Tour the Cloud Kingdom of Bhutan with George Archibald, Co-Founder of the International Crane Foundation

November 5-20, 2017

The International Crane Foundation works worldwide to conserve cranes and the ecosystems, watersheds, and flyways on which they depend. ICF provides knowledge, leadership, and inspiration to engage people in resolving threats to cranes and their diverse landscapes. www.savingcranes.org
**THU 09 Nov**

**Lobesa**

This morning drive to Tsekha village to seek out the world’s rarest heron, the White-bellied Heron, one of the world’s 50 rarest birds. The ICF – and particularly George Archibald – has been a key figure in helping with a project to save this giant heron and its habitats, in perhaps the world’s only safe place for this rare bird. If we are lucky, we may even see Pallas’s Fish Eagle along this river. On the return stop in Punakha to walk across Bhutan’s longest suspension footbridge to the Punakha Dzong, built in 1637 and the place where all the Kings of Bhutan are crowned. Hotel Vara (B, L, D)

---

**MON 06 Nov**

**Bangkok**

The primary order of business today is recovery from our long transpacific flights. The hotel pool is pleasant, and the concierge can arrange Bangkok tours for the energetic. We will rendezvous at The Square Restaurant at 6:30pm to discuss plans for our departure and enjoy getting to know each other during dinner. Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel (B, L, D)

---

**TUE 07 Nov**

**Bangkok/Thimphu**

This morning fly via Drukair from Bangkok to Paro, Bhutan, where your local host is waiting to greet you for the short trip to the capital city of Thimphu. Today was won’t be a ‘flying day’. The to the high altitude with no strenuous sightseeing scheduled. Ascend for a panoramic view of the capital city and its adjoining areas. There is a lovely hiking trail that cuts through a lush forest of pine trees. After 30-40 minutes of hiking, you will reach the quaint monastery of Wangdite. Keep an eye out for the Kali Pheasants that are known to frequent this area. Check in at the hotel for dinner and overnight. Hotel Pedling (B, L, D)

---

**WED 08 Nov**

**Thimphu/Lobesa**

Start the day with a visit to the National Memorial Stupa, built in 1974 in memory of the 3rd King – His Majesty Jigme Dorji Wangchuck. Then visit the National Institute of Zorig Chusum, a crafts school that trains both boys and girls in the thirteen traditional crafts of Bhutan. Next is the Textile Weaving Factory to see weavers creating elaborate traditional patterns and visit their show room. Depart for the subtropical valley of Punakha. Travel over Dochu La Pass stopping to look for Fire-tailed Myzornis and Spotted Laughingthrushes. At Dochu La Pass, there is a congregation of 108-tailed Myzornis and Spotted Laughingthrushes. Arrive in Lobe-Buddhist stupas built on a conch-shaped hillock at particular point about 4 pm in order to witness the cranes flying to their roost. It is always a special thrill to experience the cranes spiraling down the valley and doing their dances upon landing at the roost. Homestays (B, L, D)

---

**THU 10 Nov**

**Lobesa/Phobjikha**

Today leave for the glacial valley of Phobjikha, most commonly referred to as the “Cranes Valley.” Phobjikha is Bhutan’s largest wetland and a designated conservation area. Because of the presence of a large flock of Black-necked Cranes, which come to Bhutan from Tibet in late October and leave in early spring, it is one of the most important wildlife preserves in the country. There will be plenty of birding and photography stops during today’s drive. The Yellow-rumped Honey Guide, which is classified as a globally threatened bird, can often be seen feeding on the honeycombs hanging from the cliffs. Driving time approximately 3 hours plus stops. Homestays (B, L, D)

