



# COLOMBIA

CRIMSON-RUMPED TOUCANET BY REINIER MUNGUIA

## Birding the Central Andes, Valle del Cauca, and Amazon *with Western Field Ornithologists*



WESTERN FIELD  
ORNITHOLOGISTS

AUGUST 1 - 14, 2024

SPACE LIMITED! For more information or to enroll, visit [holbrook.travel/wfo-co24](https://holbrook.travel/wfo-co24)

*With over 1,900 avian species — more than any other country in the world — Colombia is a birder's paradise waiting to be discovered.* On this 14-day program with Western Field Ornithologists, you'll embark on a comprehensive adventure through a variety of habitats to seek out as many species as possible. The journey begins high in the cloud forests of the Central Andes around Manizales, with visits to renowned reserves such as Otún Quimbaya Fauna and Flora Sanctuary, Los Nevados National Natural Park, Hacienda El Bosque, and Termales del Ruiz. From here, head south to the Valle del Cauca region to observe species characteristic of the megadiverse Chocó biogeographic region. By contrast, the experience culminates amid the lowland tropical rainforests of the Colombian Amazon, a still-under-the-radar birding destination.

### HIGHLIGHTS

- Look for the highly localized Buffy Helmetcrest, as well as hundreds of other species, in Los Nevados National Natural Park.
- Meet with members of the Yarumo Blanco Foundation and learn about their award-winning work in community conservation and social development and about the development of the Central Andes Birding Trail.
- Enjoy great opportunities to photograph Toucan Barbets, Crimson-rumped Toucanets, and numerous tanagers and hummingbirds at Doña Dora observatory in the Upper Anchicayá River Valley.
- Bird the wetlands of Laguna de Sonso, an important biodiversity oasis amid an industrial expansion area.
- Search for the iconic Capuchinbird during a visit to Sabanitas, an Indigenous Amazonian community that manages a varzea forest path protecting some of the region's important species.



# ITINERARY

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## DAY 1 | THU | AUG 01 | PEREIRA

Meet the group in Miami and fly together to Pereira. Participants will be booked on the same flight as part of their international air (not included in land cost). Transfer to the hotel. Check-in starts at 3 pm. Meet this evening for a welcome orientation and dinner at the hotel restaurant.

**DINNER**  
**SONESTA HOTEL**

## DAY 2 | FRI | AUG 02 | MANIZALES

This morning, check out and travel approximately one hour to Otún Quimbaya, with birding en route. Located on the western slope of the central mountain range, Otún Quimbaya Fauna and Flora Sanctuary protects the middle basin of the Otún River and the Andean and high Andean forests surrounding it. The site has been reforested for more than 40 years, creating connectivity with the well-preserved forests of the upper part of Los Nevados National Natural Park and resulting in a biological corridor of great importance in the Central Andes. Spend the morning and early afternoon birding in Otún. Look for Cauca Guan, Chestnut Wood-Quail, Torrent Duck, Rufescent (Colombian) Screech-Owl, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, Hooded Antpitta, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Flame-rumped Tanager, Scrub Tanager, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Multicolored Tanager, Crested Ant-Tanager, and White-capped Tanager — just a few of the 400 species recorded here. It is also possible to see large Andean mammals, such as mountain tapir and sometimes spectacled bear. After lunch at the on-site lodge, meet members of the Yarumo Blanco Foundation. This community association manages the park and was heavily involved with the development of the Andean Birding Trail. All members of the foundation are local farmers who have made an unparalleled effort to make Otún one of the best sanctuaries in the country. Learn about their award-winning work in community conservation and social development. Also meet with park rangers to learn about Colombia's rich national park system. Later this afternoon, continue to Manizales. Check in and have dinner at the hotel, with time together to complete your daily birding checklist. Elevation: 7,382 feet / Walking conditions: Easy, unpaved rural road, little inclination / Temperature: 60-79 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**QUO QUALITY HOTEL**

