



Glistering-green Tanager by Debbie Jordan



ECUADOR

Chris Eberly | Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership

December 1 - 10, 2021

An extraordinary abundance of bird life inhabits the forests of northwestern Ecuador. Amid cloud forest, rainforest, páramo, and the eastern and western slopes of the Andes Mountains, you'll seek out as many of the country's 1,640-plus species as possible with assistance from your expert guide on this 10-day adventure. In particular, much of the avifauna you'll encounter is endemic to the Chocó region, while other species are more easily found here than any place else. Along the way, view the snow-capped Antisana Volcano, straddle the equator at the Middle of the World Monument, and receive a lecture from a local ornithologist.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore diverse habitats at varying elevations in national and private reserves, including Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve, the subtropical rainforest at Milpe Bird Sanctuary, páramo ecosystem at Antisana Ecological Reserve, and more.
- Seek out some of Ecuador's approximately 130 hummingbird species, including the Giant Hummingbird, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, and Glowing Puffleg.
- Identify other target species like the Andean Condor, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Chocó Trogon, and dozens of tanagers.

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

DECEMBER 1 - QUITO

Upon arrival in Quito, you'll be met by your guide and transferred to the hotel. *Overnight at Rincón de Puembo.*

DECEMBER 2 - MINDO

Depart from the hotel early in the morning for Mindo via the Yanacocha Reserve and El Paseo del Quinde Eco-route for birding. Arrive to Yanacocha, a moss-clad temperate forest and *Polylepis* woodland on the side of Volcán Pichincha located at an altitude of approximately 10,000 feet. Yanacocha is the last refuge of the emblematic bird of Quito: the Black-breasted Puffleg (categorized as critically endangered). Other birds seen in the area include Black-chested and Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers, Golden-breasted and Sapphire-vented Pufflegs, Great Sapphirewing, and Sword-billed Hummingbird. Enjoy lunch at the reserve and continue through the Eco-route. There will be several stops to watch some of the birds like the Toucan Barbet, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, and the Beautiful Jay. While you are heading down to a lower altitude, you will be reaching the subtropical forest and may see some other birds like the Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager and White-winged Brushfinch. Visit Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve for hummingbird observation. The reserve sits over two major valleys and covers a large range of altitudes (4,750 - 7,210 feet) with several different habitats. Alambi has a recorded list of 250 species of birds and 32 hummingbirds seen either at the feeders or in the reserve. Continue to Mindo for check-in, program orientation, and dinner. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 3 - MINDO

This morning, visit Milpe Bird Sanctuary, located in the subtropical rainforest. Milpe Bird Sanctuary covers 49 acres with an altitudinal range of 3,350 - 3,770 feet. Located in the Chocó Andean foothills, Los Bancos Milpe is in a Birdlife International-defined Important Bird Area (IBA), and birding guides consider this one of the finest sites in all of Ecuador. Many of the most spectacular Chocó endemics are protected here, including Plumbeous Forest-Falcon, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Glistening-green Tanager, Chocó Trogon, Club-winged Manakin, and Long-wattled Umbrellabird, to name just a few. This site is also known for sightings of the rare Moss-backed Tanager. In the afternoon, visit San Tadeo Feeders, where you can easily see a dozen different tanagers, aracarís, toucanets, and barbets. Continue to the hotel for dinner. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 4 - MINDO

Mashpi-Amagusa is the last foothill forest that directly connects to the lower subtropical western forest of Ecuador. Its unique location makes it particularly attractive for birders looking for the highest biodiversity regions with Chocó

endemic birds. The altitude range is 2,450 - 5,600 feet. Chocó endemics that can be seen in the reserve or along the road include Rose-faced Parrot, Orange-fronted Barbet, Toucan Barbet, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Moss-backed Tanager, Chocó Vireo, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, and brightly colored passerines like Indigo Flowerpiercer. Boxed lunch during the excursion. In the afternoon, return to the lodge. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 5 - MINDO

Depart early from the hotel for a one-hour drive to Pedro Vicente Maldonado, where the Río Silanche reserve is located. This important site is one of the last remaining accessible forest remnants found in this key life zone. It is situated in hilly lowland forest at an altitude between 985-1,150 feet. The main feature at Río Silanche is its incredible birding. Its mixed-species foraging flocks are packed with many important Chocó regional endemic species. Spend much of the day here searching for species like Purple-chested Hummingbird, Gray-and-gold Tanager, Orange-fronted Barbet, Stub-tailed Antbird, Black-tipped Cotinga, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Scarlet-breasted Dacnis, Scarlet-and-white Tanager, and Blue-whiskered Tanager. Continue to Mirador Río Blanco for lunch. This place is a birder's dream and great for spotting tanagers. Return to the lodge in the late afternoon. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 6 - SANGOLQUÍ

