

BORDERLAND TOURS NEWS

COLORS, IMPRESSIONS, AND COMMENT FROM THE WORLD OF BIRDS

2875 W. Hilltop Road • Portal, Arizona 85632 • 520-558-2351 • Email: info@borderland-tours.com



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THE BORDERLAND PHOTO ALBUM

FRONT COVER PHOTO: ORNATE HAWK-EAGLE, LODGE AT PICO BONITO, HONDURAS BY JOHN YERGER



BARBARA BICKEL IN THAILAND
BY RICK TAYLOR



BILL, BARBARA & LYNNE AMONG BIGTOOTH
MAPLES, CHIRICAHUA MOUNTAINS



BARBARA WITH RED-BILLED STREAMTAIL,
JAMAICA, BY RICK TAYLOR



BLACK-CRESTED COQUETTE, HONDURAS
BY JOHN YERGER



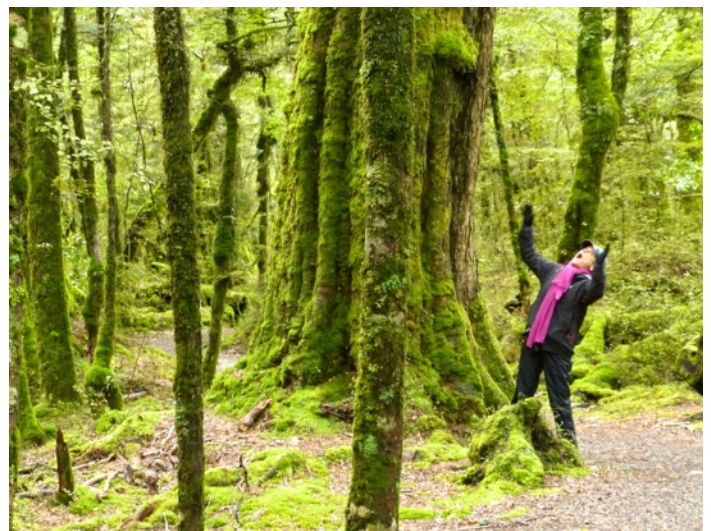
JAMAICAN TODY AT MARSHALL'S PEN
BY RICK TAYLOR



VIOLET SABREWING, COSTA RICA
BY RICK TAYLOR



KOKAKO, NEW ZEALAND
BY RICK TAYLOR



ANCIENT SOUTHERN BEECH MEETS STEFANIE: NEW ZEALAND
BY RICK TAYLOR

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FROM RICK'S DESK: ABOUT BARBARA BICKEL

The big news at Borderland in 2015 was NOT Rick Taylor's Retirement. Rick did NOT retire. He moved. More on that story in Staff Notes. The big news here was Barbara Bickel's Retirement. And even that needs an asterisk.

Barbara started at Borderland Tours in 1993 when she entered nearly half of Rick's bird sightings—over 50,000 data points—onto a bird listing program. The idea was to enable Rick and other Borderland guides to access a likely list of avifauna at a given location—Monteverde in Costa Rica, for example—with a few quick key strokes. Nowadays, of course, an eBird "Hotspot" provides much the same data from a mosaic of observers, but at the time it was cutting edge technology.

Within weeks it became apparent that Barbara was much more than a gifted typist and a great friend who on occasion brought in news clippings or chocolate chip cookies. It became obvious that Barbara was adept at organizing tasks, answering the phone courteously and personalizing information, and that she actually cared about the people that belong to the greater Borderland family. It wasn't long before people were calling up and asking for Barbara. It fell to Rick to enter his own sightings into that database.

Over the next 21 years Barbara was instrumental in developing new programs to new countries and streamlining old itineraries. She joined many maiden tour offerings, and she always assisted the leaders, even though she frequently protested she was "just a participant." Not long after Barbara joined Borderland, Lynne Taylor and Barbara invented a position that I called the "Tactical and Logistics support staff." T & L. Basically that meant that on Arizona, New Mexico, and Texas tours one of them drove a vehicle stuffed to the gills with everyone's baggage, as well as other supplies. They drove ahead of the tour vans, pre-checked the group into our accommodations, and deposited the bags into everyone's respective rooms. When we arrived at our hotel we were met with a smile and our keys. Barbara and Lynne chose to call themselves the "Borderland Bag Ladies."

