

Western
Carolina
UNIVERSITY | Highlands Biological
Station



HIGHLANDS
BIOLOGICAL STATION

*A Multi-Campus Center of Western Carolina University
Founded 1927*

Chile's
LAKE DISTRICT & PATAGONIA:
In Darwin's Footsteps at World's End

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 10, 2024



TORRES DEL PAINE



HIGHLANDS BIOLOGICAL STATION

This program is an invitation to explore a land of geographical and biological wonders: a visit to Chile is a boon for hikers, naturalists, nature photographers, and birders as well as devotees of the history of exploration and discovery, Darwin,

and evolution. Located along the western coast of South America, this long and narrow country spans almost half the continent from its northernmost to southernmost points, promising an abundance of natural and cultural diversity along the way. Our visit in early March is the perfect time to enjoy Chile, with pleasant temperatures expected as it transitions from summer to autumn.

A visit would not be complete without time in Santiago, Chile's vibrant capital nestled at the foot of the majestic Andes Mountains. We will begin our trip here, exploring the city's historic neighborhoods and admiring the panoramic views from Cerro San Cristóbal, soaking in the city's captivating blend of old-world charm and contemporary allure.

Chile's Lake District is a mesmerizing region of breathtaking natural beauty and picturesque landscapes. Our visit to Pucón places us

in a charming town at the foot of Villarica volcano. We will hike through a primeval forest of 1000-year old Araucaria (Monkey-puzzle) trees, float along the crystal-clear waters of Liucura Lake, and walk among Southern Beech (Lenga) trees as we ascend the volcano for a dramatic view of Villarica Lake. A guided hike to Petrohué Falls to view a succession of turquoise cascades rushing over volcanic rock is included on our way to Puerto Varas.

Next we'll explore the untamed wilderness of Patagonia, where nature's grandeur reigns supreme. After exploring along the Strait of Magellan to sites visited by Charles Darwin, we will stay at a lodge located in the heart of Torres del Paine National Park, the crown jewel of Patagonia declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1978. Among the impressive mountain peaks, we will look out for guanaco herds and rheas, flamingos, condors, foxes, geese, black-necked swans, and pumas. Lakes and lagoons in hues of blues, greens, grays and ochres abound. With ample time to explore the area, our visit will include hikes and/or a horseback ride, and time to relax and enjoy the environment.

Our trip ends back in Santiago and a private visit to Kingston Winery in the Casablanca Valley, culminating in a sumptuous farewell lunch and wine tasting.



STUDY LEADER

Your study leader is DR. JAMES (JIM) COSTA, executive director of the Highlands Biological Station and professor of biology at Western Carolina University where he teaches biogeography, Darwin's Origin of Species, and co-teaches a comparative temperate-tropical ecology field course at Highlands Biological Station and Wildsumaco

Biological Station in Ecuador. Jim has written extensively on the explorer-naturalists Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace, co-discoverers of evolution by natural selection, and has traveled in Darwin's footsteps throughout Chile multiple times. His books include *The Annotated Origin* (Harvard, 2009), *Wallace, Darwin, and the Origin of Species* (Harvard, 2014), *Darwin's Backyard: How Small*

Experiments Led to a Big Theory (Norton, 2017), and most recently the new Wallace biography *Radical by Nature: The Revolutionary Life of Alfred Russel Wallace* (Princeton, 2023) and *Darwin and the Art of Botany* (Timber, 2023). Recipient of the Wallace Medal and the Stephen Jay Gould Prize, Jim is a Trustee of the Charles Darwin Trust and has been awarded research fellowships at Harvard's Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study, the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin, the LuEsther T. Mertz Library of the NY Botanical Garden, and the DFG-Centre for Advanced Study at the University of Hamburg. For many years he co-instructed Harvard's summer program on Darwin and evolution at Oxford University, and is a long-time research associate of the Museum of Comparative Zoology at Harvard and study leader/lecturer for the Harvard Alumni Association Travel Program.



DAY 1 Tuesday, February 27

DEPART THE U.S.

