



**BOLIVIA, LAND OF ENDEMIC MACAWS: THE ANDES  
AND CHACO LOWLANDS**

**24 OCTOBER – 13 NOVEMBER 2018**



**Red-fronted Macaw** (photo Ken Logan) is one of our targets on this trip.

Bolivia may be one of the less frequently visited birding destinations in South America, but it has truly great potential and magnificent birds. The country holds 1432 bird species, the sixth country with the largest number of birds after Colombia, Peru, Brazil, Indonesia, and Ecuador. There are 20 endemic species, but Bolivia also holds several range-restricted and 48 globally threatened birds that are very difficult to find somewhere else. The reason for this avian biodiversity probably is the large number of different ecosystems found in this country. From Amazon rainforest through cloudforest (Yungas) mountains, tropical savannas, cerrado, flooded savannas, Chiquitania forest, and Chaco to high Andean mountains and Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, Bolivia is most likely the most diverse landlocked country on earth.

The itinerary of our Bolivia birding tour gives you the opportunity to explore in 19 days the most important birding ecosystems in search of the best birds the country has to offer.

Our trip starts in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, a lowland city surrounded by native woodlands of Acacia-like trees and other xerophytic vegetation (the Chiquitania region) and vast grassland plains and savannas reminiscent of the Brazilian cerrado, allowing us to see most of the bird species endemic to and typical of this ecosystem, such as **Toco Toucan, White-wedged Piculet, Chotoy Spinetail, Chopi Blackbird, White Woodpecker, White-bellied Nothura, Red-winged Tinamou, Red-legged Seriema, Green-cheeked Parakeet**, the near-endemic **Bolivian Slaty Antshrike**, and others.

We will then fly to the town of Trinidad north of Santa Cruz, located in the province of Beni, which is surrounded by grasslands and wetlands similar to the Brazilian Pantanal. We will look for the endemic and critically endangered **Blue-throated Macaw**, one of the most representative birds of Bolivia and one of the most endangered species of parrots in the world, with only 110-130 individuals. Other species include the endemic subspecies of **Plain Softtail** and **Grey-crested Cacholote, Velvet-fronted Grackle, Mato Grosso Antbird, Pale-crested Woodpecker, Chestnut-fronted, Blue-and-yellow, and Red-and-green Macaws**, as well as large numbers of **Jabiru, Woodstork, Wattled Jacana, Limpkin, and Plumbeous and Bare-faced Ibises** on the area's lagoons.

After flying back to Santa Cruz we will drive south towards the border with Paraguay to explore the Chaco, a vast and impenetrable deciduous thornbush-like ecosystem that covers large parts of Paraguay and Northern Argentina and reaches into southern Bolivia. The Chaco holds several very special bird species, like the most-wanted **Black-legged Seriema, Chaco Earthcreeper, Little Thornbird, Many-colored Chaco Finch, Crested Hornero**, and others. **Black-legged Seriema** is more reliably seen here than in any other country that contains Chaco.

Transferring back to Santa Cruz, we start our drive towards the inter-Andean valleys, on the way passing through the lush tropical forest of the Bermejo canyon, where we should find species such as **Bolivian White-crowned Tapaculo, Grey-throated Leaf-tosser, Military Macaw, Rufescent Screech Owl, Two-banded Warbler, Dusky-green Oropendola**, and more.

We will explore all the dry valleys between Samaipata and Saipina in search of several Bolivian endemics and hope to find **Bolivian Earthcreeper, Bolivian Blackbird, Cliff Parakeet**, and the endangered **Red-fronted Macaw**. Other species include **Dusky-legged**

**Guan, Giant Antshrike, Grey-crested Finch, and Chaco and White-eared Puffbirds,** among others.

Even though many people think Bolivia conjures up mainly the idea of high Altiplano, the country actually holds a lot of lowland ground, including Amazon, Chaco, and the savannas of Beni. But once we reach the town of Cochabamba, we seriously start our climb into the high Andes and the Altiplano.

