



# Cheepers! News

July 12, 2011

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Welcome to Volume 2, Issue 4 of **Cheepers! News** issued by Jim and 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.**

## **Cheepers! is accepting registrations for the following 2012 escorted tours:**

- Jan 7 - 16 **PANAMA (4 spots open)**  
Canal Zone/Chiriqui Highlands \$1888
- Feb 11 - 25 **ECUADOR Part I (2 spots open)**  
Northern Ecuador \$3395
- Feb 24 - 29 **ECUADOR Part II**  
Amazon Extension  
Napo Wildlife Center \$1196
- Mar 1 - 10 **GALAPAGOS**  
Island Hopping \$3695 - \$3900 \*
- Mar 10 - 24 **Southwest ECUADOR**  
Tumbesian Endemics \$3395
- Apr 23 - May 4 **PANAMA SOLD OUT**  
Canopy Tower and Lodge \$2595
- Apr 23 - May 4 **PANAMA (6 spots open)**  
Canopy Lodge and Tower \$2595
- Jun 2 - 10 **ALASKA Part I**  
Denali and Kenai \$3350 - \$3900 \*
- Jun 10 - 14 **ALASKA Part II**  
Nome Extension \$1858 - \$2256 \*

\* **Final price depends on number of registrations received.**

**Visit the *Cheepers!* website at [www.cheepersbirding.com](http://www.cheepersbirding.com) for itineraries & registration forms.**

bowerbirds and platypus, to the southeast's lyrebirds, fairy wrens, wallabies, albatrosses and penguins, our tour samples a good portion of Australia's scenery, avifauna and other wildlife. Endemism is extraordinary; 5 non-passerine families and 15 passerine families are endemic to Australasia, plus diverse marsupials, pigeons (26 species), parrots (53 species) and seabirds (79 species). A superb and exciting tour with mostly easy birding in comfortable surroundings – truly unforgettable!

We will soon be accepting registrations for this trip. Itinerary and pricing have been established. Our start date will be announced as soon as all lodges have confirmed our reservations. Check our website during the next few weeks for the latest information and registration materials.

## **What's new!**

### **Cheepers! announces 2nd April 2012 Canopy Tower/Canopy Lodge trip**

We found ourselves in a very unusual position with our April 2012 Panama Canopy Tower/Canopy Lodge trip. The trip sold out almost a year in advance and we had birders asking if there were any additional spots available. We don't like to turn anyone away, so we worked with the Canopy Tower staff to arrange a second tour. By reversing the sequence of lodges, we are able to take two groups simultaneously.

We now have two Canopy tours scheduled from April 23 to May 4 as follows:

**Trip 1 (Sold Out)** - 5 nights in the Canopy Tower followed by 5 nights in the Canopy Lodge with the last night at a hotel near the airport

**Trip 2 (Accepting registrations / 6 spots open)** - 5 nights in the Canopy Lodge followed by 5 nights in the Canopy Tower with the last night at a hotel near the airport

Cindy will lead one trip and Jim will lead the other. Both trips include a buffet dinner at the Miraflores Locks on the last night of the trip.

### **Cheepers! is going to Australia in 2012**

Australia is a naturalist's dream come true. Australia has enormous diversity of habitats, including the world's longest coral reef, the 1260-mile long Great Barrier Reef. Our tour focuses on eastern Australia during the dry season. From the northeast, where we have a chance for cassowary,



Cheepers! is working to finalize the following escorted trips tentatively scheduled for the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of 2012:

**Jul - Brazil**

**Sep/Oct – Papua New Guinea**

**Oct - Australia**

**Oct – Tasmania Extension**

We will post itineraries, dates and prices on the website and subsequent newsletters when plans are finalized.

For 2012, the following partner trips have been confirmed:

**Feb and Mar – Belize**

**Jul – Peru**

**Oct - South Africa**

**Nov - Namibia**

**Nov - Bhutan**

Please visit our *Cheepers!* Website for more information on these partner tours.

Standard and custom itineraries are available for the following destinations:

Alaska  
Argentina  
SE Arizona  
Belize  
Bolivia  
Brazil  
California (CA Specialties)  
Costa Rica  
Florida  
Ecuador Photographer's Tour  
Namibia  
Northern Ecuador  
Southwest Ecuador  
Guyana  
Namibia  
Panama  
Peru  
South Africa  
South Texas

Please call or email to discuss scheduling one of these destinations for your group.

