



Summary of the NAOC VI Meeting in Washington DC

In August 2016, the Association of Field Ornithologists held its Annual Meeting as part of the 6th North American Ornithological Conference (NAOC VI), hosted by the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. The meeting was a huge success, attracting over 2,000 attendees from over 40 countries making it the largest-ever ornithological meeting in North America! The meeting's theme, "Bringing Science and Conservation Together", was echoed in many of the 1,400+ presentations given throughout the conference.

Highlights from the program included four plenary talks: "Physiology at the Extreme: From Ocean Depths to Mountain Peaks Among the Stars" given by Dr. Jessica U. Meir (NASA); "Nomads, Pioneers and Fugitives: On the Move in a Capricious World" by Dr. John Wingfield (University of

California, Davis); "Desafíos para Conservar las Aves Cubanas: Lessons from Cuban Waterbirds" by Dr. Lourdes Mugica Valdés (University of Havana); and "Exploring the Sexual Phenotype" by Mike Webster (Cornell University). Attendees were also treated to a variety of special events including early-morning bird walks, the annual quiz bowl, a southern barbeque at the National

Zoo, and the annual Bird Jam and Poetry Slam with musical performances from a variety of talented ornithologists including AFO's former treasurer, Greg Shriver!

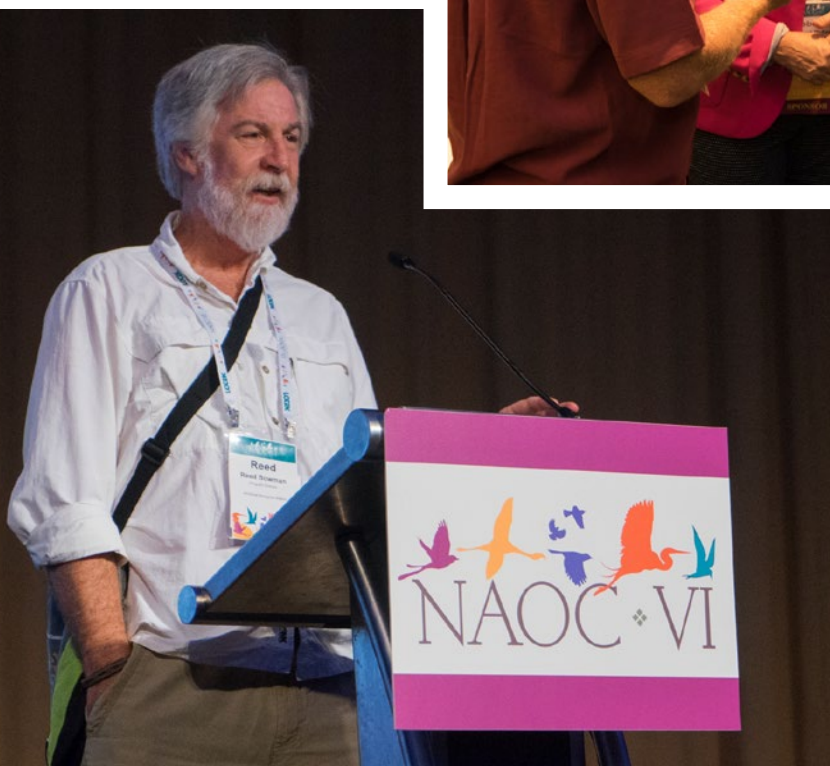
AFO Student Presentation Awards were given to Glenn Seeholze, Louisiana State University, for his talk "Complex patterns of population divergence underly dramatic phenotypic cline in an Andean songbird", and to Santiago David, University of British Columbia, for his talk "Structure and coexistence in a highly diverse community of Amazonian antbirds (Thamnophilidae: Aves)". The Best Student Publication Award in *The Journal of Field Ornithology* was presented to Kristen G. Dillon, University of Arizona, for her paper (with coauthor Courtney J. Conway) "Elevational gradient in clutch size of Red-faced Warblers". Bergstrom Research Awards were presented to Daniel Pascual

Cáceres Apaza, Universidad Nacional de Cuyo; Emiliano Agustín Depino, Universidad Nacional de Tucumán; Cristian Andrés Gorosito, Centro de Investigación Esquel de Montaña y Estepa Patagónica; Fernando Henrique



Provided by NAOC (2)

Left: Reed Bowman, (Immediate Past President of AFO) representing AFO at the NAOC, August 2016. Above: Patrick Keenan (Avian Research Supplies), right, talks with Greg Shriver (AFO), left, and Deb McKew (ARS) at the NAOC, August 2016.

