



LEGACYLINE NEWSLETTER - DECEMBER 2017

8:07AM; Friday, December 1st, 2017

The pilot of the Cessna 208 Caravan, having completed the pre-flight checklist, methodically powers the aircraft along the runway setting in motion a flight from Cabo San Lucas, Mexico to Isla Socorro, the celebrated main island of the Revillagigedo complex that rises from the sea 300 miles off of the West Mexican Pacific coast. On board the troupe of adventurers fidget excitedly in their seats, each anticipating a remarkable 'trip of a lifetime'.

The surgeon, having prepped early in anticipation of the five-hour procedure, reviews the plan for surgery one final time, then animates his hands, deliberately leaving behind the large scope of the tasks ahead to pursue an exact focus, initiating the incision that exposes the breastbone for what is to conclude as a quintuple arterial heart bi-pass. For the patient the plane had occupied his mind for months, but on this Friday morning at 8:07AM it is the surgery that occupies his heart.

While guiding in Sri Lanka a disquieting 'alarm bell' sounded in my chest. Susan came halfway around the world to escort her ailing husband the long journey home. An angiogram revealed serious problems requiring an urgent though hugely successful surgery. Six nights later Susan and I celebrated our 27th wedding anniversary at home with a good night's sleep together in our own bed.

This year did not conclude for Legacy as planned... I left three lifers behind in Sri Lanka, another three on Isla Socorro. My family obligingly journeyed with me the full course of this scare, and now I am to put-off my birding friends during all January and much of February of 2018. However, Susan and I rejoice that the almighty saw fit to unfold daily events in a manner that allowed doctors to discover the 'unknown' before genetics took a more haunting course. I am fine, and we are happy. It should be a few months yet before I am once again at full strength.

2017 CALENDAR OF TOURS

Three years ago Legacy Tours took a booth at the colossal UK Birdfair, a three-day weekend in August attended by more than twenty-five thousand birders. Now more than half of our contracts for guiding in Mexico have come out of Europe. As result the tour availability now fills a full year in advance... **during 2018** Legacy has **one**

room (single or double) available to visit Bulgaria next May; a part of Europe closer to land than the monotypic oaks of England, manicured evergreens of Germany, or expansive grain fields of Spain. We believe this is the perfect destination in Europe for a bird watching holiday. In addition Legacy can offer **one room (single or double) for our tour to Northern Thailand next November;** a part of Asia with a comfortable climate, great food, and a lot of birds - nearly 500 species. We have long believed in the value of the island nations of Taiwan and Sri Lanka as introduction-destinations to the continent, however, if a larger number of species is a high priority than no mainland destination is easier and more enjoyable than the north of Thailand - Bangkok and Chiang Mai. ***Let us know if you would like to receive information concerning one or both of these tours.***

A recent change of client plans means Legacy can offer **a two-week window during mid-July 2018.** These days are extremely valuable for an individual or custom party (2-6 persons) with a focus on the better birds of Mexico. July is an outstanding month, particularly in the north or west of the country. Key birds like Thick-billed and Maroon-fronted parrots are seen with certainty only in this window. Owls and nightjars take advantage of the warm evenings for calling; and the numerous endemic targets can be found singing at dependable locations. ***Let us know if this unexpected window can serve as your next step to a great Mexican bird-list.***

2017 BIRD LIST

This will be only the second time in the past twenty-five years that I will not have seen at 800 species of birds in Mexico during the calendar year... 786 is the current number. My Mexico Life-List increased by one (with the split of the Baird's Junco) to 1,036 species. I have been silently cheering for my friend, and native Mexican, Jorge Montejo to surpass my total... I believe this is the year that he will do so.

THANK YOU

We have often concluded the *LegacyLine NewsLetter* with an acknowledgement of the role that you, our clients and friends, have played in the success of our programs during the past 26 years, however this season in particular, as the news of my illness and subsequent surgery slowly ripples through the birding community we find ourselves grateful in a different way... thankful for your sincere words of encouragement, your stories of personal health struggles, and your kind sharing of Legacy's role in your cherished memories and valued friendships. Thank You...

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