



# Venturing!

Our somewhat irregular electronic newsletter  
Issue Number: 2007:1      February 2007

Space still  
available on the  
following Early  
2007 Ventures



**March 9-15**

**March 10-18**

**May 13-17**

**May 19-27**

**June 2-10**

**June 10-20**

**June 9-20**

**South Florida and Everglades –NEW!**

**Hummingbirds and Tanagers, Introduction to Andean Birds, Ecuador**

**Cranberry Glades, WV**

**NW Peru- Marañon Endemics and Pelagic**

**Tiputini Jungle Lodge and Andes, Ecuador**

**Galapagos Islands and San Isidro Lodge, Ecuador**

**Madeira, Tenerife and Fuerteventura, Canary Islands**

There are still a few spaces available on the above Ventures. Descriptions of all of the above can of course be found on the Ventures website: [www.birdventures.com](http://www.birdventures.com)

**NEW! ESCAPE TO SOUTH FLORIDA THIS COMING MARCH 8-15**

South Florida is home to a unique avifauna, and our itinerary will cover such excellent birding locations as Merritt Island, Loxahatchee, and the Florida Everglades. From Orlando, we will slowly head south, stopping at sites for such species as Sandhill Crane, Limpkin, Snail Kite and a host of waterbirds. The main portion of this Venture will be the two-day visit to the famous Florida Everglades. The habitats within this National Park are very varied and so is the bird selection. From the vast open vistas of the “river of grass” to the seemingly tangled hammocks of tropical vegetation, birds are everywhere. Egrets, herons and ibis dot the wetland habitats along with Anhinga, Wood Stork, and several duck species.

Accommodations are comfortable and in a family-style environment, but your location is perfect – right in the center of the Everglades and the birding is excellent right from your front door or hotel window. Join us for an excellent introduction into the avifauna of this sunshine state.

**Cost only \$1475 per person from Orlando**





## ONE Space Left on March 10-18 Ecuador Trip!!

**Giant Antpitta in Ecuador** (taken with a regular “point-and-shoot” camera) –not the best shot, but I was shaking with amazement at the time (Antpittas can and will do this to you!!) Anyway, we saw 2 on our last Ecuador week and should see this great bird again in March. If you can’t make March 2007– we’ll do it again in 2008!! Plus you can extend the tour with a week in Southern Ecuador too.

## NW Peru- May 19-27- The place for rare endemics!

Northwestern Peru offers spectacular scenery, a wide diversity of habitats, and some relatively easy-to-see ultra rare birds, such as the once believed extinct White-winged Guan. Our Venture starts in Lima, where we start our exploration of the dry coastline looking for Miners, Earthcreepers and Canasteros. The coastal lagoons hold thousands of shorebirds, gulls and terns, while our excursion out into the



**Peruvian Plantcutter**



Inca Tern– photo by Kevin Calhoun

Humboldt Current will offer us a bonanza of albatrosses, shearwaters and petrels. Once we head north towards the Peruvian city of Chiclayo, new and localized birds will appear on a regular basis. Thorny woodlands hold critically endangered birds such as Rufous Flycatcher and Peruvian Plantcutter. A moderate hike up Olmos Canyon should produce the very rare White-winged Guan, as well as White-edged Oriole and White-collared Jay. Montane forests hold a wealth of hummingbirds, many restricted to this part of Peru with the prize of all being the immaculate and very rare Marvelous Spatuletail, surely one of the most spectacular hummingbirds in the world. Add to this a supporting cast

of antbirds, thrushes, flycatchers and tanagers and this is set up for a truly superb birding Venture. Cost from Miami: \$3100 per person

“NEW”

**LATIN Birding breaks have been designed to introduce birders to great birding destinations in the New World Tropics. They are about 8 days in length and often include air as well.**

### **Latin Birding Breaks 2007**

<b>March 10-18</b>	<b><i>Hummingbirds and Tanagers, Introduction to Andean Birds, Ecuador</i></b>
<b>May 19-27</b>	<b><i>NW Peru- Marañon Endemics and Pelagic</i></b>
<b>June 2-10</b>	<b><i>Tiputini Jungle Lodge and Andes, Ecuador</i></b>
<b>June 10-20</b>	<b><i>Galapagos Islands &amp; San Isidro Lodge, Ecuador</i></b>
<b>November 21 - 30</b>	<b><i>Eco-Venture to Peru: Andes and Machu Picchu</i></b>
<b>December 1-8</b>	<b><i>Introduction to South American Birding, Amazonian Peru</i></b>
<b>December 8-11</b>	<b><i>Whitesands Forest Extension, Iquitos, Peru</i></b>



**More new and exciting destinations to be added in 2008!**

**You can see the flyers, itineraries, birdlists and more at the Ventures website: [www.birdventures.com](http://www.birdventures.com)**

### *New Trip Reports- Australia November 2006*

Australia- It's always hard to come up with highlights from an Australian tour, as every breath of every day is exciting with new sights, experiences and adventures around every corner. We started our tour in the tropical north of Queensland, where the local conservationists and government organizations have been working extremely hard to establish the "Wet Tropics Biosphere Preserve". What a jewel this is with vast stretches of upland rainforest all now protected and many ideas to reforest damaged and logged areas to connect many of the smaller tracks back together again.