Hundreds of you who ventured to Big Bend or SE Arizona with Barbara as co-leader recognize that Barbara also has formidable birding skills. As likely as not, Barbara was the one that found the Montezuma Quail for the group. In Switzerland where she led our Borderland tours, usually it was Barbara that spotted the Wallcreeper. More importantly, Barbara had an endless supply of encouraging words and unlimited enthusiasm for the chase.

Now the asterisk. Barbara no longer reports to Borderland's office at 9 a.m. weekdays. However, she and Bill have a cottage 200 yards upstream from Borderland's new home in the Chiricahua Mountains. Like us she can look out her kitchen window and see Wild Turkeys, Javelina, and White-tailed Deer—and Blue-throated and Magnificent Hummers at her feeders. Barbara and Bill usually divide their weeks between Tucson and Whitetail Canyon. We exploit her proximity with cavalier disregard for her hard-won freedom. If we have something for the printer—150 miles away in Tucson—we ask Barbara. If we need something still stashed in the Tucson office, we ask Barbara to bring it out on her next trip to Whitetail. Some weeks we are in daily contact with Barbara, often to decide whether dinner is at the Bickels' or at the Taylors', often on Borderland business.

In short there will never be another friend to Borderland Tours like Barbara Bickel.



Rick Taylor
Director

WHERE IN THE WORLD ARE YOU GOING?

Are you dismayed that the birding destination of your dreams isn't featured in this newsletter OR in this year's brochure? So are we! Borderland Tours has organized trips to all 7 continents over the span of four decades. We have also custom-designed tours for a large number of birding clubs, Audubon Society chapters, and groups of friends over the years. Unfortunately, we are not clairvoyant. Please tell us: where would you or your group like to travel next?

- Alaska
- Argentina
- Arizona
- Australia & Tasmania
- Barranca del Cobre
- Belize
- Bolivia
- Brazil
- Chiapas, Mexico
- Chile
- Colima/Jalisco, Mexico
- Colombia
- Costa Rica
- Cuba
- Dominican Republic
- Ecuador
- England & Scotland
- Falkland Islands
- Florida
- Galápagos Islands
- Honduras
- Iguazú Falls
- Jamaica
- Kenya
- Madagascar
- Maine
- New Mexico
- New Zealand
- Oaxaca, Mexico
- Panama
- Peru
- Puerto Rico
- San Blas, Mexico
- Shetland Islands
- Sonora, Mexico
- South Africa
- Spain
- Switzerland
- Texas
- Thailand
- Trinidad & Tobago
- Uganda
- Veracruz, Mexico
- Yucatán Peninsula

We can do more—Antarctica, India, Morocco (just check our online photo galleries)—but we can do less! For example, Borderland breaks Alaska into three components: the Pribilof Islands, Denali and the Kenai Peninsula, and Nome and Barrow. Similarly, Texas is best served in three portions: East Texas, Coastal Lowlands and Piney Woods; South Texas, Rio Grande Valley and the Edwards Plateau; and West Texas: Big Bend and the Davis Mountains. Countries the size of Australia and Brazil are simply too enormous to encompass in a single itinerary. In addition to Arizona's famed SE corner, we offer tours to the "West Coast" along the Colorado River, and to "Alpine, Arizona," focusing on the boreal specialties of the state's central highlands. We even offer tours that focus exclusively on the Chiricahua Mountains. If you have a location you'd like to go, or if you have a club or group of friends with whom you'd like to bird, let Borderland create an itinerary that perfectly suits your needs.

READY TO TRAVEL NOW!

