



CENTRAL PERU BIRDING ADVENTURE

17 AUGUST – 05 SEPTEMBER 2024

17 AUGUST – 05 SEPTEMBER 2025



Golden-backed Mountain Tanager is one of our special targets on this trip (photo Alejandro Tello).

The Central Andes of Peru is one of the least known birding routes in South America, and this is completely unjustified.

Our magnificent tour is designed to take you across the central Andes of Peru, visiting different habitats and ecosystems at varying elevations providing diverse sets of unique avian species, including several country endemics not found anywhere else. We start the trip by visiting the coast of Lima, exploring the cold waters of the Humboldt Current and habitats on the western slopes of the Andes, such as freshwater lagoons, the dry Pacific desert, the unique Peruvian lomas (areas of fog-watered vegetation in the coastal desert), the dry inter-Andean valleys, and the high-elevation mountains at the base of the mighty, snow-capped Central Andes. We will also visit the endangered *Polylepis* forest, which holds several sought-after Andean species. We then descend the eastern slopes of the Andes, where we explore elfin forest, like páramos, lush cloudforest and upper Amazon forest.



*Perhaps the prettiest tern in the world, **Inca Tern**.*

This birding and overlanding trip will take three weeks in total, and we could see species such as **Inca Tern**, **Humboldt Penguin**, **Peruvian Thick-knee**, **Peruvian Pipit**, **Thick-billed Miner**, **Andean Tinamou**, **Great Inca Finch**, **White-capped Dipper**, **Torrent Duck**, **Andean Condor**, **Least**, **Grey-breasted**, and **Rufous-bellied Seedsnipes**, **White-bellied Cinclodes**, **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**, **Andean Flicker**, **Junin Grebe**, **Black Rail** (the endemic subspecies, often referred to as 'Junin Rail'), **Andean Avocet**, **Puna Plover**, **Andean Cock-of-the-rock**, **Blue-banded Toucanet**, **Peruvian Wren**, and **Crimson-mantled Woodpecker**. In addition, we might find **Bay Antpitta**, **Masked Fruiteater**, **Chestnut-crested Cotinga**, **White-eared Solitaire**, **Cloudforest Screech Owl**, **Oilbird**, **Bay Antpitta**, **Stripe-headed Antpitta**,

Rufous Antpitta, Rufous-vented Tapaculo, White-cheeked Cotinga, Bay-vented Cotinga, Blue-headed Macaw, and many more.

This trip is particularly good for certain special tanagers, such as the endemic **Golden-backed Mountain Tanager**, the endemic **Yellow-scarfed Tanager**, the endemic **Huallaga Tanager**, the endemic **Brown-flanked Tanager**, and other attractive species like **Grass-green Tanager**, **Golden-collared Tanager**, **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager**, and **Yellow-throated Tanager**.

During our trip we will look for incredible high-elevation hummingbird species, like the endemic **Black-breasted Hillstar**, **Olivaceous Thornbill**, **Coppery Metaltail**, **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, **Giant Hummingbird**, **Oasis Hummingbird**, **Peruvian Sheartail**, **Bronze-tailed Comet**, and **Blue-mantled Thornbill**.

We invite you to join us in exploring this incredible birding route in Peru!

Itinerary

Day 1. Arrival

You will arrive at the Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima and be transferred to your hotel. No activities are planned for day 1, since most international flights arrive in Lima late in the evening. If you arrive on an early flight, the hotel might charge you an extra accommodation fee for an early check-in, alternatively, we can organize an additional birding morning near the city for you.

Overnight: Hotel in Lima

Day 2. Pucusana beach, Puerto Viejo beach, and transfer to Asia Beach

We will start by visiting the fishing village of Pucusana, 37 miles (60 kilometers) south of the city. Here we will have a chance to see many coastal birds and Humboldt Current specials like **Inca Tern**, **Belcher's Gull**, **Peruvian Pelican**, and **Peruvian Booby**. We could also see **Guanay Cormorant**, **Red-legged Cormorant**, **Blackish Oystercatcher**, **Humboldt Penguin**, and the endemic **Peruvian Seaside Cinclodes**. Later we will drive to Puerto Viejo beach, where we will look for **Great Grebe**, **Andean Coot**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **White-cheeked Pintail**, **Peruvian Meadowlark**, **Many-colored Rush Tyrant**, **Wren-like Rushbird**, **Grassland Yellow Finch**, **Grey-hooded Gull**, **American Oystercatcher**, **Grey Gull**, **Peruvian Thick-knee**, and the endemic **Coastal Miner**. We will transfer to a modern Asia Beach resort for an overnight.