## DAY 3 | SAT | AUG 03 | NEVADO DEL RUÍZ

After breakfast, depart for Hacienda El Bosque. The reserve is characterized by large patches of high Andean cloud forest mixed with livestock paddocks and potato fields. Over 120 species have been seen on the property, including Purple-backed Thornbill, Crescent-faced Antpitta, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Ocellated Tapaculo, Black-collared Jay, Rufous Wren, Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Plushcap, and Capped Conebill. Later, arrive at Termales del Ruíz, with time to bird around the lodge's trails and hummingbird feeders or relax in the magnificent thermal hot springs baths. Elevation: 9,186-9,843 ft / Accessibility: Easy - Medium, unpaved roads, trails inside the reserve / Temperature: 46 - 61 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**TERMALES DEL RUIZ**

## DAY 4 | SUN | AUG 04 | MANIZALES

Spend the day birding in Los Nevados National Natural Park. Some of today's specialties include Buffy Helmetcrest, Many-striped Canastero, White-chinned Thistletail, Tawny Antpitta, Plumbeous Sierra Finch, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Glossy Flowerpiercer, Andean Lapwing, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Greater Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, and Black-thighed Puffleg. The park is undoubtedly one of the most beautiful places in the country; the landscape is framed by snow-capped peaks that include three active volcanoes: El Ruíz, Santa Isabel, and Tolima. In addition to great birding, the park's flora is another

draw, featuring an immensity of rare and unique species. This afternoon, continue to Tinamu Lodge, located about an hour outside the city of Manizales in an agricultural region known for producing shade-grown coffee. Elevation: 11,155 - 12,139 ft / Accessibility: Easy, rural unpaved roads, paved roads / Temperature: 43 -57 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**TINAMU LODGE**

## DAY 5 | MON | AUG 05 | CALI

Enjoy an early breakfast and birding on the lodge trails. The Tinamú property is a mosaic of coffee with shade, secondary growth, and patches of native forest. Possible species include Moustached Puffbird, Common Potoo, Golden-collared Manakin, Andean Motmot, Jet Antbird, Great Antshrike, Gray-fronted Dove, Scaled Antpitta, Spectacled Parrotlet, Red-headed Barbet, Colombian Chachalaca, and Bay-headed, Scrub, Guira, and Blue-necked Tanagers. Depart at 10 am, stopping en route for lunch in the area of Chinchiná, and then continuing toward Cali in Colombia's Valle del Cauca region. Arrive at the hotel at 5 pm. Elevation: 4265 ft / Accessibility: easy, rural unpaved road, trails inside the reserve / Temperature: 75-84 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**MOVICH OR ARUACANA**

## DAY 6 | TUE | AUG 06 | CALI

Set out today toward the Upper Anchicayá River Valley, a little less than two hours from Cali, for birding along an old road that connects to the Pacific coast. This road is in good condition yet experiences minimal vehicular traffic, making it safe to hike and bird on foot. While here, stop at Finca Doña Dora, an observatory where more than 400 species have been recorded. Thanks to its location at a mid-high elevation range (5,250 feet), there is a confluence of Andean species as well as wetland forest species from the Chocó biogeographic region. Look for Toucan Barbet, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Tricolored Brushfinch, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, and numerous tanagers and hummingbirds, among others. Elevation: 5249 ft / Accessibility: paved road / Temperature: 68-79 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**MOVICH OR ARUACANA**

## DAY 7 | WED | AUG 07 | CALI

Today, travel about 45 minutes to La Florida Bosque de las Aves. Found within the Important Bird & Biodiversity Area (IBA) known as Bosque de San Antonio/Km 18, La Florida is a private project whose owner is very dedicated and passionate about showing the best vantage point possible for tanagers, toucans, and woodpeckers. The site also has feeders for Chestnut Wood-Quail, drawing in a stable local population almost daily. Multicolored Tanagers and other species can also be seen here. Elevation: 8202 ft / Accessibility: rural unpaved road. / Temperature: 61-75 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**MOVICH OR ARUACANA**

