



CENTRAL PERU BIRDING ADVENTURE

20 AUGUST – 10 SEPTEMBER 2024



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

Even though several birders visit the Central Andes of Peru each year, this still is perhaps one of the most unknown birding routes of South America, completely unjustified.

This magnificent tour is designed to take you across the central Andes of Peru, visiting different kinds of habitats and ecosystems at different elevations, which provide a different set of unique avian species, including several country endemics not found anywhere else. We will start the trip visiting the coast of Lima, exploring habitats like the cold waters of the Humboldt Current and other habitats on the western slope 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. Then we will descend to the eastern slope of the Andes, where we will explore some elfin forest like páramos as well as lush cloudforest and upper Amazon forest.



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

This birding and overlanding trip will take us three weeks in total, and it could provide 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**, **Black-spectacled Brushfinch**, **Eye-ringed Thistletail**, **Fire-throated Metaltail**, **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, "Jalca Tapaculo" (as yet undescribed), White-cheeked Cotinga, Bay-vented Cotinga, Blue-headed Macaw, and many more.

This trip is particularly good for some 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 some of the most incredible high-elevation species of hummingbirds, such as the endemic **Black-breasted Hillstar**, **Olivaceous Thornbill**, **Coppery Metaltail**, **Fire-throated Metaltail**, **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, **Giant Hummingbird**, **Oasis Hummingbird**, **Peruvian Sheartail**, **Bronze-tailed Comet**, and **Blue-mantled Thornbill**. We invite you to join us to explore this incredible birding route in Peru!



The impressive Sword-billed Hummingbird

Itinerary (22 days/21 nights)

Day 1. Arrival

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

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 specialists 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



Many-colored Rush Tyrant can be seen at Puerto Viejo 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 but protects the same ecosystem of lomas costeras. The lomas exist because of a combination of coastal climate factors and because they are subject to peculiar geography, which produces, in an almost rainless desert, heavy clouds, fog, and mist. Mist rolls in from the nearby Pacific and the moisture condenses when it reaches the Andes. The drizzle, fog, and mist are most common in the humid season, from

approximately June to November. The moisture, especially in the humid season, gives life to abundant vegetation and attracts the fauna of 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 if we are lucky 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 to look for this tricky fellow, but in the same area we could have views of **Canyon Canastero** and a number of 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 if we are lucky we might find the majestic **Andean Condor**.

Overnight: Santa Eulalia



Aplomado Falcon can be reasonably common in the higher areas of the Peruvian Andes.

Day 5. Marcapomacocha and transfer to Concepción

Today we should have great fun exploring Marcapomacocha. This place is located high in the Andes at almost 15000 feet (4500 meters), but with a lot of care and following the respective suggestions we may not have any altitude problem. 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 with luck we may find **Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe**.

Later we will drive to Concepción.

Overnight: Hotel Loma Verde, Concepción

Day 6. Birding the Pariahuanca road

Today we will explore the Pariahuanca road, looking for the endemic **Creamy-crested Spinetail** and the endemic and range-restricted **Black-spectacled Brushfinch**. We will have a chance to find the undescribed subspecies of **Plain-tailed Wren** (known as 'Mantaro Wren') and the undescribed subspecies of **Streak-throated Thornbird** (known as 'Mantaro Thornbird'). **White-winged Black Tyrant** is also a possibility here.

Overnight: Hotel Loma Verde, Concepción

Day 7. Satipo road (up to Puente Carrizales)

Today we will have a long drive along the upper parts of the Satipo road to Puente Carrizales, where we will look for the endemic and range-restricted **Fiery-throated Metaltail** and the endemic **Eye-ringed Thistletail**. The endemic **Tschudi's Tapaculo** and **Rufous Antpitta** are also possible to see in this area. We will look for the undescribed '**Jalca Tapaculo**' (formerly 'Milpo Tapaculo') and the recently described and endemic **Junin Tapaculo**. After getting these gems we will continue our drive to Satipo

Overnight: Satipo



Andean Cock-of-the-rock can be seen along the Satipo road.

Day 8. Satipo road (lower and mid elevations) and drive to Oxapampa

Today we will explore the lower parts of the Satipo road, which host several foothill-and-cloudforest species such as **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager**, **Grass-green Tanager**, **Yellow-throated Tanager**, **Flame-faced Tanager**, **Saffron-crowned Tanager**, **Metallic-green Tanager**, and with luck the uncommon **Blue-browed Tanager**. We will also look for **Blue-banded Toucanet**, **Streaked Tuftedcheek**, **Pearled Treerunner**, the endemic **Peruvian Wren**, **Slaty Brushfinch**, **Barred Fruiteater**, **Crimson-mantled Woodpecker**, **Dusky-green Oropendola**, and **Andean Cock-of-the-rock**, and with luck **Black-and-chestnut Eagle** and **Amazonian Umbrellabird**. 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 we will use our first chance to look for the poorly known **Cloudforest Screech Owl**, which is one of the main targets at this lodge.

Overnight: Ulcumano Ec lodge, Oxapampa

Day 9. Full day at Ulcumano Ec lodge

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 with luck **Brown Tinamou**. At dusk we will give the **Cloudforest Screech Owl** another try.