(These tours are guaranteed departures)

- The airfare is purchased... **Jamaica** is on, April 7–15! Rick Taylor teams up once again with Ann Sutton, author of the highly-regarded photo field guide "Birds of Jamaica." This laid-back excursion is likely to encounter all of the 27 bird species endemic to this scenic island in the heart of the Caribbean.
- Owling in **Southeastern Arizona**, May 11–15, is simply unbeatable. And while nocturnal specialties may be the focus of this condensed version of our longer spring tour, we won't ignore the daytime birds that make this region world-famous. Elegant Trogon, Red-faced Warbler, and Blue-throated Hummingbird are just a few names to whet a birder's appetite. Leader: John Yerger.
- Acadia National Park is just one famous locale we'll visit this year in **Maine**, June 21–28. Aside from Puffins and Murres, we'll sample a suite of Eastern warblers from Black-throated Blue to Bay-Breasted. John Yerger leads to this under-birded gem of the northeastern United States.
- By popular request, we have revived our **Brazil** tour, October 15–28, with an extension to **Iguazú Falls**, Oct. 28-31. Last time out we saw 7 Jaguars! Our guides are Rick Taylor and native Argentinian Miguel Castelino, formerly the chief biologist for the Park and a life-long resident of Iguazú.

FEATURED TOURS

(A few of our favorites)

- This year's trip to **Costa Rica**, July 1-13, is limited to 6 participants, but at press time we still have several slots open. Visiting this ecological crown jewel of Central America in the *veranillo* ("little summer" in Spanish) was a trick only seasoned travelers once knew. While more birders are now aware of the phenomenon, it is still a low season for tourism in general. Aside from fewer people, the appeal of July in Costa Rica is that the weather typically takes a turn for far more pleasant conditions: cooler, less humid, and minus the constant winds of winter and spring. Combine that with incredible birding – think 30 hummingbirds, Resplendant Quetzals, and Flame-throated Warblers – and you'll understand the allure of lush, green, summertime Costa Rica..
- We're excited to return to **New Zealand**, January 12–31, 2017. This island nation has long been famous for its breathtaking scenery, but strange endemic birds with names like Kea, Kokako, Tui and Takahe only add to the draw. And, naturally, we won't ignore the most famous inhabitant of these emerald isles, the incomparable Kiwi. John Yerger teams up with a local "Kiwi" guide—as the locals call themselves—on this comfortable excursion to the fabled islands featured in the film version of "Lord of the Rings."

STAFF NOTES

JOHN YERGER and wife **MORGAN JACKSON** are thoroughly enjoying the antics of their one-year old baby boy, Benjamin. They are all living contentedly in the strawbale house that is nearly complete. Benjamin recently made quite a few friends amongst the staff at the Lodge at Pico Bonito in Honduras.

Newly and—ecstatically—retired **BARBARA BICKEL** and her husband Bill are savoring the birds and wildlife at their second home in Whitetail Canyon, just upstream from Rick and Lynne.

In 2015 **RICK AND LYNNE TAYLOR** moved to their “new” old home in Whitetail Canyon. Originally a miner’s shack in the Hilltop Mines silver boom, there is still a rock incorporated into the front stone wall etched with the date 1898. Wildlife galore. That’s the only way to describe the daily visits with javelina and deer, and the flock of 4 hen “Mexican” form Wild Turkeys that roost in the

leviathan sycamore trees that shade the Taylors’ roof. The Whitetail *casa* is especially good for birds. Since Rick began submitting reports to eBird 4 years ago, the Taylor home has had the largest annual yard list for Arizona. A Ruby-throated Hummingbird in September was only the the 4th state record. Altogether there were 12 species of hummingbird using the feeders in 2015, often numbering in the hundreds. Other birds include specialties like Montezuma Quail, which are daily visitors to the yard from late spring through late summer, and the family of Elf Owls that share the sycamores with the turkeys. Although Rick and Lynne were gone from March through May, altogether 147 species of birds passed through the Taylors’ yard during the 9 months in 2015 that they were home to keep track. It is slightly inconvenient to run an office from a remote Chiricahua Mountain canyon. You can probably guess why they do it. Furthermore—if ever you find yourself in the area with time on your hands—do drop by. Birders are always welcome, especially old friends from Borderland Tours!