## DAY 8 | THU | AUG 08 | BOGOTÁ

Depart for Laguna de Sonso, an oxbow of the Cauca River about an hour and a half from Cali. The lake is considered an important bird reserve in the Valle del Cauca region, as it is one of the last refuges along the riverbank that has survived the effects of the sugarcane industry. Extensive crop fields and livestock farming along the edge of the Cauca River have critically transformed the wetlands of this region. However, Laguna de Sonso is a protected area and provides the perfect habitat for many lowland and dry forest species, making it a biodiversity oasis amid an industrial expansion area. More than 390 bird species have been recorded within its wetlands and dry forest ecosystems to date. Later, transfer to the airport for your flight to Bogotá. Elevation: 3281 ft / Accessibility: rural unpaved road, trails along the border of the wetland. / Temperature: 81-93 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**HILTON GARDEN INN**

## DAY 9 | FRI | AUG 09 | INÍRIDA

Travel to Bogotá airport for your flight to Inírida in the Colombian Amazon. Upon arrival, head to your hotel for check-in, followed by lunch at a local restaurant. This afternoon, visit Caño Culebra Trail. This area, which is composed primarily of white sand scrub and traditional low forests, attracts a number of specialist species. The open spaces make it ideal for observing macaws and guans. Look also for cotingas and tanagers perched atop the few scattered tall trees. At sundown, the pastures of Caño Culebra are great for spotting nightjars and owls. Other targets here today include Black Manakin, Pale-bellied Mourner, Cinereous Tinamou, Least Nighthawk, Brown Jacamar, Slender-footed Tyrannulet, Black-eared Fairy, White-necked Puffbird, Golden-spangled Piculet, Ringed Woodpecker, Plain-throated and Spot-backed Antwrens, Black-crested Antshrike, Black-capped Becard, Lafresnaye's Piculet, Spix's Guan, Citron-bellied Attila, Plumbeous Euphonia, Spangled and Pompadour Cotingas, Amazonian Black-Tyrant, Plain-crested Elaenia, Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, Mealy Parrot, Blue-and-yellow and Red-and-green Macaws, Plain-breasted Ground-Dove, Yellowish Pipit, White-chinned Sapphire, and Red-shouldered and Burnished-buff Tanagers. Elevation: 650 feet / Accessibility: Indigenous country roads, flat and easy walking / Temperature: 80-95 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**FUENTES DEL GUAINIA**

## DAY 10 | SAT | AUG 10 | INÍRIDA

After an early breakfast, visit Sabanitas, a nearby Indigenous community with an established touristic gram. The birds and the community live in harmony, and during the early morning hours it is possible to see Bare-necked Fruitcrows on rooftops and in the trees around the community. Also look for Speckled Chachalaca, Black-bellied Cuckoo, Gray-fronted Dove, White-bearded Hermit, Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Black-bellied Thorntail, Versicolored Emerald, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Sungrebe, and Double-toothed Kite. The community also manages the Caño Carbón trail, an approximately three mile versea forest path that protects some of the region's important species. Even though it is relatively low in biodiversity due to its vegetation, so far it is the only known place locally where it's possible to easily spot the iconic Capuchinbird. Nevertheless, more than 225 species have been recorded here, especially antbirds and flycatchers. Be on the lookout for Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Variegated Tinamou, Crimson-crested and Yellow-throated Woodpeckers, Black-headed Parrot, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Dwarf Tyrant Manakin, White-crowned Manakin, and Screaming Piha. It is important to understand that the versea forests may flood heavily during the rainy season (April to October) and it's necessary to travel by boat around the trails; sometimes the water levels around the trails may surpass 15 feet in depth. After a morning hike, return to the community for lunch and time to relax, and then continue birding along the trails on the way out of the community back to the hotel. Elevation: 650 feet / Accessibility: Indigenous country roads, flat and easy / Temperature: 80 95 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**FUENTES DEL GUAINIA**

