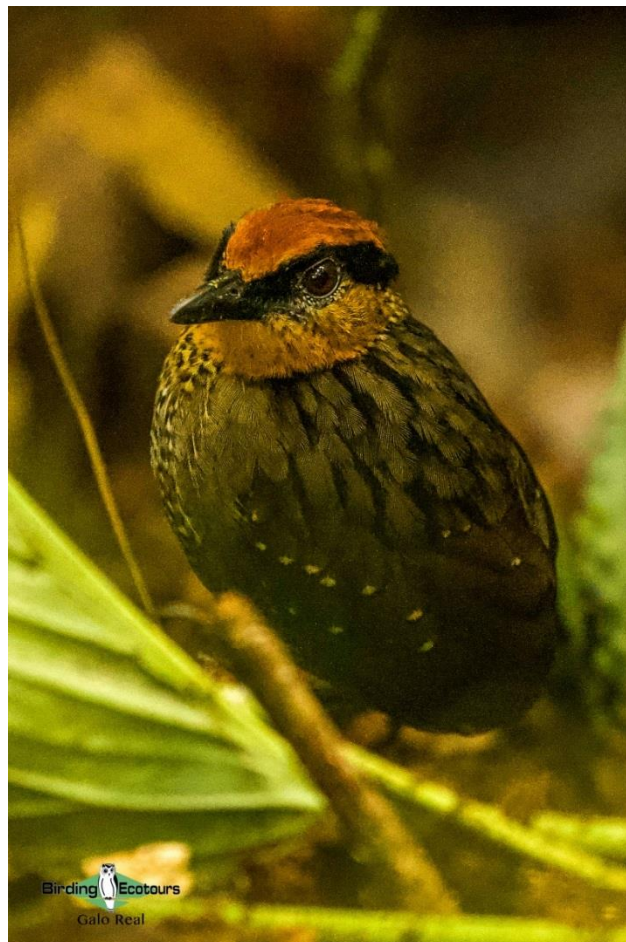




**NORTHERN ECUADOR: BIRDING PARADISE –
HUMMINGBIRD AND ANTPITTA EXTRAVAGANZA**

17 October – 2 November 2019



The rare **Rufous-crowned Antpitta** will be one of our targets on this tour.

Ecuador has the highest bird species diversity per square kilometer on the planet and offers some of the best birding in South America. Due to the short distances to drive, good tourist infrastructure, and wonderful lodges and other facilities for birders, including a multitude of hummingbird and antpitta feeder stations as well, Ecuador is perhaps the obligatory destination on the continent!

Northern Ecuador is truly a birding paradise. You will have the chance to see the best of the country in terms of birding. The west and east slopes of the Andes together make for an exciting 16-day tour.

Perhaps no other tour shows you such a large selection of classic and amazing Neotropical birds. During the next 16 days we will look for **Andean Condor, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Giant Hummingbird, Torrent Duck, White-capped Dipper, Sunbittern, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Yellow-throated Toucan, Toucan Barbet, Choco Toucan, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Golden-collared Toucanet, Choco Trogon, Golden-headed Quetzal, Crested Quetzal, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, White-faced Nunbird, Powerful Woodpecker, Giant Conebill, Ocellated Tapaculo, Tanager Finch, Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, and Oilbird.**

In addition a good number of antpittas, including **Rufous Antpitta, Giant Antpitta, Yellow-breasted Antpitta, Ochre-breasted Antpitta, Moustached Antpitta, Tawny Antpitta, Plain-backed Antpitta, White-bellied Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta,** and the stunning **Rufous-crowned Antpitta,** might also be found.

