



BIRDING TOUR ECUADOR: THE SOUTH

2 - 20 MARCH 2020



Jocotoco Antpitta is one of our main targets on this trip.

Although it is not as famous as the Northern Ecuador Birding Circuit, the Southern Ecuador route is truly a gem for birders, offering a very unique set of birds, including some country endemics and several range-restricted species shared with adjacent Northern Peru only, with several of them hard to get in that neighboring country.

During these 19 days we will have the chance to explore a unique suite of highly-endangered natural habitats, including the Chocó forest found only in Western Colombia and Ecuador and home to the amazing **Long-wattled Umbrellabird** and **Club-winged Manakin**, and the Tumbesian zone, a very localized habitat that extends through southwest Ecuador and northwest Peru only and is home to a large number of range-restricted species such as **Pale-browed Tinamou**, **Grey-backed Hawk**, and **Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner**.

We also will cross different deciduous lowlands, high-elevation cloudforest, and páramo, looking for **Jocotoco Antpitta**, as well as tropical valleys extending the number of habitats encountered during this trip while visiting a few of the Jocotoco Foundation's private bird reserves. On the foothills of the Andes of the Cordillera del Condor we will visit Cabañas Yankuam in search of the mythical **Orange-throated Tanager**.

The Podocarpus National Park and the foothills of the Cabañas Ecológica Copalinga are home to several tanager flocks and a high diversity of hummingbirds, such as the beautiful **Wire-crested Thorntail**, and also the shy **Grey Tinamou**.

Finally, the Polylepis Forest, which is rapidly vanishing in the Andes of Ecuador, Peru, and Bolivia, is home to special birds like the endemic **Violet-throated Metaltail** and the sought-after **Giant Conebill**.

Join this 19-day Birding Ecotours trip! We are sure you will have a fantastic time with us.

Itinerary (19 days/18 nights)

Day 1. Arrival at Guayaquil and transfer to the hotel

Arrive at Guayaquil's José Joaquín de Olmedo International Airport, meet your tour leader, and transfer to the hotel.

Overnight: Hotel Unipark, Guayaquil

Day 2. Birding Churute Mangroves Ecological Reserve, transfer to Buenaventura Reserve

We will start our tour birding south of the city of Guayaquil in the Churute Mangroves Ecological Reserve, where we will enjoy views of **Horned Screamer**, **Snail Kite**, **Pinnated Bittern**, **Savanna Hawk**, **Cocoi Heron**, **White-throated Crane**, **Limpkin**, and **Masked Water Tyrant**. Then we'll head to the humid montane forest on the west slope of the Andes. Much of this habitat has been heavily fragmented in the country, but there is still some well-protected forest such the private Buenaventura Reserve.

Overnight: Umbrellabird Lodge, Reserva Buenaventura

Days 3 – 4. Birding Buenaventura Reserve including the Umbrellabird lek

We will spend two more nights in the Buenaventura Reserve, looking for the endangered **El Oro Parakeet, Choco Toucan, Ochraceous Attila, Song Wren, Club-winged Manakin, Rufous and Broad-billed Motmots, White-whiskered and Barred Puffbirds, Rufous-throated Tanager, Black-winged Saltator**, of course the big star of the reserve, the impressive **Long-wattled Umbrellabird**, and, if we are lucky, the secretive **El Oro Tapaculo**. Hummingbird feeders are not exclusive to northern Ecuador, and here in Buenaventura you will have nice views of **White-tipped Sicklebill, Booted Racket-tail, Crowned Woodnymph, White-necked Jacobin, Green Thorntail, Brown Violetear, Violet-bellied Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Green-crowned Brilliant, Violet-tailed Sylph, and Wedge-tailed Hummingbird**.
Overnight: Umbrellabird Lodge, Reserva Buenaventura

Days 5 – 7. Birding the Macara and Zapotillo Roads and Jorupe Reserve

We will be birding the Macara and Zapotillo Roads en route to Jorupe Reserve, where we will spend three nights. We'll have the chance to explore the well-renowned Tumbesian zone, which is a famous endemic hotspot that ranges from the southwest coast of Ecuador to extreme northwestern Peru and is considered one of the most endangered bird habitats in the world.

This habitat is characterized by dry deciduous and humid evergreen forest and is home to several species found only in this habitat. We will spend these days looking for **Pale-browed Tinamou, Tumbes Hummingbird, Tumbes Pewee, Red-masked and Grey-cheeked Parakeet**, the elusive **Grey-backed Hawk, Pacific Parrotlet, West Peruvian Screech Owl, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Elegant Crescentchest, Watkin's Antpitta, Crimson-breasted Finch, Ecuadorian Trogon, Saffron Siskin, Pacific Elaenia, Red-billed Scythebill, Ochre-bellied Dove, Ecuadorian Piculet, and Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner**, among others.

Overnight: Urraca Lodge, Jorupe Reserve

Day 8. Exploring the Sozoranga Road and the Utuana Reserve, transfer to Loja

Today we will leave Urraca Lodge and explore the Sozoranga Road, looking for higher-elevation species such as **Grey-headed Antbird, Piura Hemispingus, Black-cowled Saltator, Black-crested Tit-Tyrant, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Purple-throated Sunangel, Jelski's Chat-Tyrant, Chapman's Antshrike**, the localized **Loja Tyrannulet, Chestnut-collared Swallow, Bay-crowned and White-winged Brushfinches, Amazilia Hummingbird, and Collared Warbling Finch**. Later we will arrive at Loja for an overnight.