Overnight: Asia Beach

Day 3. Lomas de Asia and transfer to Santa Eulalia

The Lomas de Asia municipal reserve has recently been opened to tourism and is closer to Lima than the well-known Lomas de Lachay National Reserve, both protect the same lomas costeras ecosystem. The lomas result from a combination of coastal climatic factors and peculiar geography which produces heavy clouds, fog and mist in an almost rainless desert. Mist rolls in

from the nearby Pacific and moisture condenses when it reaches the Andes. The drizzle, fog and mist are most common in the humid season (approximately June to November), and supports abundant flora and fauna in the region. The Lomas de Asia are very good for the endemic **Thick-billed Miner**, **Oasis Hummingbird**, **Peruvian Sheartail**, **Greyish Miner**, **Short-tailed Field Tyrant**, **Collared Warbling Finch**, **Band-tailed Sierra Finch** and, hopefully, the endemic but nomadic **Raimondi Yellow Finch**. After lunch we will drive back to Lima and from there toward the eastern part of the Andes, where we will spend a night in the Santa Eulalia Valley.

Overnight: Santa Eulalia

Day 4. Santa Eulalia road

Today we will have an early start to explore the Santa Eulalia road and the upper canyon. This fantastic location in the highlands of Lima provides a beautiful complex of scenery, surrounded by the Andes and dominated by blue skies. We will drive over two hours up the mountains to reach the habitat of the endemic, shy, rare, and localized **Rufous-breasted Warbling Finch**. We will focus all our efforts looking for this tricky fellow, but in the same area we could have views of **Canyon Canastero** and several Peruvian endemics such as **Black-necked Woodpecker**, **Bronze-tailed Comet**, **Rusty-bellied Brushfinch**, **Rusty-crowned Tit-Spinetail**, and **Great Inca Finch**. Other juicy birds include **Giant Hummingbird**, **Sparkling Violetear**, **Pied-crested Tit-Tyrant**, **Tufted Tit-Tyrant**, **Mourning Sierra Finch**, **Streak-throated Bush Tyrant**, **Blue-and-yellow Tanager**, **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle**, **Aplomado Falcon**, **Torrent Duck**, **White-capped Dipper**, **Peruvian Pygmy Owl**, **Greenish Yellow Finch**, and **Bare-faced Ground Dove**, and we might find the majestic **Andean Condor**.

Overnight: Santa Eulalia

Day 5. Marcapomacocha and transfer to La Merced

Today we should have great fun exploring Marcapomacocha. This is high in the Andes at almost 15,000 feet (4,500 meters) and, with care and adhering to guidelines for preventing altitude sickness, we should not experience any problems. This birding location is world famous for holding the legendary **Diademed Sandpiper-Plover**, and we will also be looking for some Peruvian endemics like **Black-breasted Hillstar**, **Junin Canastero**, **Dark-winged Miner**, and the rare, localized, and endemic **White-bellied Cinclodes**, listed as Critically Endangered (IUCN). Other birds here include **Andean Lapwing**, **Andean Goose**, **Crested Duck**, **Variable Hawk**, **Puna Ibis**, **Giant Coot**, **Puna Teal**, **White-winged Diuca Finch**, **Black Siskin**, **Olivaceous Thornbill**, **Plain-breasted Earthcreeper**, **Streak-throated Canastero**, **Grey-breasted Seedsnipe**, and **Puna Snipe**, and, hopefully, **Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe**.

Later we will drive to Concepción.

Overnight: La Merced

Day 6. La Merced and drive to Oxapampa

Today we will explore the tropical foothills of La Merced, where some of the targets will be the endemic **Cerulean-capped Manakin** and **Creamy-bellied Antwren**, among many other

species. Then we will start the long drive to Oxapampa. We will arrive at our comfortable lodge in Oxapampa before dusk, where our host will be waiting for us with a tasty dinner. If the weather permits and spirits are still high, this will be our first chance to look for the poorly known **Cloudforest Screech Owl**, one of the main targets at this lodge.