Depart on overnight flights to Santiago, Chile. *MEALS ALOFT*

DAY 2 Wednesday, February 28

ARRIVE SANTIAGO, CHILE

We arrive this morning in Santiago at the foot of the Andes. Enjoy an afternoon tour featuring the highlights of South America's most modern city, including its historical center and the famed La Moneda, the Neoclassical building that houses the executive branch of Chile's government. This evening, we'll gather for a special welcome dinner. *PULLMAN EL BOSQUE HOTEL (D)*

DAY 3 Thursday, February 29

SANTIAGO / TEMUCO / PUCÓN

This morning fly to Temuco and transfer to the town of Pucón in the Chilean Lake District, a spectacular landscape of snow-capped volcanoes, rugged mountains, and endless glacial lakes creating one of the most beautiful natural areas in Chile. The region is also the seat of the Mapuche, Chile's main indigenous ethnic group. Their culture is very much alive in the area through cuisine, traditions, and language. Upon arrival, we'll visit the majestic Salto el Claro waterfall, hidden in the lush forest outside Pucón. Your home for the next three nights is at the Pucón Green Park Hotel, nestled in an 11-acre estate surrounded by gardens and nature, with views of Villarrica volcano and the Quelhue mountain range.

PUCÓN GREEN PARK (B, L, D)

DAY 4 Friday, March 1

PUCÓN

Today we'll spend time at Villarrica National Park, a captivating haven of natural beauty. Nestled within its boundaries lies lofty forests of endemic Monkey-puzzle (Araucaria) trees. Resembling something out of the Jurassic, spiky Araucarias yield quantities of nuts prized by the Mapuche and Austral Parakeets alike. Hike through primeval forests of 1,000-year-old trees, and admire volcanoes and towering mountains stretching towards the sky, their peaks blanketed in snow. On the way back, we'll stop for a special visit to the Curarrehue Women's Cooperative, loyal caretakers of the history of the land and the sacred trees for the Mapuche.

PUCÓN GREEN PARK (B, BOX LUNCH, D)

DAY 5 Saturday, March 2

PUCÓN

This morning, we'll enjoy floating on the Liucura River in a rafting boat, enjoying its mesmerizing beauty, and immersing ourselves in the serenity of the area. Surrounded by lush forests, the crystal-clear waters reflect the vibrant hues of the sky, while the distant sound of rushing waterfalls adds to the enchanting ambiance. Following a relaxing morning, we'll dine on some local dishes for lunch and then transfer to the base of the majestic Villarrica Volcano. On a 3-hour round trip soft hike up the volcano, we'll walk among forests of the endemic Lenga trees, one of the largest of the beautiful Southern Beeches (*Nothofagus*) and capture dramatic views of Villarrica Lake from great heights. *PUCÓN GREEN PARK (B, L, D)*

Valparaíso & Viña del Mar

Santiago

ARGENTINA

Buenos Aires

CHILE

Temuco
Pucón

Puerto Varas

Puerto Montt

Torres del Paine National Park

Puerto Natales

Puerto Arenas

PETROHUE FALLS

DAY 6 Sunday, March 3

PUCÓN / PUERTO VARAS

Drive through remarkable vistas of emerald glacial lakes, green forests and snow-capped volcanoes to the charming lakeside town of Puerto Varas, known as the "city of roses." En route, we'll stop for a guided hike to Petrohué Falls, a breathtaking succession of turquoise cascades rushing over volcanic rock against a backdrop of Chile's towering Osorno Volcano, which Darwin witnessed in eruption in 1835. Following our hike, continue to our hotel in Puerto Varas, with a location featuring stunning views over Lake Llanquihue.

CUMBRES PUERTO VARAS HOTEL (B, BOX LUNCH, D)

DAY 7 Monday, March 4

PUERTO MONTT / PUNTA ARENAS

This morning we transfer to nearby Puerto Montt airport for our flight to Punta Arenas, Chile's southernmost city on the Strait of Magellan opposite Tierra del Fuego, and the gateway to Antarctica. Founded in 1848, in its golden age Punta Arenas served as





GUANACO AT LAKES EDGE

port-of-call for all ships circumnavigating the world. We'll tour some of its landmarks to provide insight into the rich history and cultural heritage in and around this unique town at world's end, including Fort Bulnes, a reconstructed fort highlighting the rigors of early 19th century colonization efforts on the strategically important Magellan Strait. We will also head south along the Strait to Port Famine—visited by Charles Darwin in 1834 aboard HMS *Beagle*—and pay our respects at the nearby Cementerio Inglés (English Cemetery), the final resting place of the ill-fated commander of the HMS *Beagle*'s first voyage. The evening is free.