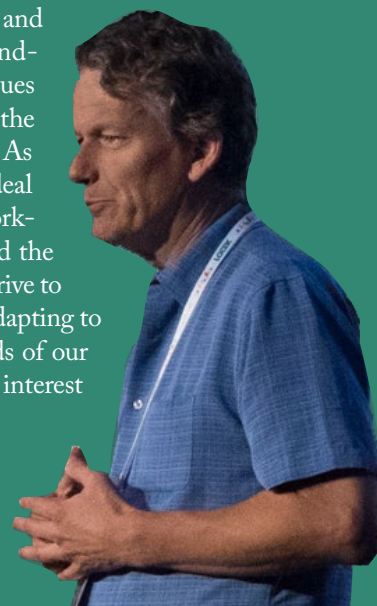


Message from the President

Over the years, the Association of Field Ornithologists has benefitted greatly from the leadership of its Presidents and the dedication of its Officers and Councilors. These individuals have worked hard to make AFO an organized and financially stable society, one that continues to serve its diverse membership and the science of Ornithology, and one that is adaptable and more likely to continue to succeed. An essential priority of the AFO is to stay relevant to its members, including students, amateur biologists, early-career professionals, and established professionals. We have a history of providing grants and travel awards to students in both the U.S./Canada and Latin America. We offer travel awards that help early-career professionals, who often have little to no support for travel. Through the leadership of Editor Gary Ritchison, the *Journal of Field Ornithology* is an excellent venue for avian research, and currently ranks 4th in impact among 24 ornithological journals world-wide. We continue to support the practice of bird banding, a long-term function of the AFO, by working with the North America Banding Council to support the training of bird banders, both here and in Latin America. Finally, we have adopted a new business model that will incorporate increased revenues to support our activities, making us less reliant on membership income. This

has been a multi-year process, which ultimately involved the bold decision by the AFO Council to purchase Avinet of Dryden, New York in November 2016 (see press release below). This represents an expansion of AFO's long-term commitment to provide mistnets and other equipment to bird banders, an activity that AFO pursues through its partnership with the Biodiversity Research Institute. As you can see, there is a great deal happening with the AFO. Working with AFO Councilors and the Executive Committee, I will strive to keep AFO moving forward, adapting to change, and meeting the needs of our society. Many thanks for your interest and support of the AFO!

*Paul Rodewald,
AFO President*



Provided by NAOO

The Association of Field Ornithologists Votes to Pursue The Purchase of Avinet, Inc. An Ornithological Supplies Company

Washington, D.C.—For the past two years, the Association of Field Ornithologists (AFO) has negotiated the purchase of Avinet, Inc., a supplier of specialized equipment for field biologists. The final acquisition was approved by AFO's Council at their annual meeting in August and as of 15 November, the deal was finalized. Avinet is in the process of being merged with Avian Research Supplies (ARS), AFO's existing retail business, which is managed by Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI), of Portland, Maine.

"The purchase of Avinet will bring new opportunities to advance product offerings and provide a key service to the ornithological community" says Reed Bowman, Ph.D., Immediate Past President of AFO. "A key goal is to continue to support bird research throughout the Americas by providing the highest quality mist nets and research tools for field biologists." The acquisition will also enable ARS to expand their offering to bat researchers.

BRI will manage the combined business from its headquarters in Maine, in partnership with AFO. "We are excited to be able to provide this important service to field researchers," says David Evers, Ph.D., BRI's Executive Director and Chief Scientist. "BRI and AFO are mutually committed to further supporting the next generation of researchers and conservationists through training opportunities and workshops focused on developing field skills and knowledge."

