

# Birding Ecotours



## CHILE: CENTRAL CHILE AND ARAUCARIAN FOREST SPECIALS

14-22 OCTOBER 2026



*Chucaco Tapaculo one of the world's finest tapaculos (photo Fernando Diaz).*

This 9-day central Chile birding tour has been designed to provide clients with the best Chilean birding experience, focusing on regional specials and quality country endemics. During this fantastic trip you will have the opportunity to travel across the picturesque Chilean landscape along the central Andes. Taking advantage of Chile's great road infrastructure and using a comfortable hotel in the capital city, Santiago, for four nights, we will enjoy visiting and birding various habitats across central Chile. Some of these habitats include important wetland reserves along the Pacific coast looking for specials such as **Black-headed Duck**, **Coscoroba** and **Black-necked Swans** and several waterfowl, wader and passerine species. We will also explore semideciduous inter-Andean valleys looking for **Rufous-tailed Plantcutter** and the endemic **White-throated Tapaculo**. From the dry Andean valleys we will ascend to the base of the majestic snow-capped Andes Mountains from where we will have chances to look for iconic birds such as the sought-after **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**, **Andean Condor**, **Andean Goose**, **Torrent Duck**, **Giant Hummingbird** and the unique **Crag Chilia**, one of the most range-restricted Chilean endemics.

Central Chile is classified as one of the world's five Mediterranean ecoregions and it is well renowned for its excellent wine. What could be better than experiencing high-quality birding while sampling some fine wine in a picturesque vineyard, surrounded by simply exquisite nature and birds!



*White-sided Hillstar in the Andes above Santiago (photo Fernando Diaz).*

Following the route of Charles Darwin, we will visit the famous UNESCO Campana National Park where we will be looking for the splendid **Moustached Turca**, another Chilean endemic, and other specials such as **Dusky-tailed Canastero**, **Striped Woodpecker**, **Chilean Flicker**, **Austral Pygmy Owl** and **Chilean Mockingbird**.

Our adventure will end with us visiting the lush Valdivian temperate rainforest where we will have the chance to look for very special birds such as **Magellanic Woodpecker**, **Thorn-tailed Rayadito**, the endemic **Chestnut-throated Huet-huet**, **Magellanic**, **Dusky** and **Ochre-flanked Tapaculos** and the impressive **Chucao Tapaculo**. We will also look for **White-throated Treerunner**, **Austral** and **Slender-billed Parakeets** and the range-restricted **Rufous-tailed Hawk**.

We invite you to discover a fantastic country with a good selection of special birds and sample some of the finest wines in the region.

### Itinerary (9 days/8 nights)

#### Day 1. Arrival to Santiago de Chile

Today you will arrive at Arturo Benítez International Airport, Santiago, where you will be met by your tour leader and transferred to our Santiago hotel.

Overnight: Santiago



*The endemic **Moustached Turca** is a standout species of central Chile.*

#### Day 2. Farellones and Valle Nevado

Today we will start our trip exploring the mountains above the city. We will ascend out of Santiago, enjoying our first foray into the Andes Mountains. Here we will look for **Greater Yellow Finch**, **Creamy-rumped Miner**, **White-sided Hillstar**, **Grey-hooded Sierra Finch**, **Rufous-**

**banded Miner**, plus other more widespread species such as **Variable Hawk**, **Mountain Caracara**, and the iconic **Andean Condor**.

Later we will focus on the “big six of Santiago”, a colloquial term that usually refers to the six Chilean endemics found above Santiago. These include the impressive **Moustached Turca**, the shy **Chilean Tinamou**, the secretive **White-throated Tapaculo**, the conspicuous duo of **Dusky Tapaculo** and **Crag Chilia** and the agile **Dusky-tailed Canastero**.

After what is sure to have been a great first day of Chilean birding, we will return to our Santiago hotel.

Overnight: Santiago

### Day 3. Coastal birding and wine route

Today, we will explore various wetlands along the coast where we can see some unique waterfowl restricted to southern South America such as **Black-necked** and **Coscoroba Swans**, **Black-headed Duck** (the only brood-parasitic duck in the world), **Red Shoveler**, **Chiloe Wigeon**, and **Lake Duck**. Other birds here might include **Yellow-billed Pintail**, **Yellow-billed Teal**, **Red-gartered**, **White-winged** and **Red-fronted Coots**, **Southern Lapwing**, **Snowy-crowned Tern**, **White-tufted**, **Pied-billed** and **Great Grebes**, **White-faced Ibis**, **Black Skimmer**, **Chimango Caracara**, **Austral Negrito**, **Grassland Yellow Finch**, **Wren-like Rushbird**, **Plumbeous Rail**, **Rufous-tailed Plantcutter**, **Many-colored Rush Tyrant**, and **Yellow-winged Blackbird**.



*Black-necked Swan in the Chile lowlands.*

Later, we will continue towards the Casablanca valley, famous for its splendid wines. We'll have lunch at one of the valley's lovely vineyards, followed by an interesting winemaking tour and ending with a fabulous winetasting. After enjoying a selection of fine wines, we will have time to relax and then make our way to our hotel in Casablanca.