The number of hummingbirds and tanagers will be amazing, including colorful species like **Violet-tailed Sylph, Brown Inca, Collared Inca, Gorgeted Sunangel, Velvet-purple Coronet, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Gould's Jewelfront, and Wire-crested Thorntail.** We can easily surpass 50 species of hummingbirds on the trip. Tanagers are also a large family to be encountered on this trip, with species such as **Grass-green Tanager, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Flame-faced Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Orange-eared Tanager, Golden Tanager, Golden-eared Tanager, Glistening-green Tanager,** and the incredible **Moss-backed Tanager.** If we are lucky we might encounter hard-to-find species like **Andean Potoo, Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Golden-winged Tody-Flycatcher, and Peruvian Antpitta.**

We invite you to join us and enjoy this birding paradise!

This trip can be combined with our preceding **Ecuador: The Amazon** tour and/or with our following **Galápagos: Natural History Extravaganza** tour.

Itinerary (17 days/16 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Quito

You will arrive at the Mariscal Sucre International Airport in Quito. Your guide will be waiting for you to help with your baggage, take you to your hotel, and go over the schedule for the next day. Dinner is on your own.

Overnight: San Jose del Puembo, Quito

Day 2. Yanacocha Reserve, Old Nono-Mindo Road and Tandayapa Valley

Today we will start our adventure early to explore the Yanacocha Reserve on the north-western side of the Pichincha Volcano. We will visit our first hummingbird feeders with

incredible species such as **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, **Buff-winged Starfrontlet**, **Shining Sunbeam**, **Tyrian Metaltail**, **Sapphire-vented** and **Golden-breasted Pufflegs**, **Lesser Violetear**, and **Great Sapphirewing**. If we are extremely lucky we might find the Critically Endangered (IUCN) and seldom-seen **Black-breasted Puffleg**. Other birds include **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager**, **Barred Fruiteater**, **Andean Guan**, **Rufous Wren**, **Tufted Tit-Tyrant**, **White-throated** and **White-banded Tyrannulets**, **Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant**, **Tawny Antpitta**, **Rufous Antpitta**, **Spectacled Whitestart**, **Great Thrush**, **Red-crested Cotinga**, **Blue-backed** and **Cinereous Conebills**, and much more for our first introduction to Ecuador birds. After lunch we will continue birding along the Old Nono-Mindo Road, and with luck we will spot our first **Plate-billed Mountain Toucan**.

Overnight: Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo

Day 3. Upper Tandayapa Valley and Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve

After an early breakfast we will visit the upper portion of the Tandayapa Valley and the Bellavista Cloud Forest Reserve. Here we will look for **Toucan Barbet**, **Green-and-black Fruiteater**, **Masked Trogon**, **Blue-and-black Tanager**, **Blue-winged Mountain Tanager**, **Strong-billed Woodcreeper**, **Crimson-mantled Woodpecker**, **Cinnamon Flycatcher**, **White-winged Brushfinch**, **Grey-breasted Wood Wren**, **Grass-green Tanager**, **Andean Guan**, and **White-throated Quail-Dove**. We will put all our efforts into localizing the most-wanted **Ocellated Tapaculo** and **Tanager Finch**.

The Bellavista feeders include hummingbirds such as **Speckled Hummingbird**, **Collared Inca**, **Buff-tailed Coronet**, **Fawn-breasted Brilliant**, and **Gorgeted Sunangel**. We will return to Sachatamia Lodge and look for **Lyre-tailed Nightjar**, **Black-and-white Owl**, and hopefully **Colombian Screech Owl**.

Overnight: Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo

Day 4. Mashpi Shungo Rainforest Biodiversity Reserve

This is one of the most special days of the tour, as it focuses on finding one of the most-wanted species in the Neotropics, the sought-after **Rufous-crowned Antpitta**. Restricted to the remaining Chocó habitat of western Ecuador and western Colombia, the Rufous-crowned Antpitta is very elusive and almost impossible to be seen in most of its habitat, and it was a dream to lay eyes on it. In recent years, with the boom of antpitta feeding station in northern South America, the Ecuadorians managed to attract this amazing species to a worm feeding station.

