



**SOUTHERN PATAGONIA: LOS GLACIARES NATIONAL
PARK, AUSTRAL RAIL & HOODED GREBE**

11 - 17 NOVEMBER 2024



Andean Condor (photo Alejandro Ronchetti) is one of our targets on this southern Patagonia tour.

This tour combines some of the most diverse birding areas of the Southern Cone in Argentina: Los Glaciares National Park and the vast steppes of southern Patagonia. The region hosts a wide diversity of habitats, such as massive glaciers that flow from the vast Southern Patagonian Ice Field, thick deciduous and evergreen forests, vast steppes, rivers, snow-capped peaks, wetlands, and mountain grasslands, all home to a wide diversity of birds including **Magellanic Woodpecker** (the largest woodpecker in South America), the rare **Austral Rail** and Critically Endangered **Hooded Grebe** at Strobel Plateau, and the healthiest population of **Andean Condors** on the continent.



*The massive **Magellanic Woodpecker** can be seen on this tour.*

This tour can be combined with one or both of our preceding Argentina tours: **Birding Tour Argentina: Northwest from the foothills to Puna** followed by our **Birding Tour Argentina: Northeast – Iberá Marshland and Iguazú National Park**.

Itinerary (7 days/6 nights)

Day 1. El Calafate

This exciting trip will begin at the El Calafate International Airport, located near the enormous Argentino Lake. After lunch we will visit the Laguna Nimez Natural Reserve, an urban wildlife preserve that protects this impressive wetland. Here we hope to find **Magellanic Plover**, **Chilean Flamingo**, **Upland Goose**, **Red Shoveler**, **White-winged Coot**, **Cinereous Harrier**, **Austral Negrito**, and **Chilean Swallow**, among many others.

Overnight: Hotel Mirador del Lago, El Calafate

Day 2. Los Glaciares National Park

Today we will spend the entire day visiting the Los Glaciares National Park. During the drive across the Patagonian steppes we may encounter **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle**, **Variable Hawk**, **Short-billed Miner**, **Sharp-billed Canastero**, **Scale-throated Earthcreeper**, **White-browed Ground Tyrant**, and **Patagonian Yellow Finch**. We will visit the Perito Moreno Glacier, one of the few glaciers on earth still advancing. At the beech forest around the glacier we should see **Austral Parakeet**, **Thorn-tailed Rayadito**, **Austral Blackbird**, **Black-chinned Siskin**, and many more. Later in the day we will also visit a group of ponds, where we might see **Andean Duck**, **Magellanic Oystercatcher**, **Black-necked Swan**, and **Wren-like Rushbird**, among many others.

Overnight: Hotel Mirador del Lago, El Calafate

Day 3. El Chaltén

Today we will head north driving across the Patagonian steppes and badlands, where we hope to find **Lesser Rhea**, **Patagonian Tinamou**, **Least Seedsnipe**, **Aplomado Falcon**, **Rufous-chested Plover**, **Long-tailed Meadowlark**, **Cordilleran Canastero**, and **Band-tailed Earthcreeper**. After a four-hour drive we will arrive at El Chaltén, a small town located at the foot of Monte Fitz Roy, one of the most iconic mountain peaks in Patagonia. In the afternoon we will drive to a series of rapids at the Las Vueltas River, where we hope to see **Torrent Duck**. In this area we will also target **Magellanic Woodpecker**, the largest South American woodpecker, along with **Ashy-headed Goose**, **Lesser Horned Owl**, **Austral Pygmy Owl**, **Bronze-winged Duck**, **White-throated Treerunner**, **Dark-bellied Cinclodes**, **Patagonian Tyrant**, **Ochre-naped Ground Tyrant**, and **Common Diuca Finch**.

Overnight: Hotel Lunajuim, El Chaltén



Least Seedsnipe can be seen in the Patagonian steppes.

Day 4: El Chaltén to Estancia la Angostura

We'll have an early departure for our long drive northward across the Patagonian steppes and semi-deserts with stops en route before reaching Estancia La Angostura. This cattle ranch hosts numerous wetlands where the extremely rare and endangered **Austral Rail** has been recorded on numerous occasions. The afternoon will be spent in search of this rarity in the reed beds and along the pond edges. Today we should also see **Andean Condor**, **White-throated Caracara**, **Black-faced Ibis**, **Austral Negrito**, **Chocolate-vented Tyrant**, **Grey-bellied Shrike-Tyrant**, and **Greater Yellow Finch**.

Overnight: Estancia la Angostura

Day 5. Estancia la Angostura

We have the full day to search for our primary target, **Austral Rail**. We will also visit some nearby ponds to look for **Black-necked** and **Coscoroba Swans**, **Flying Steamer Duck**, **Southern Crested Caracara**, **Bicolored Hawk**, **Tawny-throated Dotterel**, **Grey-breasted Seedsnipe**, **Chilean Flicker**, **Austral Canastero**, **Tufted Tit-Tyrant**, **Great Shrike-Tyrant**, **Patagonian Yellow Finch**, **Patagonian Sierra Finch**, and **Yellow-bridled Finch**.

Overnight: Estancia la Angostura



*The handsome **Aplomado Falcon** is fairly conspicuous in the Andes.*

Day 6. Strobel Plateau for Hooded Grebe

Today we have an exciting full day trip to Laguna Verde and other ponds and lakes on the extensive basaltic landscapes of Strobel Plateau. The expedition to the Strobel Plateau will require the use of 4x4 vehicles from a nearby sheep ranch due to the difficult terrain of the rocky steppes.

Here the Critically Endangered **Hooded Grebe** nests in small colonies in a few of the ponds which are protected from the wild winds of the Patagonian steppes. A few other species also share this habitat in the form of **Silvery Grebe**, **Fuegian Steamer Duck**, **Chilean Flamingo**, **Upland Goose**, **Magellanic Plover**, **Least Seedsnipe** and **Long-tailed Meadowlark**.

Overnight: Estancia la Angostura

Day 7. Departure

We will drive back to El Calafate with some birding on the way, although we have a six-hour drive ahead of us today. Our route will lead across the Patagonian steppes, wetlands, and patches of beech forests. On the drive we may find **Patagonian Tinamou**, **Burrowing Parrot** and **Bronze-winged Duck**, as well as mammals such as **Guanaco** (a wild relative of the llama) and perhaps even **Large Hairy Armadillo**. Today will mark the end of seven days of fantastic birding and scenery in southern Patagonia. We will organize transfers for you to the El Calafate International Airport to board your departure flights.

Please note that the itinerary cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 7 days
Limit (group size): 6 - 12 (We have a higher limit for this than for most tours.)
Dates: 11 - 17 November 2024
Start: El Calafate International Airport, Argentina
End: El Calafate International Airport, Argentina
Prices: US\$5,474 per person sharing (2024)

Single supplements: US\$1,065 (2024)

Price includes:

Meals (from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 7)
Accommodation (based on double occupancy)
Guiding fees (English-speaking guide)
Entrance fees
All transport while on tour
Tolls

Price excludes:

All flights

Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts

Alcoholic drinks

Personal insurance

Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))