Argentina
Córdoba Extension
20th to 25th January 2020 (6 days)
North West Endemics
25th January to 7th February 2020 (14 days)

Our comprehensive north west tour is set amongst some of the finest scenery in all of South America, and targets every single endemic and near endemic the region has to offer! From such diverse areas as Quebrada de las Conchas and Tafi del Valle to the spectacular Humahuaca Valley and Yungas Cloud forests of Calilegua National Park, no better backdrop exists against which to search out the region’s avian gems! Highlights include Rufous-throated Dipper, Tucuman Mountain Finch, flashy Red-tailed Comet, immense Andean Condor, Sandy Gallito, Burrowing Parrot, Tucuman Amazon, Lark-like Brushrunner and even Spot-winged Falconet.
THE TOUR AT A GLANCE...

CORDOBA EXTENSION

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TOUR ROUTE MAP...
Cordoba Extension

Our Cordoba Extension targets some of the least-known birds and least-visited areas of Argentina. The geographically isolated Cordoba Hills are a haven of endemism where we can expect to find the endemic Olrog’s and Cordoba Cinclodes. The nearby salt pans and lakes of Salinas Grande and Mar Chiquita offer up numerous localised flamingos and the highly localised Salinas Monjita. Visiting some highly accessible and largely unspoilt habitats, this short tour provides the perfect opportunity to clear up the region’s endemics and enjoy excellent sightings of otherwise difficult species.

Day 1: Cordoba to Pampa de Achala. We start this short extension with a drive to Pampa de Achala, the highest plateau in the heart of the Sierras de Córdobas. This granitic massif is surrounded by woodlands and scrub more typical of the Chaco. Detached from the main Andes range by some 300km, the high levels of endemism are a direct consequence of this geographical isolation. High up on our list of priority species today is the endemic Olrog’s Cinclodes, a bird we often find from the roadside. Further exploration should yield Cordoba Cinclodes, Rufous-banded Miner, Subtropical Doradito, Rufous-naped Ground Tyrant, Red-legged Seriema, Red-tailed Comet, Andean Swift, Band-tailed and Plumbeous Sierra Finch, Hellmayr’s Pipit and Puna Canastero (the locally occurring subspecies *sclateri* is often considered a species in its own right – Cordoba Canastero).

Day 2: Sierran Chaco. We plan to spend the day birding amongst the woodlands surrounding the Cordoba Hills. This scrubby habitat is actually the very southern edge of the Chaco, providing fertile grounds for Blue-tufted Starthroat, Tataupa Tinamou, the very rare Black-bodied Woodpecker, Black-crested Finch, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper and Spot-winged Falconet. Amongst the commoner species, we should find Stripe-crowned and Yellow-chinned Spinetails, Brown Cacholote, Lark-like Brushrunner, Vermilion Flycatcher, Black-crowned and White Monjitas, Spectacled Tyrant, Chalk-browed Mockingbird, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Screaming Cowbird, Long-tailed Meadowlark and Hooded Siskin.

Days 3 & 4: Mar Chiquita. Today we will move close to the famous Mar Chiquita lagoon where we will spend the next two nights.

Mar Chiquita it’s the biggest saline lagoon in South America (and the fifth
biggest in the world), a Ramsar site, an Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA), a Western Hemisphere Shorebird Reserve and a Multiple Use Reserve. Covering 950 000 hectares, Mar Chiquita holds not only a great number of birds, but an impressive level of diversity including many migrants. During our time here we will certainly not struggle for flamingo sightings, with over 100 000 resident Chilean as well as a number of Puna and Andean Flamingos. Migrants include up to half a million Wilson’s Phalarope, Lesser Yellowlegs, Baird’s Sandpiper, White-rumped Sandpipers and American Golden Plover.

Aside from the mega spectacle of flamingos and waders, we will also spend time searching for the elusive Dot-winged Crane, skulking South American Painted-snipe and localised Dinelli’s Doradito. In the surrounding scrub we will keep our eyes open for the mighty Solitary Eagle, White-fronted Woodpecker, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper, Freckle-breasted Thornbird, White-tipped Plantcutter and Red-crested Cardinal to mention a few.