## SPRING MIGRATION IN OHIO

We at *Cheepers!* schedule no trips in May so we can spend three to four days each week birding at Magee Marsh and Ottawa Wildlife Refuge near Toledo OH. Magee, Ottawa and the surrounding area comprise the largest migrant trap in Ohio (and are usually recognized among the top 10 birding spots in North America). Migrants land here to rest and feed before heading across Lake Erie to nesting grounds further north.

We joined thousands of birders from around the country, many of them participating in The Biggest Week In American Birding (BWIB) from May 5 – 15 and International Migratory Bird Day on May 14. Kudos to Black Swamp Bird Observatory, Magee Marsh Wildlife Area and Ottawa National Wildlife Refuge for their efforts in hosting BWIB. This event had more than 1000 people registered from 44 states and 4 countries. 231 species of birds were tallied during the 11-day event.

### Magee/Ottawa highlights for Cindy and Jim included:

- **Eared Grebe** (accidental, only a few records)
- **Snowy Egret** (uncommon, probably present but not certain to be seen)
- **Tri-colored Heron** (rare, occurs only every few years)
- **Common Moorhen** (uncommon, probably present but not certain to be seen)
- **Sandhill Cranes** (occasional, only detected a few times each year)
- **Lesser Black-backed Gull** (accidental, only a few records)
- **Black-billed and Yellow-billed Cuckoos**
- **Barn Owl** (rare)
- Pair of nesting **Eastern Screech Owls**
- Numerous **American Woodcocks**
- **Whip-poor-will** (occasional, only detected a few times each year)
- **Blue Grosbeak**
- **Yellow-headed Blackbirds** (occasional, only detected a few times each year)
- 35 **warbler** species (of the 37 species recorded in Ohio, we only missed the Kirtland's and the Louisiana Waterthrush).

In support of the **Dayton Audubon Birdathon Fundraiser**, Cindy and Jim led a team of birders who saw and heard 103 species birding about 12 hours in one twenty-four hour period during late April.



## Spotlight Tour – Southwest Ecuador

### Visit 4 Jocotoco Reserves in one trip

Our Southwest Ecuador (Tumbesian Endemics) tour will visit 4 of the 8 Jocotoco Reserves, including Buenaventura, Jorupe, Utuana, and Tapichalaca. This region of Ecuador harbors more endemics than any other part of the country, primarily in these reserves that have been formed to protect tracts of forest that are becoming increasingly rare.

**Buenaventura** is renowned for being one of the most ornithologically rich and easily accessible sites in the Ecuadorian Andes. It protects a narrow zone of cloud forest habitat on the otherwise seasonally dry west slope of the Andes in Southern Ecuador. The reserve provides habitat for the **El Oro Parakeet** and the **El Oro Tapaculo** and is home of species like **Collared Antshrike** and **Club-winged Manakin**. Near the research station is a lek of the globally threatened **Long-wattled Umbrellabird**. Bunches of bananas are being provided as food for birds and mammals near the lodge, resulting in regular visits by Aracaris, Toucans, Coatis and the occasional Morpho Butterfly.

**Jorupe** is an area of two square miles of high-quality deciduous forest in the Tumbesian region of southwest Ecuador, near the Peru border. Dominated by statuesque Ceiba trees, the Tumbesian Forest is a conservation priority because much of it is already cleared or badly degraded. Jorupe supports many endemic and rare species of plants and animals, including populations of numerous globally threatened birds, such as the **Henna-hooded Foliage-Gleaner**, **Watkin's Antpitta**, **Blackish-headed Spinetail**, **Slaty Becard**, **Line-cheeked Spinetail**, **Loja Tyranulet**, and **Western Peruvian Screech Owl**.

**Tapichalaca** was established in 1998 to protect the habitat of the **Jocotoco Antpitta**, a species whose total known population has remained at about twelve pairs since they were discovered at Cerro Tapichalaca by Dr. Robert Ridgely in 1997. Here we will see this rare Antpitta as it comes to be fed and bird for a variety of Tumbesians such as **Maranon Thrush**, **Speckled-breasted Wren**, **Dusky-headed Parakeet**, **White-capped Parrot**, **Swallow-tailed Nightjar**, **Ash-browed Spinetail**, **Chesnut-naped Antpitta**, **Rufous-tailed Tyrant**, **Yellow-cheeked Becard**, and **Black-faced**, **White-capped**, and **Silver-backed Tanagers**.