Leaving the dry valleys behind, we will drive through the cloudforest of the Siberia area, where we will look for the endemic **Black-hooded Sunbeam** and **Black-throated Thistletail**, but also for other species such as **Grey-hooded Parakeet, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Trilling Tapaculo, Light-crowned Spinetail, Pearled Treerunner, and Fulvous-headed Brush Finch.**

The city of Cochabamba, in the center of the country at 2550 meters (8366 feet) above sea level, will be our base for the next few days to explore the slopes of the snow-capped Cerro Tunari, where several endemics occur, such as **Cochabamba Mountain Finch** and **Bolivian Warbling Finch.** We will have a chance to see the gorgeous **Red-tailed Comet, Andean Condor** and several *Polylepis* specialists including **Tawny Tit-Spinetail, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail, and Giant Conebill.** The beautiful mountain scenery is a picture in itself with images of **Andean Gull, Andean Goose, and Andean Lapwing.**

The cloudforest and upper tropical foothills hold several range-restricted species that are otherwise found only in the extreme southeast of Peru and are hard to get there, such as **Hooded Mountain Toucan, Orange-browed Hemispingus, and Yungas Tody-Tyrant.** We will also look for the endemic **Yellow-rumped Antwren, White-eared Solitaire, Straw-backed Tanager, Blue-banded Toucanet, Crested Quetzal,** and more.

In order to save time we will fly to the city of La Paz and skip the long whole-day drive from Cochabamba, with only few species to see. From La Paz we will explore two more sights.

First we will visit Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world, located at 3800 meters (12 468 feet) with a depth of 281 meters (9 222 feet), which is the home of the near-endemic, flightless **Titicaca Grebe.** We will also have a chance to see **Andean Avocet, Chilean Flamingo, Puna Teal, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed Teal, and Many-colored Rush Tyrant** here.

Finally we will explore the lush cloudforest and foothills above Coroico town. We will drive through a spectacular Andean mountain road, once called the death road due to the high rate of truck accidents, but since truck traffic is not allowed anymore these days, the road to Coroico has become a paradise for birders and mountain bikers. We will be busy for two days looking for species such as **Rufous-bellied and Grey-breasted Seedsnipes, Scribble-tailed Canastero, and Giant Coot,** which are mostly restricted to the high passes of the mountains, and also descend to the forest, where many species are possible, including mega mixed flocks of various more wide-spread tanagers, **Barred and Band-tailed Fruiteaters, Versicolored Barbet, Upland Antshrike, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Hooded Mountain Toucan, Citrine Warbler, Glossy-black Thrush, Scarlet-bellied, Chestnut-bellied, and Hooded Mountain Tanagers,** and many more.

We then will return to El Alto (the La Paz international airport) to connect with our international flights home or fly for a short extension to the southwestern part of Bolivia in the province of Tarija to spend two days in the tropical mountain forest near the Argentinean border in search of **Rufous-throated Dipper** and **Red-faced Guan**.

Our Bolivia birding adventure gives you the opportunity to explore this fabulous country, which offers 20 endemic birds, two endemic macaws among a large list of over 20 species of Psittacids for parrot lovers, the two South American dippers, both seriemas, over 40 avian families, and a sizeable number of range-restricted species.

*Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.*

### Itinerary (19 days/18 nights or 21 days/20 nights)

#### Day 1. Arrival in Santa Cruz de la Sierra, birding around the airport

Arrival at Santa Cruz de la Sierra in the afternoon.

We will spend a couple of hours birding around the airport, looking for species like **Chotoy Spinetail**, **Rufous-fronted Thornbird**, **Chopi Blackbird**, **Orange-backed Troupial**, **Plain Inezia**, **Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant**, **Rufous Casiornis**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Toco Toucan**, **White-wedged Piculet**, **Yellow-chevroned Parakeet**, **Blue-winged Parrotlet**, **White-bellied Nothura**, **Campo Flicker**, and **Greater Rhea**.

