



**CHILE BIRDING TOURS:
GENERAL INFORMATION**



Moustached Turca, one of many of Chile's high-altitude specials.

OUR CHILE BIRDING TOURS

Chile is one of South America's most rewarding birding destinations. Superb infrastructure allows seamless travel between desert, Mediterranean, temperate forest, and Patagonian habitats, with some of the world's best pelagic birding off the Pacific coast. Despite lower overall species totals than parts of tropical South America, Chile offers a remarkable set of endemics—**Chilean Mockingbird**, **Chilean Flicker**, **Chilean Tinamou**, **Chilean Woodstar**, **Crag Chilia**, and **Slender-billed Parakeet**—and standout tapaculos including **Chestnut-throated Huet-huet**, **Dusky Tapaculo**, **White-throated Tapaculo**, and **Moustached Turca**. Regional specials such as **Chucao Tapaculo**, **Giant Hummingbird**, **Torrent Duck**, **Andean Condor**, **Austral Rail**, **Magellanic Plover**, **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**, **Magellanic Woodpecker**, and **King Penguin** round out an exceptionally distinctive bird list.

We offer two birding and wildlife tours to Chile, with our central Chile birding tour visiting key sites around Santiago and the spectacular Valdivian forests around Temuco, searching for the likes of **Moustached Turca**, **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**, and **Crag Chilia**, among others. Our birding and Puma tour focusses on finding **Puma** by visiting Torres del Paine National Park which offers you some of the best chances in the world of seeing wild **Puma**. On this tour we also hope to find special birds like **Austral Rail**, **Andean Condor**, **Magellanic Woodpecker** and **Magellanic Diving Petrel**.

PASSPORT AND VISA

To enter Chile, your passport must be valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure. We recommend carrying a passport with several blank pages, as some countries require a full page for entry and exit stamps. Please also bring a few photocopies of your passport and details of your consular representation in Chile. Please check whether your nationality requires a visa to enter Chile.

Upon arrival at Santiago de Chile Airport immigration, you will receive the PDI Tourist Card (Tarjeta Única Migratoria), which certifies your legal entry and temporary stay. It is usually a small, receipt-like slip of white paper with "PDI" printed at the top. Presenting this card with your passport allows you to avoid paying the 19% VAT on hotels and lodges. Hotels are required to photocopy this document for their tax records.

Be prepared to show your passport and PDI card at hotel check-in and before domestic flights. Losing the PDI card can be a hassle, but a replacement can be obtained. If you lose the card, you can request a duplicate via the [PDI website](#) or in person at the airport—arrive several hours early on your departure day.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

We strongly encourage you to purchase trip cancellation or interruption insurance in case you have to cancel, due to illness or for any other reason, since tour payments are non-refundable as per [our terms and conditions](#). **We advise you to get a plan that covers all your medical care and evacuation back to your country of residence.**

CRIME

The Chilean countryside is considered safe in the areas we visit, and Chileans are generally friendly and helpful. Big cities such as Santiago, however, suffer the same problems as large cities anywhere, and you should take precautions to safeguard personal belongings such as money, passports, and optical equipment. Avoid walking at night in large cities without informing your tour leader, and do not display binoculars or expensive cameras in crowded areas such as downtown Santiago, bus and train stations, and parts of Alameda Avenue.

HEALTH, VACCINATIONS, AND MEDICAL CONDITIONS

Please refer to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention \(CDC\) website](#) for health advice. Please also consult your physician or your local travel clinic for recommendations.

No vaccines are mandatory to enter Chile; however, check whether a Yellow Fever vaccination is required for your itinerary or transit countries. The CDC advises staying current on routine vaccines, including chickenpox, DTP, influenza (flu), and shingles. Traveler's diarrhea is a common risk when traveling in South America; consult your doctor and consider carrying medication such as loperamide (Imodium) or an antibiotic if recommended.

Please inform us of any medical conditions (e.g., diabetes, asthma, allergies, heart issues, knee problems) or phobias so we can plan appropriately and make this a highly enjoyable trip for you.

MONEY

The Chilean peso (denoted as \$ or CLP\$) is the national currency of Chile which can be exchanged for US dollars or euros at Santiago Airport upon your arrival. If bringing foreign currency, avoid bills with damage (torn edges, ink marks, tape), as they may not be easily exchanged. If you like paying for extras with cash, we recommend either exchanging currency or withdrawing from ATMs. Our tours are largely all-inclusive; you'll only need money for personal expenses (e.g., drinks, laundry, phone calls, bar tabs, souvenirs), most of which can be paid by credit card.