The Cairns area is a riot of bird species, most being unfamiliar to the birding visitor. We had Australian Brush Turkeys and Orange-footed Scrubfowl in the Botanical Gardens, Pied Imperial Pigeons in every waterfront treetop and Rainbow Lorikeets everywhere. Shorebirds are the highlights of the Esplanade with the chance of seeing a major rarity possible at any time. We had both Black-tailed and Bar-tailed Godwits in mixed flocks at our feet, exquisite Red-capped Plovers, bizarre Terek Sandpipers and a whole host of unfamiliar Eurasian species such as Far Eastern Curlew, Lesser and Greater Sand-Plovers, Great Knot and many, many more. Our visit to Michaelmas Cay on the Great Barrier Reef was



also fascinating with a host of tropical fish and reef life seen from both the semi-submersible submarine and from our respective snorkeling and scuba experiences. As well as life below the waters surface, we had plenty of birds on Michaelmas including Brown and Black Noddies, Crested and Lesser Crested Terns and a single Great Frigatebird, and also who could forget the smell and sound of thousands of Sooty Terns?

It was then off to the big city of Melbourne and a drastic change in scenery, habitat and birds. After a slight detour to find a Superb Lyrebird at Badger Weir (phew-that was lucky!) we spent the night right in the center of Melbourne – thankfully missing the riots of the “G20” summit. With over 100 species seen, Werribee WWTP has to be one of the finest birding spots in the state. Maybe it’s the quantity of water in an otherwise very dry region that brings in the birds, but we certainly hit the goldmine that day. Ducks were everywhere with the delightful Pink-eared being the most abundant, along with Grey and Chestnut Teal, Black Swan and Australian Shelduck. We also managed to find a few Freckled Duck – another quite uncommon species. We never did find the elusive Long-toed Stint that day, but no complaints at all. Australian Avocet, White-headed Stilt and Sharp-tailed Sandpiper were abundant, with a few Marsh and Wood Sandpiper for some variety. Little Desert was in direct contrast to this relative lushness, as it had not rained for ages with most of the area being in a serious state of drought. Hot dry air, parrot-filled trees and flies gave us almost the true outback experience. We spent a lot of our time at Whimpey’s 2 waterholes enjoying the honeyeater show. New Hollands were ubiquitous and crowds of these clown-faced birds were a constant sight. Mixed in with this lot were White-plumed, Spiny-cheeked and Brown-headed Honeyeaters. A few Diamond Firetail also came in to drink – a beautiful little bird. The highlight of our Little Desert time had to be the time spent with Whimpey in his Malleefowl enclosure. With so much of Australia’s wildlife just hanging in the balance, it is so good to see people doing so much to protect endemic and endangered species. We were treated to an upfront and personal demonstration of Malleefowl mound maintenance and all the specific requirements that go with it. Of course the other “highlight” was the dry thunderstorm we watched with its attendant bolt of lightning. And so the Little Desert fire started and Victoria’s worst fire season was on the way.

With excellent guiding at all locations our Australia trip managed about 360 species of birds and an excellent mammal selection. Thanks everybody for making the trip so enjoyable.

**The full Australia trip report (plus photos) is on the Ventures website**

Simon Thompson

## *New Zealand – December 2006*

Following our November Venture to Eastern Australia, I was asked to take 2 of the group on a short trip to New Zealand. As I had not actually birded New Zealand before, I had a lot of help from Gail her in the Ventures office, plus Roger McNeill who had just spent the past 2 years in Auckland. I need not have worried as the birding and logistics were easy. We settled on 8 days in the South Island, which gave us a great combination of scenery, birds and a great introduction to New Zealand. We were not disappointed at all in any part of the trip as we had several boat trips with a great selection of pelagic birds, a spectacular cruise in Milford Sound with waterfalls cascading of every hillside (thanks to days of rain!), delicious fish and chips, an evening hike to watch a Stewart Island Brown Kiwi snuffling for sandhoppers on a remote beach, snow-capped mountains and wonderfully friendly Kiwi folks throughout our time there.



**Kea Parrot**

**Check the Ventures website for Pru’s trip report and the full birdlist.**

**[www.birdventures.com](http://www.birdventures.com)**



## *Day Trips in the first few months of 2007*

<i>March 25</i>	<i>Caroland Farms, Landrum, SC</i>
<i>March 28</i>	<i>Station Cove, SC</i>
<i>April 18</i>	<i>Big Creek, Great Smokies, TN/NC</i>
<i>April 28</i>	<i>Warblers and more, Stecoah Gap, NC 1</i>
<i>April 29</i>	<i>Warblers and more, Stecoah Gap, NC 2</i>
<i>April 21</i>	<i>Congaree Swamp Natl. Park, SC</i>
<i>May 3</i>	<i>Latta Park, Charlotte, NC</i>
<i>May 5</i>	<i>Max Patch, NC</i>
<i>May 6</i>	<i>Warblers and more, Stecoah Gap, NC 3</i>
<i>May 10</i>	<i>Warblers and more, Stecoah Gap, NC 4</i>
<i>May 30</i>	<i>Warbler Workshop, Asheville, NC</i>

Ventures accepts both VISA and MasterCard. This makes paying for your tour very easy. Just give us a call!

The full 2007 Calendar is on the Ventures website, so please continue to check this, as new Ventures information will be added on a regular basis.

**Contact us at:**

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### **NEW AT THE VENTURES STORE!**

**Hand-painted Bird Tiles, Bhutanese hand-woven pouches, Botanical Photo Notecards- watch the website for new additions in the next couple of weeks. Plus we have our Ventures caps and large format bird lists.**

**Need a bird book for your travels? We can get most birding and natural history books for you that are currently in print.**

**They are also available at 20% off the regular**