Overnight: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz de la Sierra

#### Day 2. Lomas de Arena Reserve, flight to and birding at Trinidad

We will have an early start to explore the Lomas de Arena Reserve, where we will focus on **Red-legged Seriema** and **White-eared Puffbird**.

Then we will transfer to the airport to connect with our flight to Trinidad in the Beni province. The wetlands of Trinidad provide good numbers of **Jabiru**, **Woodstork**, **Roseate Spoonbill**, **Limpkin**, and **Wattled Jacana**. We will also look for **Snail Kite**, **Black-collared Hawk**, **Long-winged Harrier**, the local subspecies of **Plain Softtail**, and **Velvet-fronted Grackle**, **Gray-crested Cacholote**, **White-bellied** and **Rusty-collared Seedeaters**, and more.

Overnight: Casa Lucia Hotel Boutique, Trinidad

#### Day 3. Birding the Trinidad area

We will depart early in the morning to look for our main target here, the critically endangered **Blue-throated Macaw**. Until 1992 the natural habitat of this species was completely unknown, and with no more than 73 – 87 mature individuals it is one of the most endangered avian species in the world. Around Trinidad there is an accessible site, where three pairs live. We will also look for other species like **Blue-and-yellow Macaw**, **Red-and-green Macaw**, **Chestnut-fronted Macaw**, **Mato Grosso Antbird**, **White-lored Spinetail**, **Narrow-billed Woodcreeper**, **Undulated Tinamou**, **Scarlet-headed Blackbird**, **Solitary Cacique**, **White-tailed Goldenthrout**, and more.

Overnight: Casa Lucia Hotel Boutique, Trinidad

#### Day 4. Flight to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, birding the Botanical Garden

After a last morning of birding around Trinidad we will get a flight back to Santa Cruz de la Sierra. Here we'll spend a couple of hours in the Botanical Garden, looking for **Amazonian Motmot**, **Blue-crowned Trogon**, the handsome **Green-cheeked Parakeet**, **Pale-crested Woodpecker**, **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker**, our first chance for the endemic **Bolivian Slaty Antshrike**, and many others.

Overnight: Hotel Cortez, Santa Cruz de la Sierra

#### **Day 5. Transfer to and birding in the Chaco**

We will leave Santa Cruz de la Sierra and drive south toward the Chaco, one of the largest and least explored ecosystems in South America. The Chaco holds an interesting bird community with birds that can be found elsewhere only in the Chaco in Argentina and Paraguay.

On the way to the Chaco we shall look for **Military Macaw**, **Stripe-backed Antbird**, **Black-capped Antwren**, **Ringed Teal**, **Least Grebe**, **Scaly-headed Parrot**, **Turquoise-fronted Parrot**, and others.

In the afternoon we will start exploring the Chaco itself, where our main target is the most-wanted **Black-legged Seriema**. Other species we might encounter are **Lark-like Brushrunner**, **Crested Hornero**, **Chaco Suiriri**, **Cinereous Tyrant**, **Little Thornbird**, and **Chaco Earthcreeper**.

Overnight: J R Hotel, Camiri

#### **Day 6. Birding the Chaco**

We will have another day in the Chaco to look for species like **Short-billed Canastero**, **Many-colored Chaco Finch**, **Bolivian Slaty Antshrike**, **Great Antshrike**, **Crowned Slaty Flycatcher**, **Checkered Woodpecker**, and others. Time permitting, we can scout a new site, where the enigmatic **Black-bodied Woodpecker** has been recorded in 2014.

Overnight: J R Hotel, Camiri

#### **Day 7. Transfer to Bermejo, birding en route**

Today we will start our drive back to Santa Cruz de la Sierra, exploring some habitat north of the Chaco, where we can find **Grey-crowned Warbler**, **Ochre-cheeked Spinetail**, **Black-bellied Antwren**, **Black-capped Antwren**, **Blue-tufted Starthroat**, **Gilded Hummingbird**, **Sooty-fronted Spinetail**, **Pale-breasted Spinetail**, **Golden-collared Macaw**, and with a lot of luck we may encounter **Solitary Crowned Eagle**.