**Utuana** is a montane scrub and woodland habitat where we will search for the **Black-crested Tit-tyrant**, **Piura Hemispungus**, **Great-headed Antbird**, **Chapman's Antshrike**, and many others. Here, **Rainbow Starfrontlets** frequent the feeders.

We will visit other sites on this tour, including Podocarpus National Park, Sosoranga, Catomayo, and Loja, and expect to see **450 - 500 species of birds in 15 days**. If you've already visited northern Ecuador, you can expect more than half of the species we see on this trip to be life birds - birds that are found only in the southwestern part of the country.

**So, whether you've been to Ecuador before or not, consider joining us for this unique and fascinating tour!**





## Registration Gift Pack

Each person who registers for a Cheepers! trip receives a gift pack prior to trip departure which includes:

- ✓ 1 fanny/waist pack large enough to hold your trip field guide
- ✓ 1 refillable water bottle
- ✓ 1 microfiber lens cloth
- ✓ 1 customized trip checklist
- ✓ 1 bookmark
- ✓ 1 pen
- ✓ 1 pencil
- ✓ 1 pocket-sized notepad
- ✓ 1 adhesive Family Species index for your field guide

The customized checklist with a waterproof cover and back page contains:

- Names of trip participants
- Names of trip leaders
- Names of trip birding guides
- 2 pages to list daily places visited
- Country list of species with enough columns to log birds seen each day
- Bird species cross-reference to the page/plate in the country field guide
- Alpha list of all country species with cross-reference to location in checklist and in field guide
- Daily Species Tally Page
- 2 pages to list other sightings
- Species Family Index cross-referenced to the appropriate pages in the checklist
- 1-page map of locations to be visited
- Quick Index to Families for your country field guide

## Trip Cancellation Policy

If you cancel your registration, you must notify **Cheepers!** in writing, either postal 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.

## Do you need a guest presenter for a local chapter meeting?

Depending on our schedules 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:

- 2009 Harpy Eagle Trip to Panama
- Birding in Costa Rica (covers 3 trips)
- Birding in Ecuador (covers 3 trips)

After we complete our 2011 Peru and South Africa trips, we will have presentations covering these trips.

If requested, we can also develop presentations based on our birding experiences in Australia (3 trips), Belize (2 trips), Jamaica (1 trip), Panama Canal Zone and Chiriqui Highlands (4 trips), and Trinidad and Tobago (1 trip).

We can also develop presentations on Central and/or South America bird families such as hummingbirds, parrots, raptors, or tanagers.

## Birding Festival Schedule

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

- Sep 2011 – Midwest Birding Symposium (Lakeside OH)
- Nov 2011 – Rio Grande Valley Birding Festival (Harlingen TX)
- Jan 2012 – Space Coast Birding Festival (Titusville FL)

*If you attend one of these festivals, please look for us at our vendor's booth.*

## Current Scheduled Group Trips

- Nov 2011 – Galapagos Island Hopping
- Apr 2012 - Panama Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands
- Apr 2012 – Texas (Upper Texas Coast and Hill Country)
- Sep 2012 – Northern Ecuador & Amazon Basin

*If you have a group interested in a birding destination, please allow us an opportunity to submit a proposal.*

## 2 Slots open for Nov 2011 Ecuador trip

We have 2 slots open for our Nov 19 – Dec 4 2011 Northern Ecuador and our December 4 – 8 2011 Amazon Basin Extension. Contact us if you are interested in this trip.



## **Cheepers! - 2012 Escorted Birding Tours**

On **escorted tours**, Jim and Cindy accompany the tour. In their capacity as tour leaders, the Beckmans make sure the needs of all participants are met, handle any logistical problems or changes, take care of emergencies, assist the guides, and help make sure that every birder is able to see the birds found by the group. In addition, Jim maintains an electronic copy of the daily list while Cindy takes photographs of the places, people, and many of the birds seen on the trip. At the conclusion of the tour, a detailed daily and cumulative list of sightings and a DVD with hundreds of photos is provided for each participant. In most cases, a detailed trip report is provided.