Other potential species in the area are **Black Solitaire**, **Rufous-throated Tanager**, **Grey-and-gold Tanager**, **Rufous Motmot**, **Golden-olive Woodpecker**, **Orange-billed Sparrow**, **Scarlet-rumped Cacique**, **Olivaceous Piculet**, **Dusky Pigeon**, **Grey-headed Kite**, **Red-headed Barbet**, **White-whiskered Puffbird**, **Rufous-tailed Jacamar**, **Red-faced Spinetail**, **Yellow-throated Toucan**, **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis**, and **Scarlet-browed Tanager** among many more.

In the afternoon we will return to Sachatamia for dinner and the night.

Overnight: Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo

Day 5. Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary

Today we will have another early start to bird the Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary, another private reserve of the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation. This hilly lowland reserve is great for Chocó specialists such as **Purple-chested Hummingbird**, **Choco Trogon**, **Stub-tailed Antbird**, **Slate-throated Gnatcatcher**, **Orange-fronted Barbet**, **Dusky Pigeon**, **Collared**

Aracari, Bronze-winged Parrot, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Great Antshrike, White-flanked Antwren, Slaty Antwren, Zeledon's Antbird, Chestnut-backed Antbird, and Red-faced and Slaty Spinetails. In addition we hope to find **Black-winged Saltator, Buff-rumped Warbler, Crested Guan, Lanceolated Monklet, Rose-faced Parrot, Double-toothed Kite, Barred Hawk, Sooty-headed and Choco Tyrannulets, Green Honeycreeper, and Purple Honeycreeper.** If we are very lucky the striking **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis** might be found.

After a whole morning birding Silanche we will return to Sachatamia in the afternoon to enjoy the hummers at the feeders, which may include **Brown Violetear, Brown Inca, Violet-tailed Sylph, Velvet-purple Coronet, Green-crowned Brilliant, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, White-booted Racket-tail, Purple-collared Woodstar, Crowned Woodnymph, Andean Emerald, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and Sparkling Violetear.**

Overnight: Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo

Day 6. Milpe Bird Sanctuary

The Milpe Bird Sanctuary is another obligatory birding stop near Mindo. We will spend the entire day here, looking for Chocó endemics that occur here: **Glistening-green Tanager, Choco Trogon, Choco Toucan, Club-winged Manakin, Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Ecuadorian Thrush, Spotted Woodcreeper, Ornate Flycatcher, Russet Antshrike, Bay-headed Tanager, Band-backed Wren, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Green Thorntail, Maroon-tailed Parakeet, Bay Wren, Golden-headed Quetzal, Dusky-faced Tanager, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, and the gorgeous Moss-backed Tanager.**

Overnight: Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo

Day 7. Refugio Paz de las Aves and transfer to Quito

Refugio Paz de las Aves and Angel Paz are synonymous with respect to birds and antpittas, as the first person to attract and feed antpittas at worm feeder stations, Angel Paz, has turned his property from a ranch into a birders' paradise. We will have an early start to watch the **Andean Cock-of-the-rock** lek. After their "show" we should be able to come across **Giant Antpitta, Yellow-breasted Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Moustached Antpitta, Ochre-breasted Antpitta, and Rufous-breasted Antthrush** devouring a worm buffet.

We will also be looking for **Dark-backed Wood Quail, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Olivaceous Piha, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Montane Woodcreeper, Narino Tapaculo, Three-striped Warbler, Tricolored Brushfinch, Powerful Woodpecker, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Streaked Flycatcher, Orange-crowned Euphonia, Olive-striped Flycatcher, Lesser Greenlet, Marble-faced Bristle Tyrant, Pacific Antwren, Plumbeous Kite, and many more.**

We will take some time to visit the Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve's hummingbird feeders and fruit feeders, which are frequented by **Red-headed Barbet, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, and Golden Tanager.** Then we will return to Quito, looking for **Giant Hummingbird** on the way.