Overnight: Ulcumano Ecolodge, Oxapampa

Day 7. Full day at Ulcumano Ecolodge

Today we will have a nice day birding around the lodge grounds. Our main targets here are the endemic **Bay Antpitta**, the endemic **Masked Fruiteater**, the endemic **Rufous-vented Tapaculo**, the most-wanted **Chestnut-crested Cotinga**, **White-eared Solitaire** and, hopefully, **Brown Tinamou**. At dusk we will look for the **Cloudforest Screech Owl** again.

Overnight: Ulcumano Ecolodge, Oxapampa

Day 8. Birding around Ulcumano and transfer to La Oroya

We can give the **Cloudforest Screech Owl** one more attempt before dawn (in case we need it) and then leave the lodge, exploring coffee plantations for the endemic **Creamy-bellied Antwren**. It will be a long drive back to the high Andes, to the bustling town of La Oroya. On the way we might find **Mountain Caracara** and **Andean Ibis**.

Overnight: Hotel El Dorado, La Oroya



The flightless Junin Grebe; our primary target at Lake Junin (photo Alejandro Tello).

Day 9. Lake Junín and transfer to Huánuco

Today we will explore Lake Junín (13,395 feet / 4,080 meters elevation) in search of the endemic, Critically Endangered (IUCN), and flightless **Junin Grebe**, one of the scarcest birds in Peru. Other birds at the lake include **Andean Avocet**, **Puna Plover**, **Chilean Flamingo**, **Yellow-billed Teal**, **Puna Teal**, **Yellow-billed Pintail**, **Cinnamon Teal**, **Andean Duck**, **Cinereous Harrier**, and **Andean Gull**. One of our major targets is the endemic and distinctive subspecies of **Black Rail**, which is sometimes treated as a different species called 'Junin Rail'. In addition, the rocky and dry shores around the lake are good for the endemic **Dark-winged Miner** and **Black-breasted Hillstar**, **Black Siskin**, **Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant**, and **Andean Flicker**. Then we will drive across the Junín plains, also known as the Pampas de Junín, and descend to Huánuco. On the way we should see **Vicuña**, the national animal of Peru and featured on the Peruvian coat of arms.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Huánuco, Huánuco

Day 10. Bosque Unchog

Today we will visit the remote elfin and humid forest of Bosque Unchog in the mountains above Huánuco. This place is known to hold some of the most sought-after endemics in the Andes like the incredible **Golden-backed Mountain Tanager**, **Bay-vented Cotinga**, **Pardusco**, **Rufous-browed Hemispingus**, **Brown-flanked Tanager**, and **Coppery Metaltail**. After a full day birding, we will return to Huánuco in the afternoon.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Huánuco, Huánuco

Day 11. Bosque Unchog

This will be another full day to explore the Bosque Unchog forest, looking for the species described above and, in addition, we will look for **Line-fronted Canastero**, **White-chinned Thistletail**, **Golden-collared Tanager**, the endemic **Yellow-scarfed Tanager**, **White-collared Jay**, **Red-rumped Bush Tyrant**, the endemic **Neblina Tapaculo**, and **Red-crested Cotinga**. We will return to Huánuco late in the afternoon.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Huánuco, Huánuco

Day 12. Tingo Maria and the Oilbird cave

Today we will drive toward the eastern lowlands of Tingo Maria. On the way, we might stop along the Carpish Mountains if we see some good mixed flocks, as we have found on previous trips. Unfortunately, there is a lot of habitat destruction and access to the site from the road is difficult. The place is not as attractive as it used to be. On the way to Tingo Maria we might see **Crested Oropendola**, **Russet-backed Oropendola**, **Magpie Tanager**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, and even **Fasciated Tiger Heron** and **Andean Cock-of-the rock**. One of the main attractions of Tingo Maria is the famous **Oilbird** cave, where we could see many of these strange-looking birds. The Tingo Maria lowlands are also good for **Blue-headed Macaw**, another of our targets. Some classic lowland species are always present, such as **Great** and **Lesser Kiskadee**, **White-eyed Parakeet**, **Cliff Flycatcher**, **Common Tody-Flycatcher**, **Rufous-breasted Hermit**,