### **ALASKA**

Jun 2 – 10, 2012: **Denali and Kenai** **Accepting registrations**

This is an introductory tour for birding in Alaska. We will visit key birding locations in and around Anchorage, Denali National Park, Seward, the Kenai Peninsula, and Resurrection Bay. At Denali, we expect to see the “big five” – Dall Sheep, Grizzly Bear, Wolf, Moose, and Black Bear. On Resurrection Bay, we should see Humpback Whales, Orcas, Steller Sea Lions, and possibly Sei or Fin Whales.

Jun 10 – 14, 2012: **Nome Extension** **Accepting registrations**

We will spend almost 4 full days birding in and around Nome.

Key species we are searching for in Alaska include Red-throated, Arctic and Pacific Loons, Gyrfalcon, Spruce Grouse, Willow and Rock Ptarmigan, Bristle-thighed Curlew, Red Knot, Red-necked Phalarope, Long-tailed Jaeger, Arctic and Aleutian Terns, Horned and Tufted Puffins, Gray Jay, Boreal Chickadee, Arctic Warbler, Bluethroat, Yellow and White Wagtails, and Northern Wheatear.

### **AUSTRALIA**

Oct 2012: **Cairns to Sidney**

We have 16 full days of birding along the east coast including in and around Cairns, the Great Barrier Reef, the Daintree River including a river cruise, the Atherland Tableland, Wooroonooran National Park, Mission Bay, Lamington National Park including 2 nights at O'Reilly's Guesthouse, Girraween National Park, in and around Stanthorpe, a pelagic trip out of Wollongong, Barren Grounds Nature Reserve, the Blue Mountains, and Capertee Valley. Join us and expect to see Apostlebirds, Bowerbirds, Butcherbirds, Cassowary, Drongos, Fairy-wrens, Fernwrens, Figbirds, Friarbirds, Frogmouths, Fruit-doves, Honeyeaters, Kookaburras, Jacky Winter, Logrunners, Lorikeets, Lyrebirds, Mistletoebird, Pardalotes, Parrots, Riflebirds, Scrubfowl, Sunbirds, Trillers, Thornbills, Wattlebirds, and many many more species.

### **ECUADOR**

Feb 11 – Feb 25, 2012: **Part I: Northern Ecuador** **Accepting registrations (only 2 slots available)**

Using two full-time expert Ecuadorian guides, 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 581 species and heard another 59 species during our sold-out November 2010 trip. Marcelo Andy and Galo Real are our guides for both this trip and the Amazon Extension.

Feb 24 – Feb 28, 2012: **Part II: Amazon Basin Extension** **Accepting registrations (only 5 slots available)**

Join us as we travel by boat from Coca down the Napo River to an entrance of the Yasuni National Park where we switch to smaller, dugout canoes and are paddled up a blackwater creek to Anangucocha Lake, home of the Napo Wildlife Center lodge. The lodge is owned and managed by Quichua Indians on their tribal land. During our days at Napo Wildlife Center, local guides working closely with Marcelo and Galo will lead us to bird several ecosystems which only occur lower than 300 masl: Terra Firme and Riparian forests, Varzea and Igapo flooded forests, and the River Islands. In addition, we will visit the famous Yasuni National Park Parrot Clay Licks.



## ***Cheepers!* - 2012 Escorted Birding Tours (Continued)**

### **ECUADOR (Continued)**

Mar 1 – Mar 10, 2012: **Galapagos Islands - Island Hopping** **Accepting registrations**

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.

*If you have birded Northern Ecuador but haven't experienced the Ecuador Amazon Basin or the Galapagos, consider joining us for the Feb 24 – 28 Amazon Basin Extension and the Mar 1 – 10 Galapagos Island Hopping trips. These two trips can easily be combined and we can arrange day activities for you on Feb 29 (currently a low-key rest day in Quito for Jim and Cindy). We can also arrange birding/sight-seeing activities for you if you arrive before Feb 23 and/or stay later than Mar 10.*

Mar 10 – Mar 24, 2012: **Southwest Ecuador Tumbesian Endemics** **Accepting registrations**

Using two full-time expert Ecuadorian guides, 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/March is the peak of breeding season in southern Ecuador, we expect to see 500 to 550 species on this trip, including many Peruvian species. For those who have previously birded Northern Ecuador, you should add 250 - 300 or more new species to your life list on this Tumbesian Endemics trip.