Proceeds from the business will continue to support AFO's mission, providing grants for students and researchers from throughout North and South America, including the Alexander Skutch Award, the E. Alexander

Bergstrom Memorial Research Award, and travel awards for students to attend conferences. "During a time when academic societies are losing members and revenue, the purchase of Avinet will provide an alternative business model for our society, enabling us to expand services to our members, retain and attract more members, and ensure the long-term health of AFO" says Bowman.

AFO's Avian Research Supplies business was established by E. Alexander Bergstrom during the 1950s to support ornithological research in participation with the U.S. Geological Survey's Bird Banding Lab. Since its inception, ARS has grown to offer a broad suite of products for use in the field. The purchase of Avinet, Inc. provides AFO with the capacity to complement imported Japanese mist nets with American made mist nets and custom-made nets. Avinet, Inc. also markets mist nets for use in bat capture surveys—an area of increased research need given heightened conservation concern for bat populations.



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Greg Shriver (AFO) manning the AFO booth at the NAOC, August 2016

Teófilo de Abreu, Instituto Nacional de Pesquisas da Amazônia; Alejandro Alberto Schaaf, Universidad Nacional de Salta; Clayton Delancey, Ball State University; Elizabeth Ames, Ohio State University; Katie Schroeder, East Carolina University; James Wright, Ohio State University; Lee Bryant, Arkansas State University. A Pamela L. and Alexander F. Skutch Fund Research Award was given to Renata Biancalana, Mackenzie Presbyterian University, to study cypseloidine swifts in Brazil. Congratulations to all who received AFO awards!

At our annual member's business meeting held during the NAOC VI, the following AFO officers were elected: Paul Rodewald (President), Daniel Ardia (Vice President), Dale Gawlik (Secretary), and Scott Sutcliffe (Treasurer). Robert Aldredge, and Ian Ausprey were elected as new members to the AFO Council (Class of 2019), and Matthew Shumar, Julie Jedlicka, and Daniel Cristol were elected as returning members. Here is some more information about our two new AFO Council members:

Rob Aldredge

Dr. Robert Aldredge is a U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service liaison for Avon Park Air Force Range (APAFR) in south-central Florida. His M.S. and Ph.D.



Rob Aldredge

research focused on understanding the causes and consequences of incubation behavior for offspring growth and survival in birds, and his post-doctoral research examined sources of variation in demography of three threatened and endangered bird species at APAFR. Dr. Aldredge works with the U.S. Air Force to promote military training and mission flexibility, while aiding the recovery of threatened and endangered species on and around the military land. Species monitored at APAFR include the Florida Scrub-Jay, Red-cockaded Woodpecker, Florida Grasshopper Sparrow, Northern Crested Caracara, Everglade Snail Kite, Bald Eagle, and Wood Stork, as well as one endangered bat, a threatened snake, and two endangered plants.

Ian Ausprey

Ian is a doctoral student at the University of Florida, Florida Museum of Natural History. His dissertation research explores the patterns and processes shaping avian community assembly in fragmented high-elevation cloud forests of the Peruvian Andes. Much of his work is based in rural campesino communities where he communicates his science via environmental

education and outreach programs. Ian has participated in avian field research throughout the United States and Latin America, including stints in Mexico, Costa Rica, Honduras, El Salvador, Venezuela, Colombia, and Peru. His M.S. research (2010) examined avian post-fledging ecology in urban landscapes. He then worked with Klamath Bird Observatory as a Research Biologist, conducting analyses



Ian Ausprey

of bird distributions to inform land management and collaborating with governmental partners to develop the bird-monitoring component of the Trinity River Restoration Project in northern California. Ian is Chair of the Evaluation Committee of the North American Banding Council, where he develops policies for NABC's professional certification program. He is currently facilitating a small grants initiative funded by AFO that supports Latin American and Caribbean biologists seeking to obtain NABC certification. He has trained or certified over 120 biologists in bird banding techniques during workshops in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, El Salvador, and Peru.