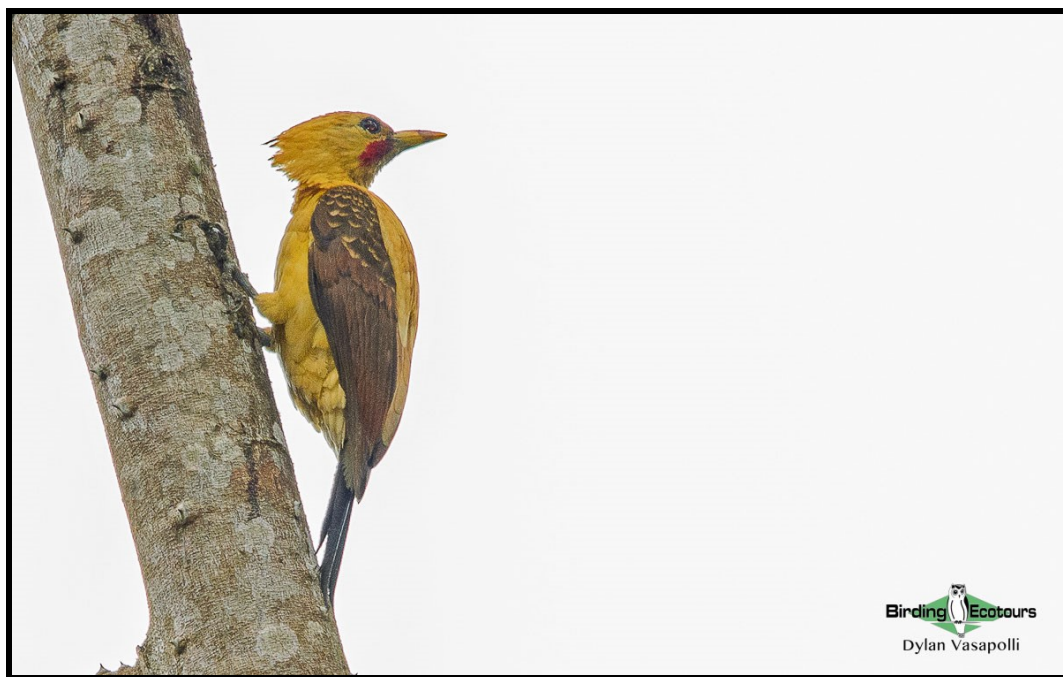
Yellow-throated Toucan, Green-backed Trogon, and the endemic Huallaga Tanager. At night we will try for **Tropical Screech Owl** and **Band-bellied Owl** around our lodge.

Overnight: Villa Jennifer Farm & Lodge, Tingo Maria

Day 13. Full day at Villa Jennifer Farm & Lodge

After breakfast we will explore the grounds of Villa Jennifer, where we can see a good set of species, like **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Cream-colored Woodpecker, Blue-crowned Trogon, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Plumbeous Kite, Spot-winged Antbird, Grey-crowned Flatbill, Yellow-throated Toucan, Golden-collared Toucanet, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Amazonian Motmot, and Lafresnaye's Piculet.** In addition, we could have good views of **Gilded Barbet, Bluish-fronted Jacamar, Yellow-olive Flatbill, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Rufous-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, Limpkin, Capped Heron, Crested Oropendola, Blue-headed and Military Macaws, Reddish Hermit, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Grey-breasted Sabrewing, Masked Tityra, Pale-legged Hornero, Dark-breasted Spinetail, Thrush-like Wren, and Ferruginous Pygmy Owl.**

Overnight Villa Jennifer Farm & Lodge, Tingo Maria



Cream-colored Woodpecker can be seen in the grounds of Villa Jennifer.

Day 14. Transfer to Huánuco

After a last morning birding around Tingo Maria we will have an easy transfer back to Huánuco.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Huánuco, Huánuco

Day 15. Drive to Carhuaz

Today we will have a long drive via the La Union mountain pass to Huaraz in the heart of the Cordillera Blanca. On the way we will look for classic Andean species like **Andean Lapwing**, **Andean Flicker**, **Andean Negrito**, **Bright-rumped Yellow Finch**, **Peruvian Sierra Finch**, **Puna Ibis**, **Andean Ibis**, **Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe**, and **Grey-breasted Seedsnipe**.