*The Galapagos and Southwest Ecuador can also be combined. Fly into Guayaquil for the flight to the Galapagos, then return to Guayaquil for the start of the Southwest trip. The Southwest trip ends in Guayaquil where you can connect with your international flight home. Of, if you want to spend time in Quito either before or after these trips, you can fly into Quito and then to the Galapagos and return to Quito after your Galapagos and/or Southwest trips are completed. We can also arrange birding/sight-seeing activities for you in Quito if you arrive before March 10 and/or stay later than March 24.*

### **PANAMA**

Jan 7 – Jan 16, 2012: **Canal Zone and Chiriqui Highlands** **Accepting registrations (4 spaces available)**

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. Our last afternoon and evening will be spent 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. 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 23 – May 4, 2012: **Canopy Tower and Canopy Lodge** **Accepting registrations (6 spaces available)**

Come with us to one of the most famous birding destinations in the world - the renowned Canopy Lodge and Canopy Tower in Central Panama. Our tour includes five nights at the Canopy Lodge and five nights at the Canopy Tower. Birding at different elevations and in a variety of habitats affords us the opportunity to see a diverse array of species. Our last afternoon and evening will be spent 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 spent near the airport. During our sold-out April 2010 trip following this itinerary, the group saw 317 species, heard an additional 26 species and our guides saw 1 species that no one else saw for a grand total of 344 species seen and heard.

*Compare the Cheepers! price for this tour to the big tour companies. The per day cost of the Cheepers! tour is \$216 vs. from approximately \$350 to \$375 per day for Field Guides, VENT and Wings. There are some differences in sites visited and in time of year visited, but we are staying at the same places, eating the same meals, using the same guides, and generally seeing the same resident birds.*



## ***Cheepers!* - 2012 Partner Tours**

For **partner tours**, Jim and/or Cindy may or may not join the tour, depending on the number of participants who register through *Cheepers!*. These tours will typically include travelers who sign up directly with the partner. When the Beckmans do not accompany a partner tour, *Cheepers!* cannot provide a final list of sightings, a DVD of photos, or a trip report at the end of the tour. You will receive the *Cheepers!* Registration Gift Pack, but without the customized checklist as the checklist will be provided by the Partner Tour Company,

### **Belize**

Feb 4 – 13, 2012 or Mar 3 – 12, 2012 or Mar 17 – 26, 2012:

#### **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 three 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.

### **Bhutan**

Nov 3 – Nov 22, 2012

#### **Birding the Pristine Forests of the Eastern Himalayas**

Bhutan is a quaint, quiet and scenically spectacular country with a fantastic conservation ethic that means that vast areas of unspoiled forest still cover the Himalayan foothills covering much of the country. On clear autumn days we hope to see snowcapped peaks as well as fabulous architecture while we search for a suite of sought-after birds. November is particularly good for birds often missed on spring birding tours to this country – notably Black-necked Crane and the critically endangered and enigmatic White-bellied Heron. Birding Bhutan in November also means being treated to abundant, fabulously exciting mixed flocks that contain the likes of Laughingthrushes, Vuhinas, Fulvettas and other incredible Oriental bird groups. We also expect to find some fabled Eastern Himalayan birds that can be encountered year-round, such as Beautiful Nuthatch (and other nuthatches), Ward's Trogon, the unbelievable Fire-tailed Myzornis, Rufous-necked Hornbill, Yellow-rumped Honeyguide, Ibisbill and of course Satyr Tragopan, Himalayan Monal and other vivid pheasants. Other highlights are Wallcreeper, spectacular Sunbirds, Parrotbills, striking and gorgeous Forktails along the fast-flowing rivers - plus a plethora of other tantalizing jewels.

This 20-day tour begins in Paro, Bhutan, and ends in Guwahati, India.