HOTEL CABO DE HORNOS (B, BOX LUNCH)

DAY 8 Tuesday, March 5
TORRES DEL PAINE NATIONAL PARK

Today we'll transfer to Torres de Paine National Park, traveling through Chile's expansive Patagonian steppe and along the shoreline of the Strait of Magellan, keeping an eye out for guanaco herds and rheas, the South American ostriches sought by Charles Darwin, as well as Andean condors, caracaras, foxes, and puma. En route, we will stop at an estancia for a delicious lunch of asado or estancia-raised lamb barbecue, while getting a first-hand look at the rugged gaucho culture and lifestyle, including demonstrations on the care and keeping of sheep and sheepdogs. This afternoon, enjoy some time to relax and explore the pristine surrounding area on your own. LAS TORRES PATAGONIA (B, L, D)

DAY 9 & DAY 10
Wednesday & Thursday, March 6–7

TORRES DEL PAINE NATIONAL PARK

By far, the most impressive sight in southern Chile is Torres del Paine National Park, known as the crown jewel of Patagonia, and declared a Biosphere Reserve by UNESCO in 1978. The dramatic mountain formations of towering rock, windswept pampas, ice fields, glaciers, and myriad lakes and lagoons in hues of blues, greens, grays, and ochres make for a stunning and unforgettable landscape. Torres del Paine National Park is surrounded by impressive mountains including the famous Cuernos del Paine (Horns of Granite), twisted, snow-dusted pillars of grey granite that rise from the flat Patagonian steppe. Here we will revel in the natural history and geology of one of the world's most spectacular landscapes, exploring the west side of the Park one day and the east side the next, looking out for iconic Patagonian species, many endemic to the region: guanacos, rheas, Magellanic foxes, flamingos, Andean condors, black-necked swans, eagles, Magellanic woodpeckers, and pumas. Our itinerary will take us hiking along windswept glacial till beaches to view Grey Glacier and Lake, dotted with deep blue icebergs, and a visit to the spectacular Salto Grande glacial waterfall on the Paine River. At our hotel, hike or ride horses with an expert guide or simply relax in the surrounding wilderness.

LAS TORRES PATAGONIA (2B, 2L, 2D)

DAY 11 Friday, March 8

PUERTO NATALES / SANTIAGO

We depart this morning for Puerto Natales and the return flight to Santiago. We'll travel again through Chile's expansive Patagonian pampas, ready to stop for sightings of rheas, condors, caracaras, and eagles. The flight to Santiago will offer, weather permitting, magnificent views of the Andes Mountains, snow-capped peaks, glaciers, and ice fields as they stream downward, feeding the lakes below. Upon arrival in Santiago, transfer to our hotel. The evening is free. PULLMAN EL BOSQUE HOTEL (B, BOX LUNCH)

DAY 12 Saturday, March 9

SANTIAGO / U.S.

This morning we visit Cerro San Cristóbal for a sweeping panoramic view of Santiago. Next, we'll journey through the Casablanca Valley where renowned Chilean wines are produced, and stop at the Kingston Family Vineyards for a private visit. We'll learn how this vineyard was founded and managed by an American family, and has evolved into one of Chile's most acclaimed, award-winning boutique wineries. Here, our journey culminates with a gourmet farewell lunch and wine tasting. We'll return to our hotel in the city for the remainder of the afternoon at leisure before transferring to the airport for overnight flights home. (B, L)

DAY 13 Sunday, March 10

ARRIVE U.S.

Arrive in the U.S. and connect to your flights home.