Whitetail Canyon portraits. Above: Cici vs. Wild Turkey; Below: the Taylor’s abode in autumn (Photo: Rick Taylor).



Above: The Yerger-Jackson strawbale home in Portal (photo: John Hoffman). Below: Benjamin and Morgan in Honduras (Photo: John Yerger).



2016 BORDERLAND TOUR SCHEDULE

APRIL

JAMAICA (Small group - limited to 6 participants)

April 7–15 at \$3595 with Ann Sutton & Rick Taylor

MAY

SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA, OWLING RUN

May 11–15 at \$1595 with John Yerger

JUNE

MAINE, DOWNEAST & NORTH WOODS

June 21–28 at \$2795 with John Yerger

JULY

COSTA RICA (Small group - limited to 6 participants)

July 1–13 at \$4495 with Carlos Gomez & John Yerger

AUGUST

SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA, MONSOON DELUXE

July 31–August 7 at \$2395 with John Yerger

SOUTHEASTERN ARIZONA, HUMMINGBIRD RUN

August 17–21 at \$1595 with John Yerger

SEPTEMBER

VERACRUZ, RIVER OF RAPTORS

September 15–26 at \$3995 with Rick Taylor & John Yerger

OCTOBER

BRAZIL, PANTANAL & COASTAL CORDILLERA

October 15–28 at \$6995 with Rick Taylor

BRAZIL, IGUAZÚ EXTENSION (incl. internal airfare)

October 28–31 at \$2495 with Rick Taylor

NOVEMBER

CUBA (Sold out - stay tuned for 2017 dates)

November 5–15 at \$5495 with John Yerger

DECEMBER

CUBA (Sold out - stay tuned for 2017 dates)

December 3–13 at \$5495 with Rick Taylor

JANUARY, 2017

NEW ZEALAND

January 12–31 at \$6995 with NZ leader & John Yerger

OTHER 2017 OFFERINGS:

CUBA, CHIAPAS, HONDURAS, PANAMA, PERU

See the full 2016 Brochure, including trip descriptions, photo galleries and more, online at:

www.borderland-tours.com

To register for a tour, or to request printed materials (including travel itineraries, maps, bird checklists and previous trip reports), please contact us at:

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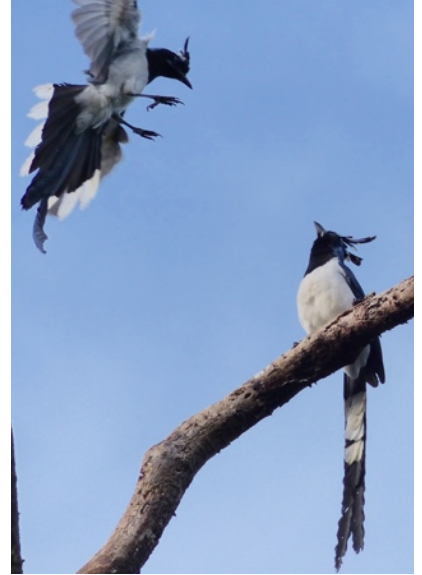
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JABIRU IN FLIGHT, BRAZILIAN PANTANAL
BY RICK TAYLOR



CREAM-COLORED WOODPECKER, IGUAZÚ
BY RICK TAYLOR



BLACK-THROATED MAGPIE-JAYS, SAN BLAS
BY RICK TAYLOR



RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD, WHITETAIL CANYON
4TH ARIZONA RECORD BY RICK TAYLOR



PANTANAL SUNSET, BRAZIL
BY RICK TAYLOR



FAMILY OF COATI, WHITETAIL CANYON, ARIZONA BY RICK TAYLOR



SAFFRON TOUCANET, BRAZIL BY RICK TAYLOR

BACK COVER PHOTO: BLUE-NAPED CHLOROPHONIA, SOUTHEAST BRAZIL BY RICK TAYLOR

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