ATM machines are available in the larger cities and towns. Credit cards are widely accepted, though some remote areas remain cash-oriented. Tipping is appreciated by locals and acceptable in US dollars and euros.

ELECTRICITY

In Chile, power plugs and sockets (outlets) of type C and type L (two round pins) are used. The standard voltage is 220 V at a frequency of 50 Hz. A surge protector is strongly recommended. We also recommend bringing more than one universal adaptor to fit your electric devices into all kinds of sockets.

WIFI

Internet and Wi-Fi are widely available, including in some remote locations. You should have Wi-Fi available at all the accommodations. For connectivity beyond hotel Wi-Fi, purchase a

local SIM on arrival or use an international roaming plan (however, check charges). You can usually purchase a travel SIM from the airport or a convenience store. We can sometimes provide an in-vehicle hotspot; streaming is not permitted to preserve data for the group.

DRIVES AND DISTANCES

Chile is one of the longest north-south countries in the world with 3,997 miles (6,432 kilometers) of coastline. As such, to connect key birding zones, we may have to drive long distances. Talca-Temuco is about 265 miles (426 km), and routes in northern Chile and within Torres del Paine National Park can involve roundtrip drives of around five hours between sites and Punta Arenas.

The nonstop domestic flight from Santiago to Punta Arenas takes just over three hours.

EARTHQUAKES

Chile sits along the Ring of Fire, a tectonic belt of volcanoes and earthquakes where about 90% of global seismic activity occurs. As such, Chile regularly experiences seismic activity ranging from minor tremors to serious earthquakes that can trigger tsunamis. While earthquakes are difficult to predict, Chile has strong building codes and practiced evacuation plans. Most tremors do not disrupt daily life, and locals often remain calm during quakes below magnitude 6.0. If you feel shaking, observe the locals; if they remain calm, it is likely a minor tremor.

We ask you to be aware of emergency exits and look for designated security zones in your hotels upon your arrival. We also strongly suggest you obtain travel insurance that covers medical evacuation and incidents related to natural disasters, and enroll in your government's traveler alert system (e.g., STEP for US citizens).

DANGEROUS ANIMALS AND PLANTS

Venomous animals are rare in Chile, though caution is always advisable in natural areas.

Puma safaris are now among Chile's most popular wildlife activities, with a high chance of encounters—sometimes at relatively close range. Please remain calm and always follow your tour leader and local guides' instructions. Park rangers often know individual Pumas at key sites and will advise how close we can approach, and which animals are more tolerant of observers.

Always follow ranger and local guidance. Violations—such as disturbing wildlife to get a better photo or breaking park rules—may result in partial or full expulsion from the park, forfeited fees, and possible legal action.

WEATHER

The climate in Chile is incredibly diverse due to its extreme north-south length, ranging from the dry Atacama Desert in the north to cold alpine and sub-Antarctic conditions in the south, with a Mediterranean climate in Central Chile, where temperatures range from about 96°F (36°C) in summer to 35°F (2°C) in winter. Our tours run in spring (September–November), when typical temperatures range from about 32°F (0°C) to 73°F (23°C).

Torres del Paine National Park and the wider Chilean–Argentine Patagonian region are among the windiest in South America, with winds often between 10–60 mph (20–100 km/h). Windy or inclement weather can delay or cancel activities such as pelagic trips, boat rides, and ferry crossings, and may lengthen long drives.

If you plan to visit at another time of year, let us know and we'll advise on seasonal conditions.

DAYLIGHT

In southern Chile during spring, daylight typically runs from about 07:30 to 20:00. Many travelers typically dine around 18:30–19:00, which coincides with the afternoon peak in bird activity and dusk mammal watching. To maximize bird and wildlife viewing, be prepared for later dinner times.

TOUR VEHICLE AND SEAT ROTATION

We mostly use vans (Mercedes Sprinters) for our Chile birding tours. For Puma safaris, we may switch to 4×4 vehicles on rough sections, splitting groups of up to eight into two or three 4×4s.

Birding Ecotours employs seat rotation on all small-group set-departure tours to ensure equal viewing opportunities. Motion sickness does not exempt participants from rotation; please bring appropriate medication if needed. Participants should be fit and flexible enough to move to the back seats when their turn arises. Tour participants should also be mindful of what extra equipment they bring into the general seating area of the vehicle (rather than the luggage section) and should ensure they do not clog up general thoroughfare or extra seats with camera equipment, tripods, etc. from a comfort and health and safety point of view.

BIRDING ECOTOURS EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS

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