CASABLANCA VALLEY VINYARD

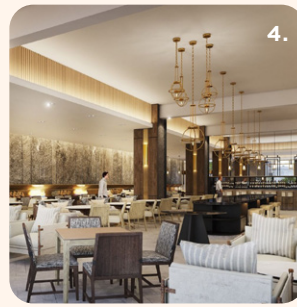
OPTIONAL POST-TOUR EXTENSION TO VALPARAÍSO & VIÑA DEL MAR

March 10–11, 2024

We spend an additional night in Santiago and the next day we travel to Valparaíso, a UNESCO World Heritage site and one of the first South American cities founded by the Spanish. In the morning we depart for the Pacific coast, again driving through the open coastal Casablanca Valley famous for its excellent white wines and Pinot Noirs. We tour the historic port city of Valparaíso and stroll through the Concepción and Alegre neighborhoods and ride the century-old hillside ascensors (elevators). We will also visit Viña del Mar, a seaside resort town near Valparaíso known for its beautiful gardens, beaches, and tall buildings. We'll enjoy lunch at a restaurant with views of the ocean. We return to Santiago and transfer to the airport for our evening return flight to the U.S. PULLMAN EL BOSQUE HOTEL (B, L) • RATES FOR THE EXTENSION ARE BASED ON A MINIMUM OF 10 GUESTS.



VIÑA DEL MAR



ACCOMMODATIONS

1. Pullman El Bosque, Santiago

The hotel offers a luxurious and comfortable retreat in the heart of the city. With its modern design and elegant decor, the hotel provides a sophisticated ambiance. The spacious rooms are tastefully furnished, offering a blend of contemporary style and convenience. Guests can enjoy amenities such as a fitness center, swimming pool, and spa facilities. The hotel's central location allows easy access to Santiago's attractions, shopping districts, and vibrant dining scene.

2. Pucón Green Park Hotel

Nestled in an expansive 11-acre estate surrounded by lush gardens and nature, Pucón Green Park Hotel offers a tranquil and idyllic retreat in the beautiful town of Pucón. With breathtaking views of the Villarica volcano and the Quelhue mountain range, the hotel provides a picturesque backdrop for guests to immerse themselves in the natural beauty of the region. It provides modern amenities such as flat-screen TVs, minibars, and complimentary Wi-Fi. Guests can enjoy the outdoor swimming pool, surrounded by the hotel's lush gardens, or relax in the sauna and hot tub or make use of its fitness center.

3. Cumbres Puerto Varas Hotel

Located in the charming lakeside town of Puerto Varas, Cumbres Puerto Varas Hotel offers spacious accommodations with stunning

views over Lake Llanquihue. Guests can take advantage of the hotel's spa facilities, including a heated indoor pool, sauna, and massage treatments (additional cost), or unwind in the beautiful gardens and terrace overlooking the lake.

4. Hotel Cabo de Hornos

Located right on the main square in the historic town of Punta Arenas, gateway to Antarctica, the hotel's grand building stands as an icon of Chilean Patagonia. The hotel features modern rooms that overlook the Strait of Magellan and La Plaza Central, with such amenities as complimentary Wi-Fi, flat-screen TVs, in-room safes and hairdryer. Guests may make use of the gym facilities during your stay.

5. Las Torres Patagonia

Las Torres is a working estancia as well as a comfortable lodge located in the heart of Las Torres del Paine National Park. With a breathtaking mountainous backdrop, rooms here are spacious and bright, with oversized windows to take full advantage of the stunning views. Each room features premium bedding, in-room safes, hairdryers, rainfall shower and deep soaking tubs. Guests can dine on regional dishes at the onsite restaurant that takes advantage of the lodge's own organic garden, then grab some complimentary drinks at the glass-roof bar. Enjoy a relaxing spa service (additional cost) during your stay.



WHAT TO EXPECT

This exclusive expedition is designed for those who are interested in learning about the history, culture, the superb natural areas of Patagonia and the Lake District, and the history and panoramas of Santiago and Valparaíso (extension). This is a moderately active program. Some walks in the Torres del Paine area are approximately one mile long (sometimes over uneven terrain); walks can be longer at the participant's discretion. Typically, the weather is warm in Santiago (mid-70s at noon) and cooler in Puerto Montt and Puerto Varas where temperatures average in the mid-60s during the day and can drop to the low 40s at night. Sites in southern Patagonia -Torres del Paine, Punta Arenas, and Puerto Natales- are usually quite cold in the early morning and late evening, but can be sunny with variable temperatures during the day. Winds, which can be strong, are frequent in the southern Patagonia area, where weather is unpredictable. Since some travel will occur in remote areas, everyone must be flexible concerning time schedules, food, weather, and dust. In order to enjoy this trip, a spirit of adventure and anticipation, and the desire to explore spectacular natural areas are musts. There are a couple of relatively long drives including bumpy stretches, which are necessary for the chance to explore the superb scenery of Patagonia and the Lake District. Travel is by regularly scheduled jet aircraft and motor coach. Altitude does not pose a problem for this itinerary.