---

**SAT 11 Nov**

**Phobjikha**

After breakfast, drive to the courtyard of the 17th century Gangtey Monastery to attend the Annual Crane Festival. The International Crane Foundation and its travel partner in Bhutan were instrumental in sustaining this festival, which was mainly initiated to demonstrate the benefits of conservation to the local community. There will be masked and folk dances as well as exhibition stalls at the festival. Perhaps the most popular program of the festival is the Black-necked Crane dance performed by the children of the community school. After lunching at the festival site, George will lead us on a hike through the beautiful pine forest bordering the wetlands. We will plan the walk to arrive at particular point about 4 pm in order to witness the cranes flying to their roost. It is always a special thrill to experience the cranes spiraling down the valley and doing their dances upon landing at the roost. Homestays (B, L, D)

---

**SUN 12 Nov**

**Phobjikha/Chhume**

Travel to Bumthang, the spiritual and cultural heartland of Bhutan. Today’s destination is the quaint valley of Chhume where the Black-necked Cranes visit during the winter months. Drive through misty forests of rhododendrons, silver firs and bamboo, and make several stops to enjoy the breathtaking vistas of the rolling hills and take in the cool, fresh Himalayan air. Driving time approximately 5 hours. Chumey Nature Resort (B, L, D)

---

**MON 13 Nov**

**Chhume/Yongkhola**

Today’s drive is hailed by many as one of the most spectacular in the world. Travel past pristine forests and the occasional rhinoceros that have remained untouched from the forces of modernization. Stop at Shertang La from where (if the weather permits), there are fantastic views of Gangkhar Puensum – the highest mountain in Bhutan and the highest unescalable mountain in the world. In the Ura Valley watch for the beautiful White-bellied Heron, Red-tailed Chough, Spotted Nutcracker, Russet Sparrow, Black-billed Magpie and Rufous-breasted Accentor. While driving through lush forests of conifers and rhododendrons you may spot coves of Blood Pheasants scuttling across the roads. Climbing through a magical wonderland of moss-draped trees to the high-elevation pass of Thrumshung La, then descend towards the idyllic little village of Yongkhola. This stretch has long been lauded as one of the best spots for birding in Asia with such species as the Black-throated Parrotbill, Goldcrest, Golden Bush Robin, Grey-sided Laughingthrush, and the speciality of this region – the rare Satyr Tragopan. Driving time approximately 5-6 hours plus stops. Trogon Villa (B, L, D)

---

**TUE 14 Nov – WED 15 Nov**

**Yongkhola**

Spend the next two days birding in beautiful Yongkhola. The region’s pristine broadleaved forests make it a natural haven for several species of birds. Some of Bhutan’s rarest birds are found in this region such as the elusive Ward’s Trogon and the majestic Rufous-necked Hornbill. Other bird species found in this area are various types of Scimitar Babbler, Parrotbills, an assortment of Warblers, Fire-tailed Myzornis, Flycatchers, Laughingthrushes, and a variety of Bulbuls. There will be an early start to both days. Much of the morning lunching at the hotel will be spent birding and looking along the main road that traverses through the Yongkhola/Limithang region. With luck you might encounter the charismatic and photogenic Capped Langur. The evenings bring an altogether different experience when the forests come alive with the sounds and calls of a variety of nocturnal bird and animal species. Perhaps search out owl species such as the Collared Owlet and the Collared Scops Owl and catch a glimpse of a flying squirrel in flight. Trogon Villa (B, L, D)

---

**THU 16 Nov**

**Yongkhola/Bumthang**

Start the journey westwards by backtracking a ways – the drive will be just as fascinating as the first time around because of the amazing scen-
Fly from Paro to Bumthang; although the flight might be the finest example of Bhutanese architectural sites in the Himalayan world. Perched on the monastery and one of the most venerated pilgrimage’s Nest). Taktsang is Bhutan’s most famous visit to Bhutan’s cultural icon – Taktsang (the ‘Tiger’s Nest’). This site is Bhutan’s most famous monastery and one of the most venerated pilgrimage sites in the Himalayan world. Perched on the side of a cliff at an altitude of 10,428 feet, Taktsang might be the finest example of Bhutanese architecture. Upon reaching the base of the cliff upon

Itinerary continues on the back page
where the monastery complex is located, we will hike for about two hours to reach the monastery. The initial part of the hike is through a forest of pine before the vegetation changes to massive oak trees. There is a cafeteria at the halfway point that offers an excellent view of the Tiger’s Nest. Return to Paro for a farewell dinner and overnight.