Overnight: Casablanca

#### Day 4. Campana National Park

In 1834 Charles Darwin explored Chile during his famous trip onboard the Beagle. While visiting central Chile he discovered a unique, diverse area of Mediterranean forest and scrubland, rich in endemic flora and fauna. Many decades later the area became a national park known as the La Campana. The diverse and pristine vegetation in the park, unfortunately an uncommon occurrence in central Chile, is the ideal place to look for many of Chile's key bird species. Here we will have another chance for some of the key endemics like **Moustached Turca**, **White-throated Tapaculo**, **Chilean Tinamou**, **Dusky-tailed Canastero** and **Dusky Tapaculo**. Other interesting birds we are likely to encounter include **Chilean Pigeon**, **Striped Woodpecker**, **Chilean Flicker**, **Austral Pygmy Owl**, **Giant Hummingbird**, **Plain-mantled Tit-Spintail**, **Tufted Tit-Tyrant**, **White-crested Elaenia**, **Rufous-tailed Plantcutter** and **Diuca Finch**.

After an exciting day's birding exploring this fascinating Chilean landscape we will head back east to Santiago.

Overnight: Santiago

#### Day 5. El Yeso Reservoir

Today we will visit the Embalse El Yeso, an artificial reservoir located at 9,800 feet (3,000 meters) elevation, known among birders as the easiest and most accessible place in the world to look for the most-wanted **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**. Here at El Yeso, it is possible to find the sandpiper-plover at its southern limit, and without the hassle of long walks, which are required to find this species in central Peru and northern Argentina, at an altitude of 15,700 feet (4,800 meters) and 13,400 feet (4,100 meters), respectively. Other great birds include **Upland Goose**, **Black-winged Ground Dove**, **White-sided Hillstar**, **Grey-breasted Seedsnipe**, **Magellanic Snipe**, **Scale-throated Earthcreeper**, **Buff-winged Cinclodes**, **Cordilleran Canastero**, **Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant**, **Ochre-naped** and **White-browed Ground Tyrants**, **Yellow-rumped Siskin**, **Austral Blackbird**, **Diuca Finch** and **Grey-hooded Sierra Finch**.

Overnight: Santiago



*Diademed Sandpiper-Plover at El Yeso (photo Fernando Diaz).*

### Day 6. Colbun Lake and Vilches

Today we will head south of Santiago towards Talca and Colbún Lake. Still in dry Mediterranean habitat, our main targets will be the spectacularly colorful and very noisy **Burrowing Parakeet**, and the handsome **Spectacled Duck**. Once at the lake we will look for a few other interesting duck and grebe species as well as the tricky **Spectacled Tyrant**. We will then make a short trip north of the lake and spend the rest of the afternoon and the next day in the magnificent Altos de Lircay National Reserve. At dusk we'll look for the elusive **Rufous-legged Owl**.

Overnight: Altos de los Vilches

### Day 7. Altos Lircay National Reserve

Altos Lircay Reserve protects a very interesting ecotone, where temperate rainforest meets the Mediterranean ecoregion. Here we'll see a mix of the bird communities characteristic of the dry Mediterranean habitat and the lush temperate Nothofagus forests. The lush primary forest is home to one of the least-known Chilean birds, the endemic **Chestnut-throated Huet-huet** (a tapaculo). While birding this fascinating area, we will look also for **Austral Parakeet** (the world's southernmost parrot species). We may also have our first encounter with **Magellanic Woodpecker** (the largest woodpecker in South America) and the rare and hard-to-find **Chilean Hawk**.

Overnight: Alto de los Vilches

### Day 8. Temuco and Valdivian forest

After breakfast at our *hostería*, we'll head south towards Temuco, the capital city of the Araucanía Region. On our way we will stop by some meadowy agricultural areas to look for **Screaming Cowbird**, **Hellmayr's Pipit** and **Chilean Tinamou**. By the time we reach Temuco, the dry Mediterranean landscape will have been left behind, replaced by lush temperate rainforest. Here, we can find dense rainforest understory species, such as **Black-throated Huet-huet**, **Des Mur's Wiretail**, **Chucao Tapaculo** and **Ochre-flanked Tapaculos** and the near endemic **Slender-billed Parakeet**. The forests in the area are also a good spot to find the uncommon **Rufous-tailed Hawk**.

Overnight: Temuco



*A male Magellanic Woodpecker in Los Altos del Lircay Reserve.*

### Day 9. Valdivian forest and flight to Santiago, tour ends

In the morning, we will head to the higher altitude habitat of mixed *Nothofagus* and *Araucaria* (Monkey Puzzle Trees) forests surrounded by stunning mountainous landscapes. Here we will look for the newly split **Patagonian Forest Earthcreeper** as well as **Magellanic Tapaculo**, **Austral Parakeet**, **Striped Woodpecker**, **Chilean Flicker**, **White-throated Treerunner** and other forest species. Today we will enjoy both fantastic forest birds and the allure of magical forests, in equal parts. The silhouettes of *Araucaria* trees on the hillside and the snow-capped volcanoes on the horizon give one the feeling of being in the midst of a prehistoric forest.

After a full day of birding, we will drive to Temuco's airport for the short domestic flight back to Santiago where the tour will end.

Overnight: Not included



*Rufous-legged Owl is possible to see in our Chile tour (photo Fernando Diaz).*

*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.*

<b>Duration:</b>	9 days
<b>Group Size:</b>	6 - 8
<b>Dates:</b>	14-22 October 2026
<b>Start:</b>	Santiago, Chile
<b>End:</b>	Santiago, Chile
<b>Price:</b>	US\$6,630 per person, based on 6-8 participants
<b>Single Supplement:</b>	US\$1,050

**Price includes:**

Meals (from dinner on day 1 until lunch on day 9)  
Accommodation  
Guiding fees  
Entrance fees  
All transport while on tour

Airport transfers (on day 1 and day 9 only)  
Tolls

**Price excludes:**

All flights  
Items of a personal nature, e.g. gifts  
Alcoholic drinks  
Personal insurance  
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))