Provided by NAOC

Provided by Rob Aldredge

Provided by Ian Ausprey

Pamela L. and Alexander F. Skutch Research Award: Interviews with Past Recipients—Part 2

In the August 2016 issue of *AFO Afield*, we provided highlights of important research funded through the Skutch Award from three former recipients: Sandra Victoria Rojas Nossa (2003), Ursula Valdez (2006), and Gustavo Londoño (2010). The Fund provides up to \$10,000 annually, supporting research into the life histories, especially social relations and reproduction, of little known birds of the Neotropics. Since 2002, a total of \$150,000 has been awarded to 16 ornithologists conducting research on a wide variety of Neotropical species. Here, we provide the second installment of our report highlighting the amazing breadth of research that has been supported by the Skutch Award. We showcase research of three recipients: Harold Greeney (2005), Noemi Esther Huanca Llanos (2009), and Renata Biancalana (2015).

Harold Greeney (2005), Yanayacu Biological Station, Ecuador

The behavior and reproductive biology of little known montane passerines in eastern Ecuador.

Tell us about your research funded by the Skutch Award

I focused on the breeding biology and natural history of montane passerines in Ecuador. In particular, I focused on several species whose breeding biology was poorly known, were (are) of conservation priority,

or were species that were useful for drawing future attention to the area. Using basic field observations and remote video equipment, I found and monitored nests, describing basic aspects of their reproductive biology. Many of these videos are now archived with the Cornell Lab of Ornithology.

What were the major findings of your research?

I described basic aspects of avian biology, ecology, and behavior for a wide range of species. Very little was known before my research. Yet, despite copious additions via this project, we still need more!

What impact has your research had to date?

My research funded by the Skutch Award resulted in 43 publications in peer-reviewed scientific journals. Twenty-eight provided first descriptions of nests in the scientific literature. The results of the study were summarized in the *Journal of Field Ornithology* (Greeney, H. F., R. C. Dobbs, P. R. Martin & R. A. Gelis. 2008. The breeding biology of *Grallaria* and *Grallaricula* antpittas. *JFO* 79:113–129).

What is your current job title and where are you based?

I am a researcher at the University of Arizona, Tucson supported through a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship. I am studying the

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Banding an Immaculate Antbird by Wilfrido Vaca; Banded Orange-billed Sparrow by Wilfrido Vaca; Measuring wing of Broad-billed Motmot by Nelson Wan.

Biodiversity Research Institute (BRI) is the agent for the AFO's supply company **Avian Research Supplies**. We provide the highest quality mist nets, and bird banding tools and supplies to field ornithologists.

Proceeds support research grants for students, amateurs, and Latin American researchers.



www.avianresearchsupplies.org
www.avinet.com



Skutch Research Award: Interviews with Past Recipients—Part 2

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natural history of the Cordilleran Flycatcher and the nesting associations formed between Black-chinned Hummingbirds and Accipiter hawks. I am also finishing a scholarly guide (ca. 600 pages) to the antpittas, gnateaters, and anthrushes and am beginning work on a guide to the nests and eggs of Ecuadorian birds as part of my fellowship—this will be the first of its kind for any Neotropical country.

Tell us about one of your most memorable ornithological fieldwork moments

In Ecuador, while working alone, far from the nearest dwellings, I climbed out onto a slippery cliff face to measure the eggs of a Barred Hawk. The access point collapsed and I was trapped there for several hours before I got the courage to jump 10 meters down into the pool of a massive waterfall!

Noemi Esther Huanca Llanos (2009), Asociación Armonía, Cochabamba, Bolivia

Breeding biology and habitat use of the endangered endemic Cochabamba Mountain-Finch (*Poospiza garleppi*)

Tell us about your research funded by the Skutch Award

My research focused on the breeding biology and habitat use of the Cochabamba Mountain-Finch. The study was not straightforward because the bird is rare and difficult to find in the barren landscape where it lives and under the unpredictable weather conditions that I encountered. However, my experiences, in addition to the help from my team, allowed my research to be successful! During my research, I found and described the first nest of this species and made the first song recording during the breeding season. I learned a lot about the study area, as well as how to communicate with local people in their native language (Quechua). Despite my study, there are still many steps to take in order to conserve the Cochabamba Mountain-Finch.