**Day 5: Dean Funes and Salinas Grande.** We depart Mar Chiquita early this morning and head to the tiny village of San Jose de las Salinas. Home to the last remnants of the now derelict salt mining trade, it is our access point to the massive Salinas Grande salt pan (8,900km²)! The salt pans harbour a remarkable range restricted species that occupies a highly specialised niche. The Salinas Monjita is found almost exclusively in the highly stunted vegetation surrounding the area’s salt flats and pans. Around the salt pans we pass through excellent Chaco habitat with a good chance of seeing the much sought-after Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Brushland and Elegant Crested Tinamous, Black-legged Seriema, White-fronted Woodpecker, Suiriri Flycatcher, Crested Hornero, Straneck’s Tyrannulet, White-banded Mockingbird, Red Pileated and Many-colored Chaco Finch.

**Day 6: Dean Funes to Córdoba.** This morning we return to Córdoba where the extension will conclude. Those continuing onwards to our main Northern Argentina tour will take short flight to San Miguel de Tucumán.
North West Endemics

Day 1: San Miguel de Tucumán, transfer to Tafi del Valle. Our tour starts this morning in Tucumán, the largest city in the north-western region of Argentina. After assembling, we will transfer to the small settlement of Tafi del Valle, passing initially through flat farmland before climbing up the steep, angular foothills of the Andes. We will bird intermittently up the Yungas cloud forest shrouding the Rio Los Sosa Valley. Of particular interest are a few localised specialities including the endemic Yellow-striped Brushfinch, Rusty-browed Warbling Finch and sprightly Brown-capped Whitestart, while along the swift waterways, we will search for Torrent Duck and the extremely localised Rufous-throated Dipper.

Day 2: Tafi del Valle. We have a full day to bird the montane forest and high Andean grasslands around Tafi del Valle. Some of our primary targets include the endemic Tucuman Mountain Finch, Moreno’s Ground Dove and White-browed Tapaculo, as well as the outrageously colourful Red-tailed Comet, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Puna and Scribble-tailed Canasteros, chances for the immense Andean Condor, Aplomado Falcon, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, Paramo Pipit, Ornate Tinamou and Ash-breasted Sierra Finch. After a satisfying day’s birding, we will then return to our lodgings in Tafi del Valle, where
we have the opportunity to sample some of the exquisite locally made cheeses or dine on fresh trout from Lago Angostura.

**Day 3: Tafi del Valle to Valles Calchaquíes.** This morning, we depart Tafi del Valle and ascend the valley further until cresting at ‘El Infiernillo’ (the Little Hell) at some 3,042masl. Once over the pass, we leave behind the moist, high altitude grasslands and scattered forest groves and drop into the dry Calchaquíes Valley. Species are markedly different in this Monte desert habitat, stunted with tall cardon cactus. Some of the key birds we can expect to see include the endemic Sandy Gallito, Steinbach’s Canastero and Cinnamon Warbling Finch, along with White-fronted Woodpecker sallying for insects, Patagonian Mockingbird, Golden-rumped Euphonia, and, if we are very lucky, the nomadic endemic White-throated Cacholote.

**Day 4: Valles Calchaquíes to Cabra Corral.** This morning, we will continue birding though the Monte desert habitat looking for further endemics and specialities. In the afternoon, we then transfer through the well-tendered vineyards of Cafayate, marvelling at the stunning views of Quebrada de las Conchas (Ravine of the Shells) on our way to Moldes.

In the verdant wine lands of Cafayate, we will search for large flocks of Green-cheeked Parakeet, the local subspecies of Burrowing Parrot, as well as explore the thorny scrub and dry streambeds for Ringed Warbling Finch, the localised endemic Steinbach's Canastero, Green-barred and Checkered Woodpeckers, Chaco Puffbird, the outrageous Ultramarine Grosbeak, Chaco Earthcreeper, White-winged Black Tyrant, and hyperactive endemic Rufous-naped Ground Tyrant along the river banks, and Sandy Gallito (known locally as ‘little rooster’) scurrying across the desert floor.

This afternoon, we will bird the surroundings of Cabra Corral, searching for both Black-legged and Red-legged Seriemas amongst other dry woodland specialities. After what should be an excellent day’s birding, we will still have ample time to indulge in some of the exquisite locally produced wine.

