



Russet-throated Puffbird (*Hypnelus ruficollis*)
Photo by Neil Orlando Diaz Martinez



HIGH INTENSITY!

This program is for serious birders. Expect at least 6-8 hours of birding each day.

COLOMBIA

NORTHERN COLOMBIA BIRDING TRAIL: A BIRDER'S PARADISE

With Phil Unitt

April 4 – 15, 2018

With over 1,900 avian species — more than any other country in the world — Colombia is a birder's paradise waiting to be discovered. This 12-day program focuses on the country's northern highlights, including the Caribbean region and the Santa Marta Mountains, famed for their high level of endemic species. Explore high elevation mountains, dry forest, páramo and coastal habitats in search of an array of tropical avifauna, including flycatchers, hummingbirds, tanagers, toucans, and more.

Throughout your journey, meet members of the local community and learn about conservation efforts to use birding as a sustainable development resource.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, home to more than a quarter of the country's 73 endemic species.
- Discover the Perijá Mountains, one of the least explored areas of Colombia and a Holy Grail for birders.
- Go owling in the dry forests of Los Besotes Reserve.
- Enjoy a presentation about conservation and training initiatives at El Dorado reserve in the Santa Marta Mountains.
- Seek out the rare Blue-billed Curassow and other tropical moist forest birds in Tayrona National Park.

Support Audubon and its partners to advance sustainable development in bird hot-spots

Holbrook Travel is a supporting partner in Audubon's conservation work in Latin America and in the Caribbean. One aspect of that work is the strengthening of **bird-based tourism** as a conservation and sustainable development tool. As part of our **Flyway Expeditions** series, this program is designed to help protect key areas along the flyways for migratory and local species. As a participant on this trip, you'll have a direct economic impact on local people and communities, help preserve IBAs, and nurture an emerging ecotourism industry.

Learn more at holbrook.travel/flywayexpeditions

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

APRIL 4 - BOGOTÁ

Individual arrivals into Bogotá, transfer to the hotel. Dinner is on your own this evening. *Overnight at Hotel Habitel.*

APRIL 5 - VALLEDUPAR

This morning transfer to the airport for your flight to Valledupar. After lunch, visit the lower parts of Los Besotes Private Reserve, about 6 miles from Valledupar. As the first Important Bird Area (IBA) in Colombia, Los Besotes is part of the Santa Marta Range. This forest is greatly threatened, and hosts many regional specialties. Over 210 species of birds have been found at Los Besotes. A possible highlight species here is the Blue-billed Curassow as well as the uncommon Military Macaw. Other species of note include Vermilion Cardinal, Glaucous Tanager, and the Golden winged Sparrow. The Black-backed Antshrike is here in the lower elevations, as well as the Pale-legged Hornero, a form that is sometimes considered a regional endemic (Caribbean Hornero). Picnic dinner, then continue birding after dark to look for owls. *Overnight at Hotel Arawak Upar. (BLD)*

APRIL 6 - SERRANÍA DEL PERIJÁ

Begin the day with another morning exploring the dry forests of Los Besotes, before moving on to the Perijá Mountains. The drive is approximately an hour to reach the foothills, and from there the road becomes rougher and slower. If time permits, stop for birding once above 1500m elevation along the drive up the mountain to the accommodation. We will be using 4x4 vehicles for our transportation. During drives, you may not be sitting with a guide, but all vehicles will be in radio contact and during the stops en route, birding will be done as a group. If you are prone to motion sickness, please make sure you have medication with you, as the roads will be rough on this day. Arrival to the cabins will be in the evening. Pro Aves' Chamicero del Perijá Reserve started receiving tourists in May of 2015. The basic but comfortable accommodations are surrounded by amazing montane forest. Please note that there are only 5 cabins at this site, so single rooms are not available. The Perijá Mountains (Serranía de Perijá) are like the Holy Grail for birders interested in Colombia's birds. This isolated offshoot of the Eastern Andes forms the border with Venezuela and it is one of the least explored areas in Colombia. *Overnight at Chamicero del Perijá Reserve. (BLD)*

APRIL 7 - SERRANÍA DEL PERIJÁ

Currently the Serranía de Perijá is considered to have four endemic species, the Perijá Metaltail, Perijá Thistletail, Perijá Sierrafinch and the newly described Perijá Tapaculo. This area has been out of reach for birders and scientists for decades until now. Many new discoveries await as birders and biologists increase their visits to Perijá. There is a spintail here that could be a new species and so far a resolution of what it is has not been reached. A unique looking form of Lacrimose Mountain Tanager is common in the higher areas, as well as another unique endemic that may one day be a full species, the local form of the Golden-bellied Starfrontlet. With luck the White-rumped Hawk or even Black-and-chestnut Eagle may fly through. The road that reaches the reserve continues into páramo habitat, where Rufous-chested Chat Tyrants abound, and Páramo Seed eater may be found as well as many Tyrian Metaltail and fewer of the stunningly purple tailed endemic Perijá Metaltail. The ability to move from montane forest to páramo, and then down to foothill subtropical areas will give you many opportunities for excellent birding. Today spend a full day birding at the top of Sabana Rubia in the páramo. *Overnight at Chamicero del Perijá Reserve. (BLD)*

APRIL 8 - SERRANÍA DEL PERIJÁ

Today spend the day birding the elevations slightly above and below the cabins. Other bird species that can be seen in the area, include Crested and Golden-headed Quetzal, Barred Fruiteater, Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard Eagle, Plushcap, and Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager. *Overnight at Chamicero del Perijá Reserve. (BLD)*