This will be a long drive, having as our final destination the comfortable Laguna Volcan Golf Eco Resort at the edge of Amoro National Park.

Overnight: Laguna Volcan Golf Eco Resort, Bermejo

#### **Day 8. Birding Bermejo, transfer to Comarapa, birding en route**

We are going to spend some hours birding around the lodge, looking for species like **Two-banded Warbler**, **Black-goggled Tanager**, **Dusky-green Oropendola**, **Plush-crested Jay**, **Purplish Jay**, **Masked Duck**, **Green-cheeked Parakeet**, **Blue-throated Piping-Guan**, and many others.

After a few hours we start our drive towards Comarapa. During the drive we will look for **Gray-crested Finch**, **Dusky-legged Guan**, **Striped Woodpecker**, **Black-and-rufous Warbling Finch**, **Striped Cuckoo**, **White-fronted Woodpecker**, **Bolivian Earthcreeper**, **Spot-breasted Thornbird**, and more.

Overnight: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

#### **Day 9. Search for the Red-fronted Macaw**

Today we have an early start to drive to Saipina and look for the endemic **Red-fronted Macaw**. Other birds here include **Cliff Parakeet, Cliff Flycatcher, Bolivian Earthcreeper, Spot-backed Puffbird, Giant Antshrike, Black-capped Warbling Finch, Rufous-sided Warbling Finch, Striped Woodpecker**, and more.

Overnight: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

#### **Day 10. Birding the Comarapa area**

Today we will explore the humid patch of montane forest above Comarapa, looking for Azara's [Buff-browed] **Spinetail, Light-crowned Spinetail, Trilling Tapaculo**, the endemic **Rusty-faced Antpitta, Common Bush Tanager, Fulvous-headed Brush Finch, White-browed Brush Finch**, the endemic **Black-hooded Sunbeam, Black-winged Parrot, Gray-hooded Parakeet, Olive-crowned Crescentchest**, and more.

Overnight: Hotel Paraiso, Comarapa

#### **Day 11. Birding the Comarapa area, transfer to Cochabamba**

Today we will focus on birds of higher elevations like **Black-throated Thistletail, Darwin Nothura, Thick-billed Siskin, Bolivian Brush Finch**, the endemic **Grey-bellied Flowerpiercer**, and the endemic **Wedge-tailed Hillstar**.

Later in the day we will drive to Cochabamba.

Overnight: Cochabamba

#### **Day 12. Birding the Chapare area**

The Chapare area, well-known in birding circles, is home of several exciting birds, including **Rusty-faced Antpitta, Black-throated Thistletail, Trilling Tapaculo, White-eared Solitaire**, the localized **Hooded Mountain Toucan, Masked Trogon, Superciliaried and Orange-browed Hemispingus, Band-tailed Pigeon, Barred Antthrush, and Streaked Xenops** among many others.

Overnight: Cochabamba

#### **Day 13. Birding the Chapare area**

Today we will focus on the lowest parts of the Chapare with birds like **Crested Quetzal, Yellow-rumped Antbird, Straw-backed Tanager, Blue-banded Toucanet, White-backed Fire-eye, Yungas Manakin, Red-billed Parrot, Scaly-headed Parrot**, and many more.

Overnight: Cochabamba

#### **Day 14. Birding Cerro Tunari**

Today we explore the Cerro Tunari, looking for **Cochabamba Mountain Finch, Bolivian Warbling Finch, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail, Tawny Tit-Spinetail, Puna Tapaculo, Maquis Canastero, Cordilleran Canastero, Rusty-vented Canastero, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Black-hooded Sierra Finch, Greenish Yellow Finch, White-capped Dipper, Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, and Tufted Tit-Tyrant**, and if we are lucky we may find **Giant Conebill and Citron-headed Brush Finch**.

Later we will check some wetlands near Cochabamba to look for **Rosy-billed Pochard, Plumbeous Rail, and Grassland Yellow Finch**.