Overnight: Hotel El Abuelo, Carhuaz



Bright-rumped Yellow Finch - a high-altitude special.

Days 16 - 17. Huascarán National Park

We will have two full days at Huascarán National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which comprises most of the Cordillera Blanca, the world's highest tropical mountain range. Here we will look for the amazing species which occur in the *Polylepis* forest between the Llanganuco Lakes, including **Ash-breasted Tit-Tyrant**, **Tawny Tit-Spinetail**, the spectacular, endemic **White-cheeked Cotinga**, the endemic **Ancash Tapaculo**, the sought-after **Giant Conebill**, and **Tit-like Dacnis**. In addition, we may find the endemic **Plain-tailed Warbling Finch**, the endemic **Striated Earthcreeper**, the endemic **Rufous-eared Brushfinch**, and **Stripe-headed Antpitta**.

Overnight: Hotel El Abuelo, Carhuaz

Day 18. Birding the Huaylas road and the Pueblo Libre

On the last birding day of the tour, we will spend the morning exploring the Huaylas road looking for the endemic **Rufous-backed Inca Finch**, and the dry slopes of the Pueblo Libre area

for the endemic **Pale-tailed Canastero**. Later we will transfer to Huaraz and check into our comfortable hotel.

Overnight: Andino Club Hotel, Huaraz

Day 19. Drive back to Lima with birding en route

We will have an early start as we leave the city of Huaraz and make our way to the coast at Lima. Along the route we will make strategic stops, looking for high elevation species at Lake Conococha where we might get a few new species for our already substantial list. When we reach the coast, we will visit other areas to look for **Wilson's Plover**, **Great Grebe**, **Peruvian Thick-knee**, **Peruvian Tern**, **Cabot's Tern**, **White-cheeked Pintail** and many other new birds. There will also be opportunities to improve waterfowl photography today. We will arrive in Lima late in the afternoon and check into our hotel and, of course, enjoy a tasty dinner to celebrate a great trip.

Overnight: Hotel in Lima

Day 20. Departure

Tour participants will be transferred to Lima's Jorge Chávez International Airport today to catch international flights home.

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. In addition, we must sometimes use a different international guide from the one advertised, due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 20 days
Group size: 4 - 6
Dates: 17 August – 05 September 2024
17 August – 05 September 2025
Start: Lima
End: Lima

Prices: US\$7,790 per person sharing (2024)

US\$8,646 per person sharing (2025)

In the event of only 3 participants, there will be a 15% surcharge to guarantee departure if all participants agree.

Single Supplements: US\$960 (2024)

US\$1,065 (2025)

Price includes:

All transfers airport/hotel
All accommodation (hotels and lodges)
Private transport
Private tour leader
All meals included (except where indicated)
All admission fees
All activities described in the itinerary
Bottled water in the field

Price excludes:

All flights
Any activity in Lima on day 1
Dinner in Lima on day 1
Expenses of a personal nature such as laundry, internet access, phone calls, etc
Any activity not described in the itinerary
Personal medical and trip cancellation insurance
Meals in Lima on day 20 (except breakfast)
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))

Some tour facts:

The tour is designed to search for endemics and localized birds of the Central Peruvian Andes. We will visit high elevations during this tour, up to 15,000 feet (4,600 meters) above sea level. A few moderately difficult hikes in steep cloudforest terrain at 9,100-11,800 feet (2,700-3,600 meters) are involved in the tour, but most of the birding is along roads.

This trip requires long drives through the Andes to cover different ecosystems and to get to the endemic bird territories. Therefore, we will drive long distances almost every day, with a couple of exceptions where we will have nice breaks at some lodges, exploring the grounds on foot for the whole day.

The accommodations vary from very good, comfortable hotels in Lima, Huánuco and Carhuaz, to the best options in La Oroya, Tingo María, and Oxapampa. Accommodations at Santa Eulalia are basic but have warm showers and en-suite bathrooms.

This trip is for the adventurous birder in search of a great list of endemics and Andean specials. Participants should be able to walk about two miles (three kilometers) per day and cope with high altitudes for most of the trip. The trip would also be enjoyable for advanced birders who love the outdoors and overlanding trips. The scenery is fantastic throughout the tour, and there are good photo opportunities.