Overnight: Grand Victoria Boutique Hotel, Loja

Day 9. Exploring Podocarpus National Park and transfer to Tapichalaca Reserve

Today we will explore the Podocarpus National Park and the Tapichalaca Reserve. We will focus on the sought-after **Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Peruvian Antpitta, Plushcap, Chusquea Tapaculo, Rufous and Plain-tailed Wrens**, and with luck **Chestnut-crowned and Undulated Antpittas**. Other birds will include **Masked Mountain Tanager, Neblina Metaltail, Mouse-colored Thistletail, White-throated Tyrannulet, Blue-backed Conebill, and Andean Pygmy Owl**.

Overnight: Casa Simpson, Tapichalaca Reserve

Day 10. Tapichalaca Reserve and Valladolid Road

Tapichalaca Reserve is famous as the major spot for the recently described, regional endemic, and striking **Jocotoco Antpitta**. We should have great views at the worm feeding stations. Other

good birds found in Tapichalaca Reserve include **Golden-plumed Parakeet, Bearded Guan, Lacrimose Mountain Tanager, Hooded Mountain Tanager, Barred Fruiteater, Turquoise Jay, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, White-browed Spinetail,** and **Chusquea Tapaculo**. The hummingbird feeders attract **Collared Inca, Flame-throated Sunangel, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Long-tailed Sylph,** and **Amethyst-throated Sunangel**.

Overnight: Casa Simpson, Tapichalaca Reserve

Day 11. Birding the Zamora Road and transfer to Copalinga Lodge

We will descend into the upper tropical forest, birding the Zamora Road, where we should find species like **Torrent Duck, Oilbird, White-capped Tanager, Red-headed Barbet,** and the most-wanted **Vermilion Tanager**. Other flocks of tanagers include **Saffron-crowned, Golden, Orange-eared, Spotted,** and **Golden-eared Tanagers**. Here we may also see the range-restricted **Equatorial Greytail, Black-billed Seed Finch, Black-capped Donacobius,** and others. We will reach the nice Cabañas Ecológica Copalinga, where we will stay for two nights.

Overnight: Cabañas Ecológica Copalinga, Zamora

Day 12. Birding Podocarpus National Park and Copalinga

Copalinga is famous for its very good service and for perhaps the easiest place to see the secretive **Grey Tinamou** at the lodge feeders. Other birds here include **Little Tinamou, White-throated Quail Dove, Wire-crested Thorntail, Spangled Coquette, Little Woodstar, Lemon-browed Flycatcher, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Lanceolated Monklet, White-fronted Tyrannulet, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Western Striped Manakin, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet,** and with luck the elusive **Amazonian Umbrellabird**.

Overnight Cabañas Ecológica Copalinga, Zamora

Day 13 – 15. Drive to the Cordillera del Condor and Cabañas Yankuam

The Cabañas Yankuam have become the most accessible and easy place on earth to see the highly-prized, monotypic **Orange-throated Tanager**.

Other birds include **Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Gilded Barbet, Blue-headed Parrot, Green-and-gold, Yellow-backed,** and **Paradise Tanagers, Eastern Woodhaunter, Pygmy Antwren,** and **Chestnut-eared Aracari**. If time permits we might explore other neighboring territories in search of the handsome **Golden-winged Tody-Flycatcher, Golden-collared Toucanet, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak, Red-billed Tyrannulet, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Yellow-cheeked Becard,** and others.

At night we will try for **Band-bellied Owl** and **Blackish Nightjar**.

Overnight: Cabañas Yankuam, Via Nuevo Paraiso

Day 16. Birding on the way to Loja

On our transfer back to Loja we will try for species such as **Golden-crowned Tanager, Agile Tit-Tyrant,** the impressive **Ocellated Tapaculo, Paramo Seedeater,** and **Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant,** and with some persistence and luck the ultra-targets are **Crescent-faced Antpitta** and **Red-faced Parrot**.

Overnight: Grand Victoria Boutique Hotel, Loja

Day 17. Birding on the way to Cuenca and around Saraguro

Today we will drive toward Cuenca, birding on the way, making selected stops and looking for

species we could have missed on the previous day. We'll stay overnight at Santuario Hibiscus, which will allow easy access to binding the Yunguilla Reserve tomorrow.

Overnight: Santuario Hibiscus, La Unión

Day 18. Birding Yunguilla Reserve and heading to Cuenca

The Yunguilla Reserve is home to the critically endangered **Pale-headed Brushfinch**, a country endemic, which was rediscovered on the reserve in 1999 after an absence of 30 years. It will be our main target in this area.

After hopefully having found this special target, we will continue to Cuenca.

Overnight Hosteria Dos Chorreras, Cuenca

Day 19. Explore Cajas National Park, transfer to Guayaquil for departure

We will spend the last morning birding in the Cajas National Park near Cuenca, looking for high-elevation species such as **Tawny Antpitta**, **Stout-billed Cinclodes**, the endemic **Violet-throated Metaltail**, **Ecuadorian Hillstar**, **Ecuadorian Rail**, **Giant Conebill**, **Tit-like Dacnis**, **Blue-mantled Thornbill**, **Plumbeous Sierra Finch**, and **Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant**.

After a nice morning birding the park you will be transferred to the Cuenca airport to connect with a domestic flight to Guayaquil, from where you will catch your international flights.

Please note that the itinerary above 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:	19 days
Group size:	4 - 8
Date:	2 – 20 March 2020
Start:	Guayaquil
End:	Guayaquil

Price:	US\$6480 per person sharing
Single supplement:	US\$770

Price includes:

Domestic flight Cuenca - Guayaquil
 All transfers airport/hotel/airport
 All accommodation
 All meals except dinner in Guayaquil the first night of the tour
 Private transportation
 Tour leader
 Entrance fees

Price excludes:

International flights
 Dinner the first night in Guayaquil
 Insurance

Gratuities

Personal expenses such as drinks, alcoholic drinks, laundry, phone calls, internet access, etc.
Any activity not described in the itinerary