Overnight: San Jose del Puembo, Quito

Day 8. Antisana Ecological Reserve and transfer to Termas de Papallacta

After a week on the western slope of the lower Andes we will climb up in elevation to the Antisana Ecological Reserve. The Antisana Volcano has a height of 5,704 meters (18,714

feet). The newly-formed Antisana Ecological Reserve was until recently a number of extensive ranches. Today it is a well-known nesting site for **Andean Condor**. We will enjoy a different birding day at high elevation, enjoying species such as **Carunculated Caracara**, **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle**, **Aplomado Falcon**, **Variable Hawk**, **Many-striped Canastero**, **Stout-billed Cinclodes**, **Chestnut-winged Cinclodes**, **Black-winged Ground Dove**, **Plumbeous Sierra Finch**, **Andean Lapwing**, **Silvery Grebe**, **Andean Coot**, **Andean Teal**, **Andean Gull**, **Andean Duck**, **Yellow-billed Pintail**, **Giant Hummingbird**, and **Ecuadorian Hillstar**.

After a full morning birding the Laguna de la Mica in the reserve we will stop for lunch at Tambo Condor, another area of the reserve. In the afternoon we will drive to Termas de Papallacta.

Overnight: Termas de Papallacta, Papallacta

Day 9. Papallacta and transfer to Cabañas San Isidro

Before breakfast, depending on the weather, we will backtrack slightly to visit the highland paramo of Papallacta, looking for the most-wanted **Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe**. Other birds here include **Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant**, **Plumbeous Sierra Finch**, **Chestnut-winged Cinclodes**, **Many-striped Canastero**, **Streak-throated Bush Tyrant**, **Paramo Ground Tyrant**, **White-chinned Thistletail**, **Sedge Wren**, **Brown-bellied Swallow**, **Glossy Flowerpiercer**, **Black Flowerpiercer**, and more. We will return for a late breakfast and depart around midday to make our way to our next accommodation, Cabañas San Isidro.

Overnight: Cabañas San Isidro, Cosango

Days 10 – 11. Two full days around San Isidro

The next two days we will spend birding around San Isidro. The lodge grounds include species such as **Masked Trogon**, **Golden-headed** and **Crested Quetzals**, **Inca Jay**, **Great Thrush**, **Glossy-black Thrush**, and **Andean Motmot**. Other possible species are **Montane Woodcreeper**, **Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher**, **Streaked Tuftedcheek**, **White-capped Parrot**, **Yellow-billed Cacique**, **Streak-headed Antbird**, **Black-eared Hemispingus**, **Spotted Barbtail**, **Olive-backed Woodcreeper**, **Golden-crowned Flycatcher**, **Black-crested Warbler**, **Barred Antthrush**, **White-bellied Antpitta**, **Ash-colored Tapaculo**, **Mountain Wren**, **Bluish Flowerpiercer**, **Beryl-spangled Tanager**, **Barred Becard**, **Golden-naped Tanager**, **Rufous Spinetail**, and **Grass-green Tanager**.

We will also look for some interesting night birds such as “**San Isidro Owl**” (undescribed), **Andean Potoo**, **Rufous-bellied Nighthawk**, and **Oilbird**. The hummingbird feeders at San Isidro include species such as **Fawn-breasted Brilliant**, **Speckled Hummingbird**, **Long-tailed Sylph**, **Bronzy Inca**, **Buff-tailed Coronet**, **Collared Inca**, and **Chestnut-breasted Coronet**.

Overnight: Cabañas San Isidro, Cosango

Day 12. Loreto Road and WildSumaco Lodge

After a late breakfast we will continue down the east slope of the Andes to the Loreto Road. We will look for **Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant**, **Black-chested Fruiteater**, **Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer**, **Yellow-throated Tanager**, and **Chestnut-bellied Thrush**. Along the Loreto Road we have chances to see **Green-backed Hillstar**, **Cliff Flycatcher**, **Lemon-browed Flycatcher**, our first **Paradise Tanager**, **Crested Oropendola**, **Yellow-browed Sparrow**, **Black-billed Thrush**, **Violaceous Jay**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Greyish Saltator**,

Swallow Tanager, Orange-eared Tanager, Rufous-naped Greenlet, and Montane Foliage-gleaner.