**Day 5: Cuesta del Obispo (Cachi Road).** We have a full day to explore the rich Cuesta del Obispo area. After a steep ascent passing dry, eroded slopes and cacti scrubland, we will bird patches of Yungas cloud forest and high Andean grasslands. Species we hope to find today include the range-restricted Rock Earthcreeper, Andean Condor, Chaco Chachalaca, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Dusky-legged Guan, the tiny Tataupa Tinamou, Suiriri Flycatcher, Plain-colored Seedeater, Rufous-bellied Saltator, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail and Maquis Canastero.

**Day 6: Cabra Corral to Calilegua National Park.** We depart early this morning, heading for Calilegua National Park via the Lerma Valley. Some of today’s target specialities include

Of mammalian interest, we will keep our eyes peeled for herds of rare Guanaco, the delightful Southern Mountain Viscacha (something of a cross between a rabbit and an oversized squirrel!), and Culpeo, the locally occurring fox species.

Day 7: Calilegua National Park and Yungas Cloud Forest. We have a full day’s excursion to Calilegua NP to explore the fantastic Yungas cloud forest. Our main targets here are Golden-collared Macaw, Green-cheeked and Mitred Parakeets, Blue-fronted and the endemic Tucuman Amazons, Ocellated Piculet, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, Giant Antshrike, reclusive White-throated Antpitta, White-throated Quail-Dove, Plush-crested Jay, migratory Andean Slaty Thrush, the banana-billed Toco Toucan, Yungas Dove, Orange-headed Tanager, Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher and the sparkling Blue-capped Puffleg, among other more widespread species.

Day 8: Calilegua area to Quebrada de Humahuaca. After some final early morning birding in the Calilegua area, we will drive through the Quebrada de Humahuaca. This narrow, arid valley was a major trade route over the last 10,000 years and is still the most important thoroughfare from the high Andes to the temperate plains of south-eastern South America. It should come as no surprise, therefore, that the former Camino Inca is the present-day location of the Pan-American Highway.

History aside, the incredibly coloured vistas here offer excellent and unrivalled photographic opportunities. We will spend the afternoon birding at various stops en route, searching for Cinereous Harrier, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Andean Swift, Straight-billed Earthcreeper, Andean Tyrant, Rufous-banded and Common Miners, White-tipped Plantcutter, Black-hooded Sierra Finch and Blue-and-yellow Tanager, amongst many others.

Day 9: Quebrada de Humahuaca to La Quiaca. Today, we drive north to the border town of La Quiaca. Most of our day will be spent visiting Laguna de los Pozuelos, a National Natural Monument. This huge, saline Altiplano Lake is home to hundreds of thousands of birds. Waterfowl, waders, flamingos and ibises can be seen in large numbers if conditions are favourable. Some of the more regular species on offer include Chilean, James’s and Andean Flamingos, Giant Coot, Andean Goose, Mountain Caracara, Puna Ibis, the stylish Andean Avocet, Puna Teal, Andean Gull, the uncommon Puna Plover and, if luck is on our side, even Puna Tinamou. Other water bodies in the surrounding...
area could yield Grey-breasted Seedsnipe, White-tufted and Silvery Grebes, Giant Coot and the difficult but spectacular Horned Coot.

**Day 10: La Quiaca area.** We will spend the day birding around the scenic La Quiaca area, where we will find typical Altiplano habitat and see the local people’s humble adobe houses. These are usually isolated from predators with elaborate rockwork fences, painstakingly constructed to secure their herds of sheep and llamas. Some targets in this area include Puna Canastero, bright Citron-headed Yellow Finch, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Black-fronted Ground Tyrant, Straight-billed and Buff-breasted Earthcreeper, eye-catching Red-backed Sierra Finch and Wedge-tailed Hillstar. We will also keep our eyes peeled for herds of Vicuña, a wild relative of the domesticated Llama.

**Day 11: La Quiaca to Joaquín V. González.** We have a long drive ahead of us today, heading back down the Quebrada de Humahuaca to the town of Joaquín V. González. Once out of the Andean foothills, the habitat changes dramatically, becoming dry and thorny - the dry Chaco. While most of the day is set aside to travel, we will make the odd stop along the way for Greater Rhea, Black-legged Seriema, Chaco Puffbird, Lark-like Brushrunner, Little Thornbird, Brown Cacholote and Spot-winged Falconet, to name just a handful. After a long drive, we will then settle down for a two-night stay.