What were the major findings of your research?

My team and I shed light on the habitat use of the Cochabamba Mountain-Finch during the breeding season. Specifically, the study provided insight into the territory usage and nesting ecology of this species. Importantly, these results have implications for the conservation and habitat management for the Cochabamba Mountain-Finch.

What impact has your research had to date?

My team and I have used the knowledge gained through my studies to raise the awareness of the local community about conservation and sustainable land-use. We were also able to teach environmental education using our fieldwork experiences in local schools. As a result of these outreach efforts (also aided through funds from the Conservation

Leadership Program), the Province of Quillacollo decided to use the Cochabamba Mountain-Finch as an emblem and dedicate itself as a sanctuary for this species of conservation concern. Results from my study have been presented at numerous conferences including the XXV International Ornithological Congress, Brazil (2010), the IX Neotropical Ornithological Congress, Peru (2011), and the XXV International Congress for Conservation Biology, New Zealand (2011). My research has also been covered in several newspaper articles.

What is your current job title and where are you based?

Currently, I am on maternity leave and living in Germany! Together with my husband who is also an ornithologist, I plan to stimulate additional conservation efforts for the Cochabamba Mountain-Finch. I am keen to support and collaborate with the local communities in Cochabamba in order to sustain current efforts focused on conservation awareness and environmental education.

Tell us about one of your most memorable ornithological fieldwork moments.

One of the most memorable moments included birdwatching with local children who always asked me for binoculars so that they could study birds. Because I was studying 'Poospiza garleppi', they called me 'Noemí Poospizita'—every time I visited the local community, they would greet me with 'Hola Noemí Poospizita!' Listening to them and learning how much respect they had for the birds was very rewarding and helped me continue with the arduous fieldwork!



Cochabamba Mountain-Finch

Dubi Shapiro

Renata Biancalana (2015), Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, Brazil

Breeding biology of the Sooty Swift (*Cypseloides fumigatus*) and White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) in southeastern Brazil

Tell us about your research funded by the Skutch Award

My research funded through the Skutch Award is based at Intervales State Park in the state of São Paulo. It uses focal observations and bird banding to study Sooty Swifts. In 2012, I began a study focusing on the breeding biology of this species at Intervales using a population that has bred at the site for more than a decade. In the same year, I noticed that White-collared Swifts also nested in the same waterfall and in a nearby cave. Other *Cypseloides* species, including the North American Black Swift (*Cypseloides niger*) are known to return to the same waterfalls during consecutive years. However, it is unclear if Sooty Swifts and White-collared Swifts do the same. To address this question, I am taking a mark-recapture approach using bird banding. My research started in 2015 and is currently in progress. During the first field season, my assistants and I banded more than 70 swifts, including both adults and nestlings. The success of my project depends on the help of local field guides and the local community who keep me up to date with field conditions, touristic activities, and who help

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Skutch Research Award: Interviews with Past Recipients—Part 2

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monitor nestling development. I provide them with new information and training techniques so that they can help other researchers.

What were the major findings of your research?

To date, my research has provided new information about my focal species. For example, we know that the breeding period of Sooty Swifts is very long, lasting more than 100 days from nest construction to fledging. My research has shown that the breeding period can take even longer under certain environmental conditions—in the 2013/2014 season the breeding activity at one waterfall at my study site was 8 months long (Oct–May!). My research has also shown that White-collared Swifts and Sooty Swifts are sensitive to human disturbance and may dump their eggs when disturbed, that White-collared Swifts do not have a second or third breeding attempt like Sooty Swifts, and that White-collared Swifts nestlings are competitive with siblings within the nest. I also documented the second case of a 3-egg clutch for White-collared Swifts in Brazil, that Sooty Swift adults are the first to leave their roosting site before noon and the last ones to arrive at night, that nestling feeding occurs at night, and that both parents incubate.

