



ECUADOR

Birding the Chocó-Andes and Eastern Slope

with Cayuga Bird Club

JULY 6 - 17, 2023

Ecuador boasts over 1,640 bird species, many of which are rare and threatened. Explore the eastern and western slopes of the Andes mountains, rainforests, and páramo with your expert guide on this 12-day adventure with Cayuga Bird Club. 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, attend an antpitta feeding session, view the snow-capped Antisana Volcano, and straddle the equator at the Middle of the World Monument.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore the Chocó ecoregion across a variety of protected areas, including Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve, Milpe Bird Sanctuary, Antisana Ecological Reserve, and others.
- Visit the famed Refugio Paz de las Aves, known as a haven for antpittas and Andean Cocks-of-the-rock.
- Experience the wonder of the Yanacocha reserve, known for the Black-breasted Puffleg, the emblematic bird of Quito.
- Venture to the Wildlife Sumaco Wildlife Reserve, in the eastern foothills of the Andes, where 500 bird species have been spotted.
- Bird the Mashpi-Amagusa Reserve for target species like the Rose-faced Parrot, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Chocó Vireo, Moss-backed Tanager, and Indigo Flowerpiercer.



ITINERARY

B, L, D = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER



JULY 6 - QUITO

Upon arrival in Quito, you'll be met outside the secured area of the airport and transferred to the hotel. Most flights arrive in the evening. No meals are included on this day. Quito's elevation ranges from 9,223 to 9,883 feet. To minimize your chances of experiencing altitude sickness, try to get plenty of rest, stay hydrated, consume high-carbohydrate foods, avoid alcohol and fatty foods, and avoid strenuous exercise at high elevations. Because we will start very early in the morning tomorrow and most travelers will be coming from much lower elevation, we recommend that you plan to arrive in Quito a day early (on 7/5) to acclimate to the very high elevation (additional cost for night in hotel). *Overnight at Sheraton Quito.*

JULY 7 - MINDO

Depart early for Mindo, NW of Quito, in the Chocó ecoregion. Make several stops en route along the Paseo del Quinde, also known as the Nono-Mindo Road. Your first stop is at Yanacocha Biological Reserve. Clinging to the slopes of Pichincha Volcano at an altitude of approximately 10,000 feet, and comprising 2,371 acres of mostly elfin Polylepis forest, this protected area was established to safeguard the critically endangered and endemic Black-breasted Puffleg. Other high-altitude species include Andean Guan, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Golden-breasted and Sapphire-vented Pufflegs, Great Sapphirewing, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Rufous and Tawny Antpittas, Ocellated and Blackish Tapaculos, Black-chested and Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers, Golden-crowned Tanager, and many more. Visit Zuro Loma field station then enjoy lunch at the Yanacocha reserve. Continue driving with quick stops to look for stunners such as Toucan Barbet, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, and Beautiful Jay. While driving down to the lower altitudes of the subtropical forest region, be on the lookout for Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager and White-winged Brush-Finch. Next, stop at Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve, where 250 species - including 32 hummingbirds - have been recorded. The reserve covers a large range of altitudes (4,750 to 7,210 feet) and spans two major basins: the Alambi Valley and the pristine Goaycape Valley. Regulars include Brown Violetear, Booted Racket-tail, Fawn-breasted and Green-crowned Brilliants, and Golden and Silver-throated Tanagers. Continue to Mindo in time for a program orientation and dinner. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

JULY 8 - MINDO

This morning, visit Mindo-Nambillo Cloud Forest Reserve to look for the Plate-billed Mountain Toucan. Then travel to Milpe Bird Sanctuary, a 250-acre subtropical rainforest reserve with

an altitudinal range of 3,350 to 3,770 feet and protecting an important tract of remnant forest in the Chocó foothills. The Chocó is an ecoregion and biodiversity hotspot that ranges from the Pacific coast of Colombia south to Ecuador, and it supports the largest number of restricted-range birds of any Endemic Bird Area in the Americas, with 62 species. Chocó endemics reliably found at Milpe include Pallid Dove, White-whiskered Hermit, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Blue-tailed (Chocó) Trogon, Chocó Toucan, Esmeraldas Antbird, and Rufous-throated Tanager. Endemics that require a little more luck include Plumbeous Forest-Falcon, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Glistening-green Tanager, and Moss-backed Tanager. The reserve is also famous for its numerous manakin leks, both Club-winged and Golden-winged Manakins. In the afternoon, visit the productive feeders at the family-run San Tadeo Birdwatching. The mix of birds here often includes standouts such as Violet-tailed Sylph, Red-headed Barbet, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Flame-faced Tanager, Black-capped Tanager, Golden-naped Tanager, and more Chocó endemics: Brown Inca, Velvet-purple Coronet, Empress Brilliant, Dusky Chlorospingus, and Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager. Return to the hotel for dinner. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