**Day 12: Joaquín V. González area.** We will spend the entire day birding in and around the town of J.V. González. Large tracts of the Chaco have sadly been felled here to make way for agriculture, but fortunately, there are still some easily accessible patches to be found. Alongside more common species such as Blue-crowned Parakeet and Eared Dove, we will be searching for a number of trickier skulkers including Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Crested Gallito and Stripe-backed Antbird. Other species that could put in an appearance include Brushland and Quebracho Crested Tinamous, Savanna Hawk, Chaco Chachalaca, Blue-fronted Amazon, Blue-tufted Starthroat, Pale-crested and Checkered Woodpeckers, Chaco Earthcreeper, Crested Gallito, Rufous and Crested Horneros, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, White Monjita and Many-colored Chaco Finch, amongst numerous others. We will also spend a few hours looking for nocturnal denizens, which might include Spectacled Owl, Little Nightjar and Common Potoo.

**Day 13: Joaquín V. González to San Lorenzo.** After breakfast this morning, we have most of the morning to search the dense stocks of surrounding Dry Chaco Forest again for any of the Chaco Specialities that we may not have seen yet. Otherwise, we will simply look to get better views of such species as Black-legged Seriema, Stripe-backed Antbird, Short-billed Canastero, Great Antshrike, Great Rufous and Scimitar-billed Woodcreepers, Straneck’s Tyrannulet, Solitary Cacique, Greyish Saltator,
Cinereous Tyrant, Crowned Slaty Flycatcher and up to three Woodpeckers - White-fronted, Checkered and Green-barred.

After lunch we head to San Lorenzo village, situated in the mountains surrounding the large city of Salta. We have time to rest before our flight tomorrow, or we can bird the gardens for some of the commoner species that we have probably already seen by now Sayaca Tanager, Brown-capped Whitestart, White-bellied Hummingbird, Small-billed Elaenia and Smoke-colored Pewee.

Day 14: Final departures. After breakfast we shall head to Salta Airport where the tour will conclude.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:
Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs (where applicable) and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES.

The tour price includes:
- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 for those on the Cordoba Extension and from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 14 of the main tour;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour price does not include:
- Visa fees;
- ANY flights and airport taxes (see above);
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities;
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to
ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

**IMPORTANT NOTES:**
a) Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.
b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement will have to be charged.
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and/or the designated Rockjumper leader/s at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.

**Tipping:** As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, porters and restaurants) are included on this tour. However, this does NOT include your Rockjumper leader. If, therefore, you feel that he has given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip him.

**Special Notes**
- Much of our time is spent in vehicles, as we do have to cover long distances in order to get to the best areas for birds and animals. The more luggage you pack, the less room there is in the vehicle, so it is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 8kg (+/-18lb) for hand luggage.
- Argentina has a reciprocity fee with some countries which must be paid online prior to arrival. Please consult your embassy in advance to check the most currency status.

**ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:**
The Cordoba Extension tour will depart on day 1 at noon from Cordoba City Airport, and will end here on the morning of day 6. The main tour will depart from Tucumán City Airport on day 1 at noon and conclude Salta Airport on the morning of day 14.

It is important to note that there are two airports in Buenos Aires;
1) Ministro Pistarini International Airport (IATA: EZE) and;
2) Buenos Aires – Aeroparque, also known as Jorge Newberry (IATA: AEP) which handles the domestic flights.

Both the international and domestic airports cater for internal flights within Argentina. These airports are completely separate, and the drive between them usually takes between 1 and 1½ hours. It is, therefore, essential that you confirm with your travel agent the airport code in order to be sure which airport your flights arrive at and depart from.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

**FLIGHTS:**
Ministro Pistarini International Airport, Buenos Aires (IATA: EZE) is the main port of entry for international flights into Argentina and is well serviced by all of the world’s major airlines. Martín
Miguel de Güemes International Airport, Salta (IATA: SLA), Ingeniero Aeronáutico Ambrosio L.V. Taravella International Airport, Cordoba (IATA: COR) and Teniente General Benjamín Matienzo International Airport, San Miguel de Tucumán (IATA: TUC) are all well connected via Buenos Aires airport. Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.