## DAY 11 | SUN | AUG 11 | INÍRIDA

This morning, board a boat and travel 15 minutes upriver to the Matraca Trail. A 2.5 mile trail leads to the Matraca community of the Curripaco Indigenous people. This is quite possibly the best place for birding in the entire Inírida region. In Matraca, it is possible to spot the endemic Orinoco Softtail, as well as Rose-breasted Chat, Blue-throated Piping Guan, Crestless Curassow, Butterfly Coquette, Gray-breasted Sabrewing, Slender-billed Kite, Green-tailed Jacamar, Golden-green Woodpecker, and Black Bushbird. Return to town for lunch at a local restaurant, and then spend some time at the hotel to relax. Later this afternoon, board a boat and travel about 45 minutes to Laguna Negra. This is a wonderful lake within the forest at the edge of the Guaviare River, home to wetland species like the Screaming Piha, Hoatzin, and Osprey, among others. With luck, you may also glimpse pink river dolphins and giant otters in the lagoon's tranquil waters. Make a stop at La Rompida Farmhouse, owned by Don Rafael, where it's possible to observe the White-eared Jacamar and the Inírida Antshrike, a new, as yet undescribed species that is truly wonderful

to see and hear. Additional species you may see today are the Sungrebe, Black Skimmer, Sunbittern, Jabiru, Anhinga, and Capped Heron. Elevation: 650 feet / Accessibility: Black water Amazonian lagoons and flat trails near La Rompida Farmhouse / Temperature: 80-95 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**FUENTES DEL GUAINIA**

## DAY 12 | MON | AUG 12 | INÍRIDA

Today travel about an hour and a half to the Cerros de Mavecure. These three monolithic hills are located about 30 miles upstream from the city, following the Inírida River. The three hills that make up Mavecure are called Pajarito Hill (2,335 feet), Mono Hill (1,574 feet) and Mavecure Hill (560 feet) and are part of a much larger geological formation known as the Guiana Shield, which encompasses Guyana, Suriname, French Guiana, Venezuela and parts of Colombia and northern Brazil. The Cerros de Mavecure are one of the most sacred places for several different Amazonian Indigenous tribes, such as the Curripaco and the Puinave peoples. The Remanso community next to the hills offers grandiose opportunities for birding in forest with firm, fragmented land that connects evenly with monolithic stone blankets filled with scattered tall trees. This is an excellent place to view King Vulture, Black Skimmer, Swallow-winged Puffbird, Cliff Flycatcher, Orange-breasted Falcon, Black Caracara, Crested Oropendola, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Burnished-buff Tanager, Black-collared Swallow, Brown Jacamar, Bright-rumped Attila, Golden-headed Manakin, Opal-rumped Tanager, Grayish Saltator, Harpy Eagle, White-naped Seedeater, Spangled and Pompadour Cotingas, White-browed Purpletuff, and Spot-backed Antwren. Spend the morning birding on the Remanso community land surrounding the hills, and then board the boat for a five minute ride to the community's restaurant. Here you will have an authentic Indigenous lunch, followed by time to relax on the beach. Depart mid-afternoon for the journey back to Inírida. This evening, have dinner and experience a special show by a local Indigenous community as we say farewell to the Colombian Amazon. Elevation: 650 2,300 feet / Accessibility: Boat ride, hiking over stone trails is optional / Temperature: 80 95 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**FUENTES DEL GUAINIA**