Early in the morning, depart toward Refugio Paz de las Aves located near Nanegalito (13 miles northeast of Mindo, at 4,590 feet). Angel Paz, resident and owner of the refuge, decided to protect his property and convert it into a sanctuary for antpittas and cocks-of-the-rock. In recent years, the reserve has become popular as it is easy to spot at least three species of antpittas: Great, Yellow-breasted, and Mustached Antpitta. Other birds seen in the area are the Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals. En route, make an additional stop in Quito at the Mitad del Mundo Monument, and then continue to the hotel in Sangolquí. Dinner and overnight stay. *Overnight at Hacienda La Carriona. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 7 - COSANGA

Enjoy a full morning birding along the trails at Antisana Ecological Reserve (11,500 feet). Located between the Andes and the Amazon lowlands, the privately owned Antisana Ecological Reserve's 297,000 acres have varied ecological zones ranging from páramo to lowland rainforest. More than 70 bird species can be found here, including the Andean Condor, Giant Hummingbird, Carunculated Caracara, Black-faced Ibis, Speckled Teal, Andean Duck, Silvery Grebe, Slate-colored Coot, Andean Gull, Andean Lapwing, and Aplomado Falcon. The snow-capped Antisana Volcano is the fourth highest peak in Ecuador with an altitude of 18,900 feet, adding to the breathtaking Andean

scenery that can be enjoyed along the lower elevation trails. In the afternoon, continue to Cabañas San Isidro. This private reserve forms an important bridge between the Antisana and Gran Sumaco Reserves, and the area boasts a bird list of about 330 species, many of which are more easily found here than anywhere else in the country. With luck, you may see the San Isidro Owl this evening. *Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 8 - COSANGA

Explore the area accompanied by your guide. San Isidro Lodge is situated at about 6,726 feet above sea level, but the trails lead through elevations ranging from 7,874 feet down to 6,069 feet, making this an ideal base to observe Andean birds from the lower reaches of the temperate zone down into the heart of the subtropical zone. Among the rarities here are Highland Tinamou, Bicolored Antvireo, Peruvian Antpitta, and White-faced Nunbird. Commonly spotted species include Powerful Woodpecker, Smoky Bush-Tyrant, Inca Jay, Black-billed Peppershrike, Wattled Guan, and Glossy-black Thrush. Look for Sickle-winged Guan, Masked Trogon, Andean Motmot, Streak-capped and Striped Treehunters, Long-tailed Antbird, Slate-crowned Antpitta, Black-chested Fruiteater, Pale-footed Swallow, and a variety of colorful tanagers among the mixed understory. *Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 9 - QUITO

After breakfast, check out of San Isidro and continue to Guango Lodge. Located about one hour away from San Isidro, Guango lies at an elevation of about 8,858 feet on Ecuador's eastern slope. This area is classified as humid temperate forest, a habitat distinctly different from San Isidro and is characterized by its more stunted trees, thicker canopy, cooler climate, and different bird and plant composition. The hummingbird feeders here are especially popular, with some of the more noteworthy species being Mountain Velvetbreast, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, Golden-breasted and Glowing Pufflegs, Mountain Avocetbill, and White-bellied and Gorgeted Woodstars. Other birds of particular interest that are seen regularly include the Andean Guan, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Turquoise Jay, Scarlet-bellied, Lacrimose, Buff-breasted and Hooded Mountain-Tanagers, Gray-hooded Bush Tanager, Black-headed, Black-capped and Black-eared Hemispingus, and Slaty Brushfinch. Enjoy lunch at Guango, and in the afternoon continue through the Cumbayá Valley to Quito. Enjoy a lecture given by a local ornithologist; learn more about some of the several species seen throughout the program. This evening, reflect on the journey during a farewell dinner. *Overnight at Rincón de Puembo. (BLD)*

DECEMBER 10 - DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for the flight home. (B)



Red-headed Barbet by Dave Wendelken

LAND PRICING

\$3,278 (8 participants)

Cost includes accommodations, activities, meals, and entrance fees as indicated in the itinerary, in-country transportation, full-time guide for duration of program, most tips/gratuities except main guide(s) and driver, bottled water on the bus, carbon offset, and a donation to Maryland Bird Conservation Partnership.

Does not include international airfare, gratuities for guide(s) and driver, or items of a personal nature. Holbrook can assist with your flight arrangements if desired.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on double occupancy; for a single room throughout the trip add \$340 per person. A \$350 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 August 28, 2021 at which time non-refundable final payment is due.



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



Antisana Volcano by Marcio Ramalho



Golden Tanager by Debbie Jordan



Rufous-throated Tanager by Debbie Jordan



Toucan Barbet by Vince Smith



Andean Cock-of-the-rock by Ricardo Sanchez



Sword-billed Hummingbird by Reinier Munguia

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL

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