Overnight: Cochabamba

#### **Day 15. Flight to La Paz, transfer to and birding at Lake Titicaca**

We will take a flight to the city of La Paz and then transfer by car to Lake Titicaca, the highest navigable lake in the world. Here we will look for the flightless **Titicaca Grebe**, and also for **Silvery Grebe, Puna Teal, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed Teal, Yellow-billed**

**Pintail, Andean Goose, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Andean Negrito, Andean Flicker, Peruvian Sierra Finch, Chilean Flamingo, Spot-winged Pigeon, and more.**

Overnight: Lake Titicaca

#### **Day 16. Search for Berlepsch's Canastero**

Today's excursion will take us to Sorata to look for the endemic and localized **Berlepsch's Canastero** and other high-Andes species. We then will drive back to La Paz for an overnight.

Overnight: La Paz

#### **Days 17 – 18. Birding the Coroico Road**

We spend two days exploring the Coroico Road in the Yungas region of Bolivia. Here we will have a chance to find **Rufous-bellied** and **Grey-breasted Seedsnipes**, **White-winged Diuca Finch**, **Scribble-tailed** and **Puna Canasteros**, **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager**, **Grass-green Tanager**, **Hooded Mountain Tanager**, **Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager**, **Diademed Tapaculo**, **Masked** and **Moustached Flowerpiercers**, **Barred** and **Band-tailed Fruiteaters**, **Hooded Mountain Toucan**, **White-collared Jay**, **Cabanis's Spinetail**, **Versicolored Barbet**, **Yungas Tody-Tyrant**, **Upland Antshrike**, and many more.

Overnight: Coroico

#### **Day 19. Departure**

After a last morning birding on the Coroico Road we will drive back to El Alto International Airport in La Paz to connect to our international flights.

### **RUFOUS-THROATED DIPPER EXTENSION**

#### **Day 19. Flight to Tarija**

Today we will fly south to Tarija near the Argentinean border.

Overnight: Tarija

#### **Day 20. Searching for the Rufous-throated Dipper**

We will have an early start to drive to and explore the Tariquia Flora and Fauna National Reserve, where we can find the localized **Rufous-throated Dipper**. This bird is normally included in Northern Argentina tours, and few people realize that here in southern Bolivia it is not difficult to find. There are two species of dippers in South America, and this trip gives you the chance to see both. Other birds here include **Tucuman Parrot** and **Red-faced Guan**.

Overnight: Tarija

#### **Day 21. Flight to La Paz, departure**

After birding the area some more we will fly back to La Paz, where we will connect to our international flights.

**Duration:** 19 days (with extension 21 days)  
**Limit:** 2 – 6  
**Date:** 24 October – 13 November 2018 (with extension to 15 November)  
**Start:** Santa Cruz de la Sierra  
**End:** La Paz

**Price:** Main tour: 5-6 participants US\$6,980 per person sharing

3-4 participants US\$8,179 per person sharing  
2 participants US\$10,597 per person sharing  
Extension: 5-6 participants US\$1,301 per person sharing  
3-4 participants US\$1,581 per person sharing  
2 participants US\$2,167 per person sharing

**Single Supplement:** Main tour: US\$881  
Extension: US\$149

**Price includes:**

Domestic flights

Meals

Accommodation

Guiding fees

Entrance fees

All transport while on tour

Bottled water throughout the tour

**Price excludes:**

International flights

Airport taxes

Items of a personal nature, e.g. laundry, gifts

Drinks

Personal insurance

Tips

**Accommodation:**

Good hotels in Santa Cruz, La Paz, Laguna El Volcan, and at Lake Titicaca. The hotels in Camiri, Cochabamba, and Tarija are more orientated toward business and local people, but they are comfortable. The accommodation in Trinidad is basic but with private bathrooms; there are no twin rooms available. The accommodation in Comarapa is basic, with private rooms and bathrooms, but there is not much service provided in such a small, remote town. But this is the only option in town and has worked well during our last tours.