## DAY 13 | TUE | AUG 13 | BOGOTÁ

On your last morning in the Amazon, visit the Vitina community and Flor de Inírida Reserve, one of the most wonderful places in Inírida for birding. With a beautiful white sand savanna, tall scattered trees and easy access to the main habitat, this is the location of two iconic bromeliad species from the region, both known as flor de Inírida. The two species are differentiated by the shape and size of their inflorescence and the time of year when they blossom. These savannas only exist on the eastern extremity of Colombia and the western extremity of Venezuela, at a point where the Amazon intersects with the Orinoquía and the Guiana Shield. The habitat is also conducive for some specialist avian species, among them the White-naped Seedeater and the Yellowish Pipit. Looking toward the tops of trees, you might see three gorgeous cotinga species: the Pompadour, Spangled, and Purple-breasted. The hiking is always done on trails from the community and the paved access road. Return to the hotel to check out and then transfer to the airport for your flight to Bogotá. Spend the remainder of the afternoon relaxing and enjoying the hotel amenities, and then join the group at the hotel restaurant for a farewell dinner. Elevation: 650 feet / Accessibility: Indigenous country roads, flat and easy walking, access road to the Vitina Indigenous community / Temperature: 80-95 °F.

**BREAKFAST-LUNCH-DINNER**  
**HILTON GARDEN INN**

## DAY 14 | WED | AUG 14 | DEPART

Flights home. Check-out is at 1 pm.

**BREAKFAST**

## ABOUT YOUR TRIP LEADERS



### Philip Unitt

Philip Unitt is the Dennis and Carol Wilson Endowed Chair of Ornithology and curator of the Department of Birds and Mammals at the San Diego Natural History Museum. Phil is a specialist in subspecies identification, distribution,

and history of distributional change of California birds. He has led large survey projects, organizing hundreds of volunteers; analyzed and interpreted extensive data sets; and prepared more than 4,000 bird specimens. Phil edits and produces publications on a wide variety of scientific subjects for diverse audiences, both public and professional. He authored *The San Diego County Bird Atlas* and *The Birds of San Diego County*, coauthored *Birds of the Salton Sea*, and is editor of *Western Birds*, the regional journal of ornithology for western North America. He is an active birder whose extensive experience spans more than 30 years. In the past he has led birding trips to such destinations as Ecuador, Costa Rica, Panama, and Peru.



### Kurt Leuschner

Kurt Leuschner, a southern California native, resides in Palm Desert, California with his wife Candice and three children, Luke, Drake, and Annabelle. He is a tenured Professor of Natural Resources at College of the Desert, teaching a variety of

courses in conservation, science, and natural history for the past 28+ years. He holds a Master's degree in Wildlife Ecology from the University of Florida; his specialties include field ornithology, entomology, desert natural history and tropical ecology. Kurt has been leading and organizing birding and natural history trips all over the United States and the world since 1980. After a year studying zoology and Kiswahili at the University of Nairobi and two years serving in Tanzania's wildlife division with the U.S. Peace Corps, he began taking groups in 1993 to international destinations including Kenya, Tanzania, Uganda, Egypt, Costa Rica, Panama, Honduras, Colombia, Ecuador, the Galapagos, Peru, Cuba, New Zealand, and Tasmania. Africa remains a favorite destination — in 1996 he became a charter member of the African Bird Club and has been the sole U.S. representative for the ABC ever since. Since 2000, Kurt has been an active member of the Western Field Ornithologists and is the Past-President of WFO and chair of the field trip committee. In 2008 Kurt received The Roger Tory Peterson Nature Education Achievement Award and was voted Faculty of the Year at College of the Desert. In his spare time he researches (and bands) California Scrub-Jays (*Aphelocoma californica*) and has recently completed a project involving sound recording of this species and other closely related corvids.



## PRICING DETAILS

**\$5,795** per person

Cost is based on a minimum/maximum of 12 participants in double occupancy. For a single room throughout the trip, add \$600 per person.

All-inclusive (with two WFO leaders and expert Colombian guides) except international airfare, gratuities, and travel/trip cancellation insurance.

A \$350 per person deposit and enrollment form are required to hold your space on this trip. This deposit is refundable until April 28, 2024, 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.

**Final payment due date:** April 28, 2024



MANY-STRIPED CANASTEROS BY DEBBIE JORDAN



CAPUCHINBIRD

**FOR MORE INFORMATION, OR TO ENROLL:**

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