA ADVENTURE

We just returned from a very adventurous familiarization trip to Guyana. On August 24, we flew from Cincinnati to JFK and then caught a red-eye from JFK to Georgetown (arriving on August 25th). We spent the morning at our hotel and then birded around Georgetown before having dinner. On day 2, we had a 6:30AM flight to Annai, arriving at 7:45AM for transport to Iwokrama. Due to a very bad road, including where we spent 40 minutes stuck in mud 3 foot deep, we did not make it to Iwokrama until 6:30PM. Over the next 7 days, we birded areas around the ecolodges at Iwokrama, Atta, Rock View, Rewa and Karanambu Ranch. We missed the Guianan Cock-of-the Rock (wrong time of the year) but got to see the Harpy Eagle chick in its nest near Surama Village plus we saw the giant river otters at Karanambu.

Our visit was ill-timed as Guyana just finished one of the wettest rainy seasons in history. Many of the popular birding trails were under water and birds were relatively scarce. We kept hearing "there will be many more birds in mid-to-late September, the water is already starting to drop". Overall in 9 days of birding, we saw 188 species, heard another 20 and had 4 fly-bys that will require a much better look before they can be added to our lifelist.

We did manage to add 51 lifers. Cindy's life list is now at 2024 and her 2000th was the Purple-breasted Cotinga. I still need about 75 lifers to reach 2000 (Cindy picked up 100 species on a Nimibia Cheetah Conservation trip a few years ago - I was not eligible to participate as the trip was restricted to educators). Guyana lifer highlights include Gray-winged Trumpeter, Red-and-Green Macaw, Red-shouldered Macaw, Caica Parrot, Red-fan Parrot, Green Aracari, Nacunda Nighthawk, Crimson Topaz, Black-eared Fairy, Guianan Puffbird, Guianan Toucanet, Waved Woodpecker, Yellow-throated Woodpecker, Guianan Streaked Antwren, Guianan Red Cotinga, Pompadour Cotinga, Capuchinbird, White-crowned Manakin, Dusky Purpletuft, and Burnished-buff Tanager.

The Guyana days were hot and humid and the evenings were warm and buggy. We slept under mosquito nets at all the lodges; some had reasonably good ventilation/airflow while at others the heat was oppressive. We shared a small bed at one lodge with a mosquito net that seemed to constantly cling to us. We joked that it was so hot we could have baked a loaf of bread between us.

In spite of the poor timing, we enjoyed our trip and met our goal of familiarizing ourselves with the birding opportunities Guyana offers. The lodges were all adequate with some offering more rustic facilities than others, so we now know which lodges best suit the needs of our clients. The people were delightful and we are looking forward to returning at a time when the roads will be dry, the bugs will be fewer, and the birding will be at its best.

If anyone is interested in Guyana as an adventurous birding destination, please contact us. We will add a Guyana trip to our 2011 or 2012 schedule if there is sufficient interest.

INTERESTED IN BIRDING IN BRAZIL?

We have heard from several people interested in birding Brazil in 2011. If we receive word from 6 birders who are ready to commit to a Brazil trip, we will add Brazil to our 2011 schedule, probably in September. If you would like to be one of the 6 people to sign on for this amazing trip which includes 4 biomes in one of the birdiest countries in the world, please contact us for more details including itinerary and expected costs.

WEBSITE UPDATES

Recent updates to the website include the Trip Report, Photos and Checklist of birds seen from our April 2010 Canopy Lodge/Canopy Tower Trip and photos from our just completed Guyana trip.

Special Interest Articles:

- Welcome to our Newsletter 1
- Our Guyana Adventure
- Interested in Birding in Brazil?
- Website Updates

Individual Highlights:

- Cheepers! - Birding Tour Schedule 2
- Cheepers! - Birding Tours by Country 3-4
- Cheepers! - 2010 / 2011 Birding Festival Schedule 5
- Cheepers! - Promotions and Discounts 5
- Cheepers! - Testimonials from Customers 5
- Cheepers! - Website Facts 5

Cheepers! – Birding Tour Schedule

2010

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

2011

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

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

www.cheepersbirding.com

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, zip lines, 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 penguins, sea lions and sea turtles, snorkel 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** *SOLD OUT*

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** *SOLD OUT*

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 by 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 (only 4 spots available - group size is max 8)**

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 (only 3 spots available - group size is max 8)**

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 for itineraries and registration materials.

Cheepers! – 2010 / 2011 Birding Festival Schedule

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	
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! – 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 June California Specialities - 171 species seen and heard

Thanks again for a perfectly planned and executed trip for our Lucky Ladies for California endemics. This was a trip we wanted badly, but which seemed was not going to happen. Several other tour coordinators presented proposals which were just out of our budget range. Then a friend recommended I contact Cheepers and our dream trip became a reality. The local guide certainly knew where to go and the couple of hoped-for birds we missed were more than made up for with some very nice surprises. Our lodging was comfortable, and the Cheepers extras like the customized trip list and the day pack turned into special keepsakes. This was a trip where even the veteran birders were thrilled with their life bird count. Both Jim and Cindy were cheerful and fun-loving traveling companions. We all enjoyed their company and Cindy's photo record of our trip was AWESOME!!! Everyone seemed delighted with the entire experience, and hopes to have another Cheepers adventure in the not too distant future.
BG A, Durham, NC (California, June 2010)

This was a trip of a lifetime for me. Cindy and Jim went above and beyond to make this trip run so smoothly. All of this and a CD of photos to remember this trip and the good times we had!
Edith T, Durham, NC (California, June 2010)

Cheepers! Birding on a Budget

Cindy and Jim Beckman
 P. O. Box 385
 Spring Valley, OH
 45370

PHONE:
 (937) 974-0802
 (937) 862-4505

E-MAIL:
cheepers@sbcglobal.net

We're on the Web!
 Visit us at:
www.cheepersbirding.com

Cheepers! – Website Facts

From September 10, 2009, through September 9, 2010, the *Cheepers!* Birding on a Budget website has had visitors from 81 countries and 47 states plus Washington DC (the only states with no visitors are Hawaii, Mississippi and Montana).

Search engines are great. Top searches for *Cheepers!* include: cheepers birding, cheepers, cheepers birding tours, cheepers bird tours, cheepersbirding, birding on a budget, cheepersbirding.com, cheep birding trips, cheepers birds, cheepers llc, and cheepers birding on a budget. In addition, based on lodge references in trip reports and itineraries, *Cheepers!* was found by searching for Ayalir Lodge, Gareno Lodge, Wild Sumaco Lodge, Sani Lodge, San Isidro Lodge, Mama Noots Lodge, Soberania Field Station, Canopy Tower, Canopy Lodge. In total, visitors have accessed *Cheepers!* through 607 different keyword searches.