Overnight: Ulcumano Ec lodge, Oxapampa

Day 10. Birding around Ulcumano and transfer to La Oroya

We can give the **Cloudforest Screech Owl** one more try before dawn (in case we need it) and then leave the lodge, exploring some coffee plantations for the endemic **Creamy-bellied Antwren**. We will have 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 Junín (photo Alejandro Tello).*

Day 11. Lake Junín and transfer to Huánuco

Today we will explore Lake Junín (at 400 meters/13124 feet 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**. We will drive across the Junín plains also known as the Pampas de Junín and descend to Huánuco. On the way we will have the chance to see **Vicuñas**.

Overnight: Grand Hotel Huánuco, Huánuco

Day 12. 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, such as 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 13. 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



*We will visit a well-known cave to see the bat-like **Oilbird**.*

Day 14. 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 in case we see some good mixed flocks, as there were here in the past. But today there is habitat destruction, and access to the site next to 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**

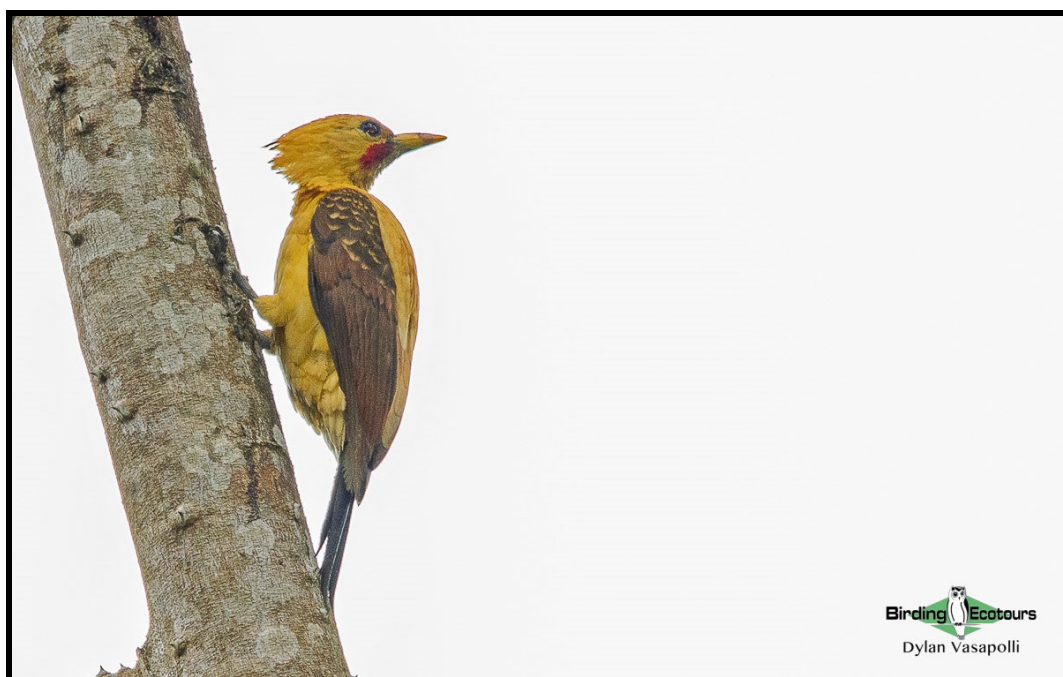
Oropendola, Russet-backed Oropendola, Magpie Tanager, Blue-headed Parrot, and even Fasciated Tiger Heron and Andean Cock-of-the rock. One of the main attractions of Tingo Maria is the famous **Oilbird** cave, where we could see many of these strange-looking birds. The Tingo Maria lowlands are also good for **Blue-headed Macaw**, which will be another of our targets. A set of classic lowland species is always present, such as **Great and Lesser Kiskadees, 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 15. 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 such as **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 16. 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 17. 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 — another high-altitude special

Days 18 - 19. Huascarán National Park

We will have two full days at Huascarán National Park, a UNESCO World Heritage site, which comprises the majority of the Cordillera Blanca, the world's highest tropical mountain range. Here we will look for the great set of species which occurs 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 20. 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 21. 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. Once 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 22. Departure

You will be transferred to Lima's Jorge Chávez International Airport today where you can catch your 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 sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.

Duration: 22 days
Group size: 4 - 6
Dates: 20 August – 10 September 2024
Start: Lima
End: Lima
Prices: US\$7,990 per person sharing (2024)

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

Single Supplements: US\$875 (2023) US\$945 (2024)

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 21 (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 4,600 meters (15,000 feet) above sea level. A few moderately difficult hikes in steep cloudforest terrain at 2,700-3,600 meters (9,100-11,800 feet) are involved in the tour, but most of the birding is by the 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. We will stay at the best options in La Concepción, La Oroya, Tingo María, and Oxapampa. Accommodations at Santa Eulalia and Satipo are basic but have warm showers and en-suite bathrooms.

In order to avoid camping in remote villages, where facilities are almost non-existent, we rather add extra driving per day along the Satipo road, so that you can stay in the most adequate accommodations but still see all the key birds. However, this could be tiring for some people.

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