### **Namibia**

Nov 2 – Nov 19, 2012

#### **Namibia, Okavango and Victoria falls Birding Adventure**

This is a truly marvelous 2.5-week birding adventure during which we sample four different countries and spectacular, diverse scenery. We start in the coastal Namib Desert with its impressive dune fields (inhabited by desirable, localized endemics) and lagoons filled with flamingos, pelicans, shorebirds and some really localized species such as Damara Tern and Chestnut-banded Plover. We then ascend the spectacular Namib Escarpment, which is inhabited by a whole suite of birds occurring ONLY in Namibia and southern Angola. A trip to the north-western corner of Namibia generates Cinderella Waxbill, Rufous-tailed Palm-thrush, Grey Kestrel and other sought-after birds. Eventually, we leave the endemic-rich desert and enter the grassland, savannah and woodland of one of Africa's greatest game parks, Etosha National Park. Here, we can find spectacular Kalahari birds such as Crimson-breasted Shrike, Kori Bustard, Pygmy Falcon and a host of others, while seeing Africa's big (and small!) mammals as an unavoidable by-product of the birding. After Etosha, we head into an incredibly bird-diverse tropical corner of Africa, the Caprivi Strip and adjacent panhandle of the Okavango Delta (which falls just within the borders of Botswana). The magnificent wetlands and woodlands in these parts support Pel's Fishing Owl, Slaty Egret, Carmine Bee-eater and literally hundreds of other species, a rather large proportion of them spectacular. Finally, we bird around the Victoria Falls of Zambia (with a brief optional foray into adjacent Zimbabwe) for yet again a rich assemblage of birds, including rare species such as Taita Falcon.

This 18-day tour begins in Walvis Bat, Namibia, and ends in Livingstone, Zambia.



## ***Cheepers! - 2012 Partner Tours (Continued)***

### **Peru**

July 8 – 22, 2012

#### **Southern Peru: Coastal birds, Machu Picchu, mountains of Manu, and the Amazon Rainforest**

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. Visit Peru for the trip of a lifetime.

### **South Africa**

Oct 5 - Oct 16, 2012

#### **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 16 - Oct 31, 2012

#### **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, 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.

## ***Cheepers! - Tours Scheduled By Request***

### **Ecuador for Photographers**

Join us as we visit some of the best sites for bird photography in Ecuador. We'll put you in places where you can get "up close and personal" to tropical birds, and then give you time to enjoy the opportunity!

Our itinerary is designed to offer opportunities to visit some of the best birding sites in northern Ecuador with an element that's rarely found in birding tours: TIME. Time to get great photographs, time to observe bird behavior, time to wait for birds to be in the right lighting with interesting background, time to savor the moment. And, while we won't see anything near the 660+ species seen on our February, 2010, 15-day northern Ecuador tour, you should come home with hundreds of photos of some of the most spectacular birds in the tropics.

#### **Chat and "Chimp"**

There will be no formal photography classes, no photoshop workshops in the evenings. Instead, you will be able to spend your evenings reviewing the photos you took that day and discussing techniques and sharing ideas with fellow photographers - informal chatting and "chimping" for photographers who want to practice their art rather than participate in formal instruction.

***Visit our website for pricing and itinerary. Don't hesitate to email or call for more information.***



## **Cheepers! - Scheduled Group Trips**

**Cheepers! custom tours** are normally led by Jim and/or Cindy, depending on the preferences of the group arranging the tour. When the tour is led by the Beckmans, all of the services provided in escorted tours are available to the group. If the group opts to schedule an unescorted tour, we do all we can to ensure that their needs will be met by carefully planning every facet of the tour and arranging for a highly qualified local guide. The trip coordinator would then assume the duties as tour leader, in which case *Cheepers!* would not be able to provide the final list of sightings, the DVD of photos, or the trip report at the end of the tour.

### **Nov 2011 – Galapagos Island Hopping**

We will be island hopping on this standard itinerary, 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. Cindy is leading this trip.

### **Apr 2012 - Panama Canal Zone & Chiriqui Highlands**

This standard 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. The group should see 325 to 350 species on this trip. Cindy is leading this trip.

### **Apr 2012 – Texas (Upper Texas Coast and Hill Country)**

We start this custom 9-day trip with a visit to the Attwater Prairie Chicken National Wildlife Refuge during the annual Prairie Chicken Festival. Then we head east to bird the Sam Houston National Forest, Jones State Forest, Anahuac National Wildlife Refuge, Bolivar Peninsula, and High Island. After visiting these Upper Texas Coast hotspots, we drive to the Texas Hill Country and bird Kerr Wildlife Management Area, South Llano River State Park, Lost Maples State Natural Area, and Garner State Park. Jim is leading this trip.

### **Sep 2012 – Northern Ecuador & the Amazon Basin**

This is a custom 11-day itinerary jam-packed with many of the best Ecuador birding locations including Yanacocha, Old Nono-Mindo Road, the Antpitta Reserve, an Oilbird roost, Tandayapa Valley, Calacali, Antisana Reserve, Papallacta Pass, Guango, and the Napo Wildlife Center. Jim and Cindy are leading this trip.

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 locations?*
- Any specific birds 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](mailto:cheepers@sbcglobal.net)

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