Tell us about the impact of your research

Few ornithologists around the world specialize on swifts. Before my work there were few reports about the distribution and breeding biology of Sooty Swifts and none about White-collared Swifts. Because of my research, we now know about nestling development in both species, threats to their habitat and breeding sites, and we are beginning to understand more about their genetics, mating systems, and diet. My research has resulted in a number of peer-reviewed journal articles, and more are in preparation. In addition, I have presented my research at numerous scientific conferences, and am preparing a field course for the field guides at Intervalles State Park.

What is your current job title and where are you based?

I'm currently a full time student within the Master of Science program in Evolution and Diversity at the Universidade Federal do ABC, in Santo André, São Paulo, Brazil. I work in the Evolution and Diversity Lab II at the UFABC and at field sites in the states of São Paulo and Tocantins. I'm currently analyzing biological samples collected as part of my research including blood samples, feathers, and dietary items.

Tell us about one of your most memorable ornithological fieldwork moments

My most memorable moment was the first time I saw a Sooty Swift nestling in 2010. At that time, I was not an ornithologist and had just discovered the breeding colony of a very uncommon bird. It was my second visit to a dark canyon in a remote region of the state of Tocantins. The nests were very high and there were no birds present, just gray fluffy mold. When I shone my flashlight on a nest, my guide said "I think the mold moved...". I was skeptical. However, I looked in a nest that was lower to the ground and I saw the sweetest thing I had ever seen—a baby swift with its big black and blue eyes staring at me. I think that was when I decided to dedicate my studies to these mysterious birds.

White-collared Swift
(*Streptoprocne zonaris*)



Provided by Renata Biancalana (2)

Renata Biancalana recipient of Pamela L. and Alexander F. Skutch Research Award (2015).

Interested in Applying for the Skutch Award?

The AFO welcomes applications from amateur or professional ornithologists of any nationality proposing field-based research on Neotropical birds. Preference is given to applicants with previous experience in the Neotropics and the species involved in the proposed study. Applicants and/or their primary supervisor must be a member of the AFO to be eligible for the award. Preference will be given to proposals that are expected to result in peer-reviewed research publications and to applicants based in Neotropical countries. The deadline for the receipt of applications for the 2017 award is 15 July. Please see the AFO website for further details: afonet.org/wp_english/grants-awards/skutch-award.



Ornithological Congress of the Americas, Puerto Iguazú, Argentina 2017

We are excited to invite AFO members and non-members alike to our annual meeting which will be held as part of the Ornithological Congress of the Americas in Puerto Iguazú, Misiones, Argentina from 8–11 August 2017. The congress is a joint meeting of the AFO, the Sociedade Brasileira de Ornitologia, and Aves Argentinas, and will bring together ornithologists working on many aspects of bird biology from across the Americas. The meeting will be held at the Amérián Portal del Iguazú Hotel situated at the confluence of the Iguazú and Parana rivers. Located near the intersection of Brazil, Argentina, and Paraguay—the venue is the perfect place for an international meeting!

Congress Program

The program is filling up fast and will feature numerous workshops, symposia, and field trips, and will include over 350 scientific presentations. Workshops and field trips will be held on 7–8 August and 12–13 August. In addition, we are ecstatic to announce that we will be hosting 7 internationally renowned ornithologists as plenary speakers:

Patricia Brennan (Mount Holyoke College, U.S.)—"Genital evolution in birds; losing the penis and winning the battle"

Cristina Miyaki (Universidade de São Paulo, Brazil)—"Phylogeography of birds: Revealing the biogeographical history of the Atlantic Forest"

Sergio Lambertucci (CONICET-Universidad Nacional del Comahue, Argentina)—"Sharing the air with wildlife: Patterns, processes and conservation in 3D"

John Fitzpatrick (Cornell Lab of Ornithology, U.S.)—"Emerging roles for citizen science in understanding bird distributions and in conservation"

Scott Edwards (Harvard University, U.S.)—"Genomic drivers of evolutionary change: micro- and macroevolutionary examples across the avian tree of life"

Thomas Martin (University of Montana, U.S.)—"On the importance of studying natural history while thinking about evolutionary ecology theory and physiology principles to advance understanding of life history variation"

Miguel Marini (Universidade de Brasília, Brazil)—"Climate change and Neotropical birds: Current knowledge and gaps."