Janka Resort (B, D)

**SUN 19 NOV** Paro/Bangkok
Transfer to the Paro airport for the Druk Air flight to Bangkok and overnight at the same at the Bangkok airport hotel. Novotel Suvarnabhumi Airport Hotel (B)

**MON 20 NOV** Bangkok/Departure
After breakfast, depart individually for home. (B)

---

**TOUR CONDITIONS**

**PAYMENT SCHEDULE:** Your reservation and deposit of $1500 per person are requested immediately to fulfill the group deadline requirements. Note that space is limited and reservations are taken on a first come, first served basis. A second payment of $1500 is due July 3, 2017. Final payment to Group Travel Directors (GTD) and donation to ICF are due September 1, 2017. For credit card payment GTD and ICF accept Visa, MasterCard, or Discover.

**REFUND POLICY:** If you should need to cancel your reservations, we ask that you provide this in writing to assure proper documentation. Unfortunately we are unable to refund fees for partial or unused land arrangements. Note: Airline tickets will be issued well in advance of departure and may be nonrefundable. To this end, we will be unable to refund the entirety of your deposit, with specific breakdowns as follows: Up to July 2, 2017 - $100 per person administrative fee plus any unrecoverable deposits; July 3 – October 21, 2017 – Deposit plus any unrecoverable payments to hotels, tour operators or airlines; October 22, 2017 or after – We are unable to provide a refund.

**LATE BOOKINGS:** Passengers registering within thirty days of tour departure will incur a $20 per person administrative fee, and possible airline and/or ground service charges. We ask for tour payment in full at the time we request space on your behalf.

---

**GTD TRAVEL PROTECTION**

Travel protection is optional, but we encourage all travelers to purchase a plan. GTD offers an extensive and competitively priced plan from Travel Insured International. Travel protection can help provide coverage for trip cancellation/interruption, baggage delay/loss, emergency accident and sickness medical expense, and emergency evacuation/repeatriation. If you decline coverage at the time of reservation, you may purchase it later, but the Pre-existing Conditions Waiver is available only if the plan is purchased within 14 days of the initial trip deposit. You may contact Travel Insured International for further information before making your decision: 800-243-3174. Review your Plan Document for Schedule of Benefits and Plan Details.

---

**GTD TRAVEL PROTECTION INCLUSIONS**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Coverage</th>
<th>Amount</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Trip Cancellation</td>
<td>up to Tour Cost*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trip Interruption</td>
<td>up to 150% of Tour Cost**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Travel Delay</td>
<td>$750</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missed Connection</td>
<td>$300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggage</td>
<td>$1,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Baggage Delay</td>
<td>$200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Medical Expense</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evacuation/Repatriation</td>
<td>$500,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accidental Death</td>
<td>$10,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political Emergency Evacuation</td>
<td>$100,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ID Theft Resolution Services</td>
<td>Included</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assistance Service</td>
<td>included*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>$50,175</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cost of this optional GTD Travel Protection is $405 per person ($424 in single occupancy). Additional coverage provided as needed: the full cost of your tour must be covered with the exception of the donation to ICF, which is uncancellable as a travel expense.

This protection may be purchased without the trip cancellation feature and used for emergency evacuation/repeatriation. The fee is $97.