JULY 9 - MINDO

Spend the day at Mashpi-Amagusa Reserve, a 320-acre protected area in the Chocó foothills that functions as a critical link between lower subtropical forest and higher montane forest at neighboring Mashpi Lodge. The altitude here ranges from 2,450 to 5,600 feet. The birding is fantastic along this corridor, with many Chocó endemics that are difficult to find elsewhere, such as Rose-faced Parrot, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Chocó Vireo, Moss-backed Tanager, Black Solitaire, and Indigo Flowerpiercer; a few, like Long-wattled Umbrellabird, require a little luck. Feeders on-site have many of the same hummingbirds and tanagers seen at Milpe and offer another great opportunity for photos. Enjoy a boxed lunch during the excursion and return to the lodge in the afternoon. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

JULY 10 - MINDO

Depart early for the one-hour drive to Rio Silanche, another reserve owned and managed by the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation. At an altitudinal range of 985 to 1,150 feet, the reserve sits firmly in the western lowlands, a region of Ecuador that has experienced considerable change from logging, agriculture, and other pressures. Famous for its large mixed flocks, a stroll on the preserve's trails is rewarded with specialties that include Dusky Pigeon, Purple-chested Hummingbird, Orange-fronted Barbet, Stub-tailed Antbird, Black-tipped Cotinga, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Scarlet-breasted Dacnis, Gray-and-gold, Scarlet-and-white, and Blue-whiskered Tanagers, and many more. Continue to Mirador Río Blanco for lunch and to check out the feeders. Regular visitors



include Green Thorntail, Crowned Woodnymph, Ecuadorian Thrush, and several euphonias and tanagers. Return to the lodge in the late afternoon. *Overnight at Sachatamia. (BLD)*

JULY 11 - SANGOLQUI

Check out and start early with a visit to Refugio Paz de las Aves near Nanegalito (13 miles northeast of Mindo, at 4,590 feet). Angel Paz is the proprietor of this private reserve, and his story is an excellent example of community conservation. Angel was formerly a local logger who transformed his property into a haven for antpittas and Andean Cocks-of-the-rock over a decade ago. His early fame came quickly when he learned how to coax the rare and elusive Giant Antpitta into the open with earthworms. He now has six different species of antpittas staked out on his property: Giant, Yellow-breasted, Ochre-breasted, Chestnut-crowned, Moustached, and Scaled. Other incredible birds on the property include Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Rufous-bellied Nighthawk, Olivaceous Piha, Dark-backed Wood-Quail, Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, and a fantastic mix of hummingbirds. En route to the hotel in Sangolquí, make a stop at the Mitad del Mundo Monument. *Overnight at Hacienda La Carriona. (BLD)*

JULY 12 - COSANGA

Spend a full morning birding along the trails at the privately owned Antisana Ecological Reserve (11,500 feet), whose varied ecological zones range 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. At 18,900 feet, the snow-capped Antisana Volcano is the fourth highest peak in Ecuador, adding to the breathtaking Andean scenery that can be enjoyed along the lower elevation trails. Depart for San Isidro with a stop en route at Guango Lodge, another private reserve on the eastern slope above San Isidro at an elevation of 8,858 feet. Cooler and often shrouded in mist, habitats here include humid temperate forest, chusquea bamboo thickets, and swift mountain streams. The area is characterized by its more stunted trees, thicker canopy, cooler climate, and different bird and plant composition. The feeders at the lodge are often hopping with birds; enjoy close views of Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Turquoise Jay, and more. Birds regularly found in the surrounding reserve include Torrent Duck, Andean Guan, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, White-capped Dipper, Slaty Brushfinch, Lacrimose and Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanagers, and Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager. Later in the afternoon, continue to San Isidro Lodge. The lodge's 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. *Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)*

JULY 13 - COSANGA

Explore the area accompanied by your guide. The cloud forest reserve at San Isidro Lodge encompasses nearly 3,000 acres on the eastern slope of the Andes at an elevation range of 6,069 to 7,874 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. Nearly 500 species have been recorded in the area, and several - such as the mysterious "San Isidro" Owl and Peruvian Antpitta - are extremely local and rare. Birds regularly encountered include Wattled and Sickle-winged Guans, Golden-headed and Crested Quetzals, Masked Trogon, Andean Motmot, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Powerful and Crimson-mantled Woodpeckers,

Speckle-faced Parrot, Chestnut-crowned and White-bellied Antpittas, the beautiful Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Black-billed Peppershrike, Green (Inca) Jay, Saffron-crowned Tanager, and Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia. *Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)*