PROGRAM COST

(per person)

MAIN PROGRAM

| | |
|------------------------|----------|
| Double Occupancy | \$9,650 |
| Single Occupancy | \$11,485 |

VALPARAÍSO & VIÑA DEL MAR POST-TOUR EXTENSION

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Double Occupancy | \$545 |
| Single Occupancy | \$710 |

PROGRAM COST INCLUDES

- Turn-key experience under the leadership of an expert Tour Director
- All accommodations and meals as stated in the itinerary
- Wine with all dinners
- All activities per itinerary
- Professional English speaking guides throughout
- An educational program of lectures and discussions with Darwin scholar Dr. James Costa
- Transportation by private motor coach
- Domestic flights from Santiago to Temuco, Puerto Montt to Punta Arenas, and Puerto Natales to Santiago, airport transfers for group flights
- Tips to local guides, drivers and wait staff
- Baggage handling, service charges and taxes, entrance fees
- Pre-departure information, coordination and administration

PROGRAM COST DOES NOT INCLUDE

- U.S. domestic and international airfare (quoted separately)
- Excess baggage charges
- Meals not specified in the itinerary
- Personal items such as laundry, e-mail, fax or telephone calls
- Alcoholic beverages except those mentioned above
- Dishes or beverages not included with meals
- Room service
- Passport fees
- Private transfers
- Covid-19 testing or quarantine expenses
- Medical expenses
- Travel insurance
- Fuel surcharges, optional extensions or deviations from the scheduled tour
- Tip to the tour director is at the passengers' discretion

COSTS & CONDITIONS

DEPOSITS An initial deposit of \$1,000 per person plus \$200 for the Valparaíso optional extension, if applicable, is required to secure your reservation. Cancellations within 7 days of booking: full refund; cancellations received after 7 days from booking and up to November 26, 2023, will be assessed a cancellation fee of \$600. Cancellations after November 26, 2023, are subject to a 100% penalty of all deposits and payments, regardless of the booking date. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features. Initial deposits may be made by check or credit card/PayPal or Apple Pay. Final payment (by check only) is due by November 27, 2023.

PHYSICAL HEALTH Participation on the program required that passengers be in generally good health. Normal activities include leisurely walks, often over uneven terrain. It is essential that persons with any medical problems and related dietary restrictions make them known to us well before departure.

TRAVEL INSURANCE We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance as the cancellation penalty in this brochure will apply. Trip cancellation insurance can be purchased through our recommended provider Travel Insured International; [CLICK HERE](#) to get a quote or call 1-800-243-3174 to get a quote and mention Royal Adventures #53140. Most insurance plans need to be purchased within 14 days of paying the initial deposit in order to waive pre-existing medical conditions as well as to purchase "Cancel for Any Reason" insurance. Neither Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University nor Royal Adventures accept liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a non-refundable airline ticket or other expenses incurred by tour participants in preparing for the trip.

RESPONSIBILITY Royal Adventures, its owners, and employees act only as agents for the various independent suppliers and contractors providing transportation, hotel accommodations, restaurant, and other services connected with this tour. Such travel and services are subject to the terms and conditions under which such accommodations, services, and transportation are offered or provided, and the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures and their respective employees, agents, representatives, and assigns, accept no liability, therefore. The Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures assume no liability for any injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or other irregularity that may be caused by the defect of any aircraft or vehicle or the negligence or default of any company or person engaged in carrying out or performing any of the services involved. Additionally, responsibility is not accepted for losses, injury, damages, or expenses of any kind due to sickness, epidemics, pandemics, pathogens, weather, strikes, local laws, hostilities, wars, terrorist acts, acts of nature, quarantine, force majeure, animal or insect bites, or other such causes. All services and accommodations are subject to the laws of the country in which