APRIL 9 - RIOHACHA

After an early start head to Riohacha, birding downslope, arriving in the afternoon. Time permitting, we will visit Los Flamencos Reserve. Those who are feeling the rough roads might prefer to stay back and enjoy the beach across the road. During our stay at Riohacha, we will learn about the Wayúu indigenous people. Taroa Lifestyle Hotel in Riohacha is the first Wayúu Lifestyle Hotel in Colombia. Every space in Taroa Lifestyle Hotel is inspired on the Wayúu culture, which is represented in their weavings, ceramics, agricultural practices, and gastronomy. The hotel is staffed with native Wayúu people. *Overnight at Taroa Lifestyle Hotel. (BLD)*

APRIL 10 - RIOHACHA

Los Flamencos Sanctuary is an important coastal wetland and dry forest reserve created to protect a large population of the

American Flamingo. This 17,000+ acre reserve of marshes, lagoons, and dry forest is also habitat to 185 other bird species (80% are migrants). We will explore the dry forest in the early morning and focus on the wetlands and shorebirds in the afternoon. We will visit the village of Camarones and meet with our local guide's family, visit their home and learn about their arts and crafts, especially the colorful, handmade bags (mochilas). *Overnight at Taroa Lifestyle Hotel. (BLD)*

APRIL 11 - SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS

Depart Riohacha this morning for the approximately 1- hour drive to Tayrona National Park, extending 20 miles along rugged shore and rises inland to 900m in elevation atop the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. It protects a range of habitats from dry scrub to humid tropical forest, which are excellent for Neotropical migrants and a range of interesting resident species. If you are really lucky, it is possible to see the critically endangered Blue-billed Curassow during morning visits to the park, though very rare. With over 280 species of birds present here, one abundant bird that is easiest to see here than anywhere is the Lance-tailed Manakin. Sometimes it can be found with its relative, the White-bearded Manakin. We will be birding in the area with our local guide and also learn about the local guide association Ecotur and their training initiatives for the locals, using birding as a sustainable development resource. We will then continue the drive up the Santa Marta Mountains in the afternoon, stopping to bird along the way. Please note that roads will be rough in this section as well and we will be using 4x4 vehicles. *Overnight at El Dorado Eco Lodge. (BLD)*

APRIL 12 - SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS

Spend the next two days at the El Dorado reserve in Santa Marta Mountains. Today enjoy the feeders at the lodge as well as the forest above and below the Lodge. The Santa Marta Mountains have been identified as the planet's single most important and irreplaceable site for threatened and endemic biodiversity by numerous scientific publications and every major international conservation organization. The range is home to over 600 bird species, including 19 endemics. Endemic Santa Marta Brush Finches are easily seen in the garden. Black-fronted Wood Quail often come to visit feeders at the lodge in the late afternoon. A dizzying array of hummingbirds visit the multitude of hummingbird feeders, including White-tailed Starfrontlet, Green Violetear, Brown Violetear, Sparkling Violetear, Violet-crowned Woodnymph, Tyrian Metaltail, Long-billed Hermit, Lazuline Sabrewing, and the Santa Marta Woodstar. This evening enjoy a presentation by the local NGO ProAves about the history of the reserve and the conservation efforts. *Overnight at El Dorado Eco Lodge. (BLD)*

APRIL 13 - SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS

Spend the day up in the highlands of Cuchilla San Lorenzo in order to see species not present at the lodge. The Cuchilla de San Lorenzo are the most accessible spur off the main Santa Marta Range. Mountain birds stratify depending on elevation, so sampling a varied set of elevations provides the best chances for finding the most endemic birds. Many of the endemics are found primarily at higher elevations above the lodge, including

Santa Marta Parakeet, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Santa Marta Antpitta, Brown-rumped Tapaculo, Santa Marta Bush Tyrant, Santa Marta Mountain Tanager, Yellow-crowned Whitestart and Santa Marta Warbler. *Overnight at El Dorado Eco Lodge. (BLD)*

APRIL 14 - BOGOTÁ

After birding this morning around the lodge, check out and transfer to the airport in Santa Marta for a late afternoon flight to Bogotá. Please allow 5 hours for the transfer to the airport. Upon arrival, transfer to hotel for our farewell dinner. *Overnight at Hotel Habitel. (BLD)*

APRIL 15 - DEPART

Transfer to airport for flights back to U.S. based on individual flights schedules.

ABOUT YOUR LEADER

Philip Unitt is curator of SDNHM's birds and mammals department and a specialist in subspecies identification of California birds. He is an active birder whose extensive experience spans more than 30 years. He is the author of The San Diego County Bird Atlas, The Birds of San Diego County, and editor of Western Birds. In the past he has led birding trips to such destinations as Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Peru.

LAND PRICING

\$5,250 (7 participants)

Cost includes meals, accommodations, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, in-country flights, private transportation, bottled water on the bus, full-time guide, donation to the San Diego Audubon Society and The Nat (San Diego Natural History Museum), and carbon offset.

Does not include international airfare, estimated at \$875 from San Diego, gratuities for guide or driver, alcoholic beverages, or items of a personal nature. Other departure cities available.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; a limited number of single rooms may be available for an additional cost of \$550 per person. A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to reserve your space on the trip. This deposit is refundable excluding a \$100 cancellation fee until December 30, 2017, at which time non-refundable final payment is due. Travel/trip cancellation insurance is strongly recommended. For more information call Travel Insured at 800-243-3174 or visit www.travelinsured.com. Holbrook Travel's agency number is 15849.



This program includes optional carbon offsetting with ClimateSafe. Learn more at holbrooktravel.com/climatesafe



FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL

Visit holbrook.travel/sandiego-co18 or contact Debbie Sturdivant Jordan at 866-748-6146 or debbie@holbrooktravel.com

PHOTOS BY

Photos by Neil Palmer, Ian Segebarth, Ben Tavener, and Tim Lenz