JULY 14 - GUAMANI

Morning birding around San Isidro and then travel to WildSumaco Lodge. The eastern foothills of the Andes is one of the finest and most threatened areas for birding in Ecuador. About 500 bird species have been seen within the WildSumaco Wildlife Sanctuary and neighboring areas. This area stretches from Loreto Road (where the main highway crosses Rio Pucuno, elevation 3,800 ft.) up to the border of Gran Sumaco National Park (5,200 ft.). The road passing through the reserve offers great road birding, and this is one of many areas from which to see mixed flocks. Possibilities here include Blue-browed Tanager, Yellow-breasted Antwren, and Coppery-chested Jacamar. Many colorful species of tanager may be accompanied by Ecuadorian Tyrannulet and the recently described Foothill Elaenia; sometimes the Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater makes an appearance. We'll also see North American migrants and over 30 species of hummingbird. At night, Band-bellied Owl, Rufescent Screech-Owl, and Foothill Screech-Owl often call from nearby. The lodge sits at a perfect elevation around 4,600 feet. *Overnight at WildSumaco Lodge. (BLD)*

JULY 15 - GUAMANI

Early breakfast, followed by birding on the trails. From WildSumaco's trails, you may see Gray-tailed Piha, Blue-rumped Manakin, and Chestnut-crowned Gnateater. The very rare Yellow-throated Spadebill has territories along several of the trails, and at any time the endangered Military Macaw or rare Spot-winged Parrotlet might fly by, or Black Hawk-Eagle soar overhead. Lunch at the lodge. This afternoon enjoy viewing an Antpitta feeding session then continue birding around the grounds before farewell dinner this evening to say goodbye to those not traveling on the optional extension to the Amazon. *Overnight at WildSumaco Lodge. (BLD)*

JULY 16 - PUEMBO

After morning birding and breakfast, travel back to Quito. [Those taking the extension will start the drive downslope to Coca and then travel by boat to La Selva Lodge.] *Overnight at San José de Puembo. (BLD)*

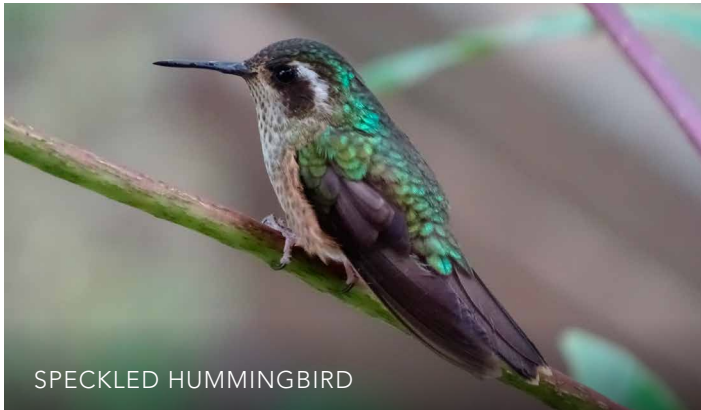
JULY 17 - DEPART

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

ABOUT YOUR LEADER



Jody Enck started birding as a small boy growing up on a farm in Pennsylvania. Since then, he continues to learn more and more about birds and birders. Jody especially loves bird-watching in his back yard and learning what the local residents are up to. He is a closet lister, with more than 500 species seen in the U.S. and nearly 1,200 throughout the Americas. He has a background in wildlife biology and social science. In 2016, he founded the Sister Bird Club Network, which links birders and clubs throughout the Western Hemisphere by raising awareness of the conservation needs of the neotropical migratory birds we all love.



SPECKLED HUMMINGBIRD



BLACK-MANTLED TAMARIN

PHOTOS BY *DEBBIE JORDAN*

ACTIVITY LEVEL

MODERATE: This birding adventure journeys through a cross-section of Andean landscapes while exploring an abundance of avifauna. You will traverse various ecosystems at a range of elevations. Expect 4-8 hours of birding each day through consistently varying elevations on uneven, occasionally slippery terrain. Pack clothing that can be worn in layers as temperature will change with elevation variations.



GIANT ANTPITTA

LAND PRICING

\$3,640 per person

Based on 9 participants. Single supplement is \$330.

Price includes:

- 12 nights' accommodation
- 31 meals (11 breakfasts, 10 lunches, 10 dinners)
- Non-alcoholic beverages with meals
- Sightseeing and activities as described, including entrance fees
- Private vehicle transportation
- Full-time expert birding naturalist guide for duration of the program
- Donation to Cayuga Bird Club
- Departure tax

Price does not include: international airfare, trip cancellation insurance, tips and gratuities, drinks purchased on own, items of a personal nature.

Final payment due no later than: **April 2, 2023**

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on a minimum of 9 participants in double occupancy.