they are provided. If this tour is canceled due to a force majeure event or other forces beyond our control, only the recoverable portion of unused services or accommodations, if any, will be refunded or credited on a future Royal Adventures tour. A force majeure event, in relation to this tour, shall mean any circumstances beyond our control, including, but without limitation, to acts of God, explosion, flood, forceful wind, fire or accident, war or threat of war declared or undeclared, acts of terrorism, sabotage, insurrection, riots, strikes, civil disturbance, sickness, epidemics, pandemics, quarantines, government intervention or other unforeseeable events. Limitations on travel arising from the COVID-19 pandemic or other pathogens shall be considered a force majeure event. Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University and Royal Adventures reserve the right to make changes in the published itinerary or to the trip leaders whenever, in their sole judgment, conditions warrant, or if they deem it necessary for the comfort, convenience, or safety of the tour participants. They reserve the right to withdraw this tour without penalty. The right is also reserved to decline to accept or retain any person as a member of the tour or to substitute another qualified leader or special guest. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. The price of the program is given in good faith based on current tariffs and rates and is subject to change. Any tariff, exchange rate, airfare, or fuel increases will be passed onto participants. Neither the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University nor Royal Adventures accepts the liability for any airline cancellation penalty incurred by the purchase of a nonrefundable airline ticket. The air ticket when issued shall constitute the sole contract between the passenger and the airline concerned. There are no refunds for unused meals, accommodations, or other trip features. I will not hold the Highlands Biological Station/Western Carolina University nor Royal Adventures and/or its employees or agents responsible for any expense or loss caused by my/our failure to purchase trip cancellation and evacuation insurance coverage. As part of the consideration and right to participate in this tour, each participant will be asked to sign a liability release, assumption of risk, and hold harmless agreement

TOUR SIZE This tour exclusively designed for the Highlands Biological Station is limited to 22 participants on a first come-first served basis. The minimum group size is 15. Should the minimum not be met, we reserve the right to levy a small group surcharge.

QUESTIONS Please visit <https://highlandsbiological.org/>, email Jim Costa (costa@email.wcu.edu), or phone: (828) 526-2602. Or contact Royal Adventures at (925) 820-6260 or 1-800-453-4754 or email: info@royaladventures.com.



Chile's

LAKE DISTRICT & PATAGONIA:

In Darwin's Footsteps at World's End
FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 10, 2024



For the ease of registering online, please visit royaladventures.intellibook.co/site/#/hbsPatagonia24.

If you prefer to mail your registration, please complete the form below and return it to Royal Adventures with deposit check (if applicable) payable to "Royal Adventures" at:

**Royal Adventures,
9 Crow Canyon Ct, Ste 205, San Ramon, CA 94583**

Enclosed is my deposit of \$ _____ (\$1,000 per person) to hold _____ place(s) on *Patagonia*, plus \$200 for the Valparaíso extension, if applicable, departing February 27, 2024, with Highlands Biological Station. Final payment is due November 27, 2023 and must be paid by check.

NAME AS ON PASSPORT _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

NAME AS ON PASSPORT _____ DATE OF BIRTH _____

STREET ADDRESS _____

CITY / STATE / ZIP _____

E-MAIL(S) _____

CELL PHONE _____

HOME PHONE _____ OFFICE PHONE _____

Payment Options

- Pay by check made out to "Royal Adventures"
 Please charge the deposit of \$ _____ to:
 AMEX VISA MasterCard Discover

CARD NUMBER _____

EXP DATE _____ SEC CODE _____

Accommodations

- Double 1 Bed Double 2 Beds Single (*limited availability*)
 I am sharing accommodations with _____
(reservation form sent separately)

Extension

- I/We wish to join the Valparaíso & Viña del Mar optional extension

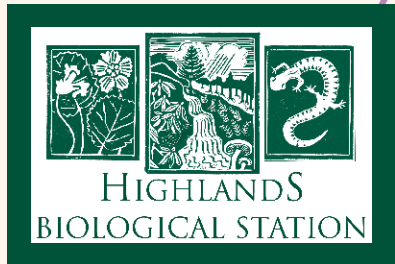
I/We have carefully read the Terms and Conditions and Responsibility sections of this brochure and agree to their terms on behalf of myself and the members of my party named above.

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____

SIGNATURE _____ DATE _____



OSORNO VOLCANO, PUCÓN



Chile's

LAKE DISTRICT & PATAGONIA

In Darwin's Footsteps at World's End

FEBRUARY 27-MARCH 10, 2024



FUEGUINOS



RHEA



CHARLES DARWIN