The Surrounding Area and Field Trips

The setting for the conference is a naturalist's dream! The surrounding area boasts many attractions including the world renowned Iguazú Falls and Iguazú National Park. Over 500 species of birds have been recorded, including many Atlantic Forest endemics like the Blue

Manakin, the emblem of the Congress. As part of the meeting, there will be daily early-morning bird walks and field trips before and after the conference to allow participants to experience the natural wonders of the region! To date, two conference-associated field trips (described below) have been announced—check the conference website for other conference trips, and contact information and websites for 5 additional nature tour companies that operate in the area.

Yacutinga Lodge

Pre- and post-Congress trips are available to Yacutinga Lodge, located on the Yacutinga Private Reserve, Argentina about 60 miles from the conference venue. Activities during the 2-night trip include bird watching, a lecture offered by Jorge Escobar, owling, and rights to enter the Yacutinga Private Reserve.

The reserve is situated deep in the Misiones jungle, is part of the Interior Atlantic Rainforest ecoregion, and is surrounded by the Iguazú River. The climate is subtropical year-round (i.e. warm and humid!) and the area is considered the most biodiverse in Argentina, providing habitat for over 320 bird species.

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Jennifer Smith

Iguazú Falls, Argentina



Ornithological Congress of the Americas 2017

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The preserve offers numerous habitats each supporting a wide range of species:

- ♦ The highest stratum of the forest (up to 30 meters in height), provides habitat for Rufous-thighed Kite, Rusty-margined Guan, White-eyed Parakeet, Reddish-bellied Parakeet, Spot-billed Toucanet, Saffron Toucanet, and White-necked Puffbird.
- ♦ The intermediate stratum of the forest provides habitat for Black-throated Trogon, Surucua Trogon, Rufous Marmot, Blond-crested Woodpecker, and Plain-winged Woodcreeper.
- ♦ The grasslands and plantations provide habitat for Tataupa Tinamou, Small-billed Tinamou, Plumbeous Kite, and Striped Cuckoo.
- ♦ The reserve's marshes provide opportunities to see Limpkin, Muscovy Duck, Green Ibis, Everglades Kite, and Wattled Jacana, while Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Sungrebes, Greater Ani, and Swallow-tailed Manakin can be seen along streams.
- ♦ Numerous owl species are present, including Black-banded Owl, Rusty Barred Owl, Mottled Owl, Tropical Screech Owl, and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl.
- ♦ The reserve also supports a wide range of other flora and fauna, including endangered mammal species like tapir, jaguar, and ocelot!

Surucua Reserve & Ec lodge

A pre-congress trip will be offered to the Surucua Reserve & Ec lodge, located in the



Iguazú Falls, Argentina

Jennifer Smith

Argentinian Parana Atlantic Forest (also known as the Paranaense Rainforest), an area easily accessible from the conference hotel (~70 km from Iguazú Falls). The 120-hectare site is characterized by its rich biodiversity, palm plantations, Palo Rosa trees, and the Iguazú River. The 1-night trip will focus on birdwatching along the hiking trails to the coast of the Iguazú River, but will also provide opportunities for nature photography, and viewing a wide range of flora and fauna including moths, butterflies, native orchids, and insects. Birds that visitors may see include White-bearded and Band-tailed Manakins, Ornate

Hawk-Eagle and Gray-headed Kite, Saffron Toucanet, Spot-billed Toucanet, Barred Antshrike, and Black-capped Screech-Owl. Visitors can also participate in an unforgettable crossing of the Iguazú River by kayak, and will long remember the fresh homemade food featuring a variety of the region's best flavors.

Important Dates

For more information about the Congress and how to register, please visit the Congress website: www.afonet.org/2017iguazu/site. Also, follow the official Twitter account of the Congress @rao_cbo_2017 for announcements!

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JENNIFER SMITH

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ANNE MARIE JOHNSON

Masthead Illustration

JULIE ZICKEFOOSE

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