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to hold your space on this trip. This deposit is refundable 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Cancellations after this date are non refundable.

Please note: Your participation as a traveler indicates acceptance of Holbrook Travel's Covid-19 protocols in place at time of travel.

Holbrook Travel strongly recommends the purchase of travel insurance for medical emergencies while traveling and to protect your investment. Please note the purchase of Cancel for Any Reason Coverage or to exclude pre-existing conditions with Trip Cancellation coverage may require policy purchase within 10-14 days of your initial deposit, depending upon the provider.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO ENROLL:

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Optional Post-trip Extension: Birding the Amazon JULY 16 - 20, 2023

ITINERARY

B, L, D = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

JULY 16 - COCA

After breakfast, depart early this morning for Coca. Head to Francisco de Orellana port. Board a canoe for the two hour ride down the Napo River to La Selva Amazon Ecolodge, which sits on the border of the famous Yasuni National Park. After getting settled, explore the Matapalo Trail, whose name comes from the Spanish for strangler fig (*Ficus* sp), one of the many remarkable trees that you can find on this short walk. Mahogany trees over 400 years old can also be seen, and your guides will share their knowledge of the flora and fauna. *Overnight at La Selva Amazon Ecolodge. (LD)*

JULY 17 - COCA

Begin the day with a walk to the observation tower. From the 115 foot high platform, you can enjoy an up in the branches view of the forest canopy. Your naturalist and native guides will help you spot the colorful birds of the Amazon, and maybe even certain primates. On the way back from the tower, you have the option of taking the Tucaneta Trail, where your native guide can show you some of the medicinal plants still in use today, and your naturalist guide will provide you with interesting info on the ecology and natural history of the Amazon. There is also the option of visiting the beautiful lagoon of Mandi Cocha. An hour's hike takes you to the lagoon, where you can see an example of an igapó forest, a type of ecosystem where the forest is temporarily flooded by black water. Different species of birds and even giant otters can be seen here. After lunch hike the Charapa Trail, which begins at the lodge and ends by the edge of the lagoon. It is a great loop where different monkeys, birds, and other wildlife can be seen and a great place to witness an Amazonian sunset. With the help of a spotlight, your guides will take you around the lagoon via canoe looking for nocturnal wildlife. Return to the lodge for dinner this evening. *Overnight at La Selva Amazon Ecolodge. (BLD)*

JULY 18 - COCA

Today you will make your way back to the Napo River and take a motorized canoe ride to the clay licks. Hundreds of parrots and parakeets gather here to eat the mineral rich soil, an important part of their diet. Binoculars are essential to really capture the moment. After the clay licks, you'll have a unique opportunity to learn about the local Indigenous culture during a visit to an Amazonian Kichua community center. Here, you'll be welcomed by community members and learn more about their daily way of life. After lunch explore the beautiful Garzacocha Lagoon and Ceiba Trail. Look for monkeys and birds; sometimes, families of squirrel monkeys will join the capuchin monkeys in looking for food. The tremendous calls of the howler monkeys can be heard in the afternoon, and the smallest monkey in the world, the pygmy marmoset, can be seen here too. Plenty of birds like the unusual looking Hoatzin, colorful toucans, and majestic macaws can also be seen flying overhead. After dark, set out on a walk for the chance to enjoy the creatures and sounds of the Amazon jungle at night. Sometimes we can see amazing things during this activity. Make sure you bring a flashlight for this fantastic experience. *Overnight at La Selva Amazon Ecolodge. (BLD)*



JULY 19 - QUITO

Depart from the lodge early in the morning after breakfast. Take the canoe (2 hours approx.) to Puerto Francisco de Orellana where you will board a plane back to Quito (30 min flight). Once in Quito, transfer to your hotel, which was already included in the main trip. *Overnight at San José de Puenbo. (BLD)*

JULY 20 - DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for your flight back home. Hotel check-out by noon. (B)

EXTENSION LAND PRICING

\$2,465 per person

Based on 4 participants. Single supplement is \$420.

Price includes:

- Internal flights relevant to itinerary
- 4 nights' accommodation
- 12 meals (4 breakfasts, 4 lunches, 4 dinners)
- Non-alcoholic beverages with meals
- Sightseeing and activities as described, including entrance fees
- Private vehicle transportation
- Full-time expert birding naturalist guide for duration of the program
- Departure tax

Price does not include: international airfare, trip cancellation insurance, tips and gratuities, drinks purchased on own, items of a personal nature.

Final payment due no later than: **April 12, 2023**

THE FINE PRINT

Cost is based on a minimum of 4 participants in double occupancy.

A \$200 per person deposit and enrollment form is due to hold your space on this trip. This deposit is refundable 95 days prior to departure excluding a \$100 cancellation fee. Cancellations after this date are non refundable.