We will arrive at the WildSumaco Lodge in the afternoon, and with luck we will have good birding activity along the road with species such as **Plumbeous Pigeon, Speckled Chachalaca, Yellow-throated Toucan, Gilded Barbet, Lineated Woodpecker, Collared Trogon, Many-banded Aracari, Lemon-browed Flycatcher, Turquoise Tanager, Golden-eared Tanager, White-lored Euphonia, Bronze-green Euphonia, Foothill Elaenia, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Lettered Aracari, and Sickle-winged Guan.** At night we will try for **Band-bellied Owl** around the lodge.

Overnight: WildSumaco Lodge, Sumaco

Days 13 – 14. WildSumaco

During the next two days we will be birding around WildSumaco Lodge, looking for **Coppery-chested Jacamar, Yellow-throated Spadebill, Grey-tailed Piha, Military Macaw, Spot-winged Parrotlet, Plain-winged Antwren, White-streaked Antvireo, Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, Wing-banded Wren, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Black-billed Treehunter, Lined Antshrike, and Dusky Spinetail.** In addition we may find **Squirrel Cuckoo, Marble-faced Bristle Tyrant, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Ornate Antwren, Large-headed Flatbill, Blackish Rail, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Golden-collared Toucanet, White-eyed Parakeet, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Long-tailed Tyrant, Black-streaked Puffbird, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, and Channel-billed Toucan.**

The WildSumaco antpitta feeding stations should provide **Ochre-breasted Antpitta** and sometimes **Plain-backed Antpitta** and **Chestnut-crowned Gnateater.**

The WildSumaco hummingbird feeders are among the best, and we can get species such as **Napo Sabrewing, Wire-crested Thorntail, Gould's Jewelfront, Black-throated Brilliant, Violet-fronted Brilliant, Many-spotted Hummingbird, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Grey-chinned Hermit, Gorgeted Woodstar, and Wire-crested Thorntail.**

At night we also can try for **Tropical Screech Owl, Rufescent Screech Owl, and Foothill Screech Owl.**

Overnight: WildSumaco Lodge, Sumaco

Day 15. Guango Lodge

After breakfast and the last birding morning at WildSumaco we will begin our return to Quito. Before crossing the Papallacta pass we will stop for the afternoon and a night at Guango Lodge. We will spend the afternoon around the lodge.

Overnight: Guango Lodge, Papallacta

Day 16. Papallacta Lodge, transfer to Quito and transfer to the airport

After a late breakfast we will go and visit the Papallacta area again in case we missed some of the species during our first visit. We will try for **Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe** and also for **Agile Tit-Tyrant** and **Giant Conebill.**

We will arrive at our hotel in Quito for a late lunch, and you can have a day-use of the hotel to take a shower, organize your luggage, and be transferred to the airport in case you have an evening or midnight flight. Participants who decide to spend the night in Quito and fly back home early in the morning can do that without extra charge.

Overnight: San Jose del Puembo, Quito

Day 17. Transfer to the airport and departure

Participants who have an early flight after breakfast will be transferred to the airport.

Please note that the itinerary 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.

Duration: 17 days

Group size: 4 - 8

Date: 17 October – 2 November 2019

Start: Quito

End: Quito

Price: US\$6045 per person sharing

Single Supplement: US\$455

Price includes:

Accommodation (hotels and lodges)

Private guide

Private vehicle

Admission fees

All meals (except where indicated)

Water during the tour

Transfer to and from the airport

Price excludes:

Any activity or service on day 1 (if arriving in the morning)

Dinner on day 1 in Quito and Dinner on day 16 in Quito

Personal health and trip cancellation insurance

Drinks and alcoholic drinks

Personal expenses such as laundry, minibar expenses, internet access, phone calls, etc.

Gratuities

Any expenses on day 17 except breakfast and transfer to the airport