---

**EXCLUSIONS & LIMITATIONS**

Insurance benefits are not payable for any loss due to, arising or resulting from: suicide, attempted suicide or any intentionally self-inflicted injury of you, a Traveling Companion, Family Member or Business Partner booked to travel with you, while sane or insane; an act of declared or undeclared war; participating in maneuvers or training exercises of an armed service, except while participating in weekend or summer training for the reserve forces of the United States, including the National Guard; riding or driving in races, or speed or endurance competitions or events, mountainboating (engaging in the sport of scaling mountains generally requiring the use of picks, ropes, or other special equipment); participating as a member of a team in an organized sporting competition or participating as a professional in a stunt, athletic or sporting event or competition; participating in bodily contact sports, skydiving or parachuting, hang gliding, or bungee cord jumping; piloting or learning to pilot or acting as a member of the crew of any aircraft; being intoxicated as defined herein, or under the influence of any controlled substance unless as administered or prescribed by a Legally Qualified Physician, the commission of or attempt to commit a felony or being engaged in an illegal occupation, normal childbirth or pregnancy (except Complications of Pregnancy) or voluntarily induced abortion; dental treatment (except as coverage is otherwise specifically provided herein); amounts which exceed the Maximum Benefit Amount for each coverage as shown in the Schedule of Benefits; due to a Pre-Existing Condition, as defined in the Certificate. The Pre-Existing Condition Limitation does not apply to the Emergency Medical Evacuation or Return of Remains coverage; medical treatment during or arising from a Trip undertaken for the purpose or intent of securing medical treatment, due to loss or damage (including death or injury) and any associated cost or expense resulting directly from the discharge, expulsion or use of any device, weapon or material employing or involving chemical, biological, radiological or similar agents, whatever in time of peace or war, and regardless of who commits the act and regardless of any other sequence thereto.

---

**CONDITIONS AND RESPONSIBILITY**

Group Travel Directors (GTD) provides customized travel planning throughout the world for group travelers who have a variety of reasons and goals for travel. The goals and/or opinions of these groups do not reflect or imply the position of GTD in any matter. Brochure contents may not be duplicated without permission from GTD. In offering these travel arrangements, Group Travel Directors, Inc. (GTD) acts solely as an agent for the sale of air transportation and other travel related services. GTD maintains no control over the personnel, equipment or operations of any entity furnishing services, products or accommodations. GTD assumes no responsibility or liability for, and shall not be expected, asked or required to pay for any injury, damage, expense, personal injury, property damage, inconvenience or any other loss experienced by reason of (1) any intentional, wrongful, negligent or unauthorized act or omission or the part of any supplier, its agents or employees; (2) any defect, breakdown or other failure of any vehicle, equipment, service, product or other instrumentality which is owned, operated or otherwise used by a supplier; (3) any intentional, wrongful, negligent, or unauthorized act or omission on the part of any other party not under the direct control of GTD; (4) financial problems causing nonperformance by any supplier; or (5) any other cause, condition or event whatsoever beyond the direct control of GTD. GTD cannot guarantee any rates, bookings or reservations of any supplier. Your retention of tickets, reservations or bookings after issuance shall constitute a consent to the foregoing provisions. All prices quoted are subject to change if airlines or ground operators increase their prices, the U.S. dollar is devalued significantly against foreign currencies, the group falls below minimum numbers, or a fuel surcharge, government tax or user’s fee is imposed. Baggage and personal effects are the sole responsibility of the owners at all times. GTD reserves the right to withdraw from any tour any tour member whose conduct is incompatible with the interests of the group as a whole. The above Conditions and Responsibility also covers the group leader(s) and their respective organizations.

---

**NOTE TO OUR TRAVELERS:**

Be assured that GTD continually monitors industry events, such as airline strikes and bankruptcies, etc. If any such events affect your tour, you will be notified. At the time this tour was developed there was not a U.S. State Department Travel Warning in effect for this destination; please refer to the following website for current information or call GTD. http://travel.state.gov/content/passports/en/alertswarnings.html

---

**For more information on this global adventure with the International Crane Foundation contact:**

Kari Stauffer
International Crane Foundation
E11376 Shady Lane Road
Baraboo, WI 53913
tel: 608-336-9462, ext. 115
e-mail: kstauffer@savingcranes.org

or

Group Travel Directors
2000 West 98th Street
Minneapolis, MN 55431-2593
tel: 952-881-7811 or 800-747-2255
fax: 952-881-6276
e-mail: groups@gtd.org
www.gtd.org