



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

**09 – 25 NOVEMBER 2024**



*The gorgeous and characterful **Toucan Barbet** should be encountered on this tour (photo Danial Orozco).*

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 these 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**.



*The outrageously colored **Yellow-throated Toucan** is often encountered on this tour.*

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 **Chestnut-naped 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 also 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!

In some years, this trip can be combined with our **Ecuador: The Amazon** tour and/or with our **Galápagos: Natural History Extravaganza** tour, please also ask for details of possible additional departures should you wish to combine.

### 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 days. Dinner is on your own.

Overnight: Hotel in Quito



*The spectacular Sword-billed Hummingbird*

#### 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**. Later in the afternoon, we will visit the Zuraloma Reserve where with luck, we can see **Tawny, Chestnut-crowned and Chestnut-naped Antpitta** feeding at a relatively new antpitta feeding station here.

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**.



*Bellavista Cloudforest is home to the gorgeous **Blue-winged Mountain Tanager**.*

The Bellavista feeders include hummingbirds such as **Speckled Hummingbird, Collared Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, and Gorgeted Sunangel**. We will find time to visit the San Tadeo feeders during our visit to Mindo to see the spectacular **Plate-**

**billed Mountain Toucan** visiting feeders at eye level, providing amazing views of this highly desirable species. We will then 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. Amagusa Reserve, Mashpi area

Today we will head to the Mashpi area and visit the Amagusa Reserve. This private property protects over 130 hectares (320 acres) of recovering forest. The location of this forest, within an Important Bird Area (IBA), is particularly special as it is the last foothill forest directly connecting to the lower subtropical western forest of Ecuador. It is a unique location and the large numbers of Chocó endemics are a particular drawcard for visiting birders. During your visit we will enjoy bird feeders that may attract species such as **Glistening-green Tanager**, **Black-chinned Mountain Tanager**, **Orange-fronted Barbet**, **Orange-breasted Fruiteater**, **Golden Tanager**, **Flame-faced Tanager**, **Rufous-throated Tanager**, **Orange-bellied Euphonia** and **Toucan Barbet**. The area is also excellent for other sought after Chocó birds including **Black Solitaire**, **Indigo Flowerpiercer**, **Moss-backed Tanager**, **Golden-collared Honeycreeper**, **Rose-faced Parrot**, **Choco Vireo** and **Choco Tyrannulet**. We should enjoy the amazing feeders at Amagusa and explore the forest in search of more elusive species such as **Dusky Pigeon**, **Pacific Tuftedcheek**, **Rufous-rumped Antwren**, **Slaty Spinetail**, **Narino Tapaculo**, and if we are lucky the splendid **Black-tipped Cotinga**.

In the afternoon we will return to Sachatamia for dinner and a good night's sleep.

Overnight: Sachatamia Lodge, Mindo



*Rufous-throated Tanager, yet another beautiful tanager we hope to see in northern Ecuador (photo Alejandro Grajales).*

### Day 5. Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary

Today we will again have an 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



*We should see many hummingbird species on this tour such as this beautiful **Crowned Woodnymph**.*

### 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 should be able to find **Andean Cocks-of-the-rock** at their lek site.*

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: Hotel in 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**.



*Andean Condor will be searched for in mountainous areas (photo Alejandro Tello).*

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 Anthrush, 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 like **Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Speckled Hummingbird, Long-tailed Sylph, Bronzy Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, Collared Inca, and Chestnut-breasted Coronet.**

Overnight: Cabañas San Isidro, Cosango



*The feeders at San Isidro attract many hummingbirds such as **Buff-tailed Coronet.***

### 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

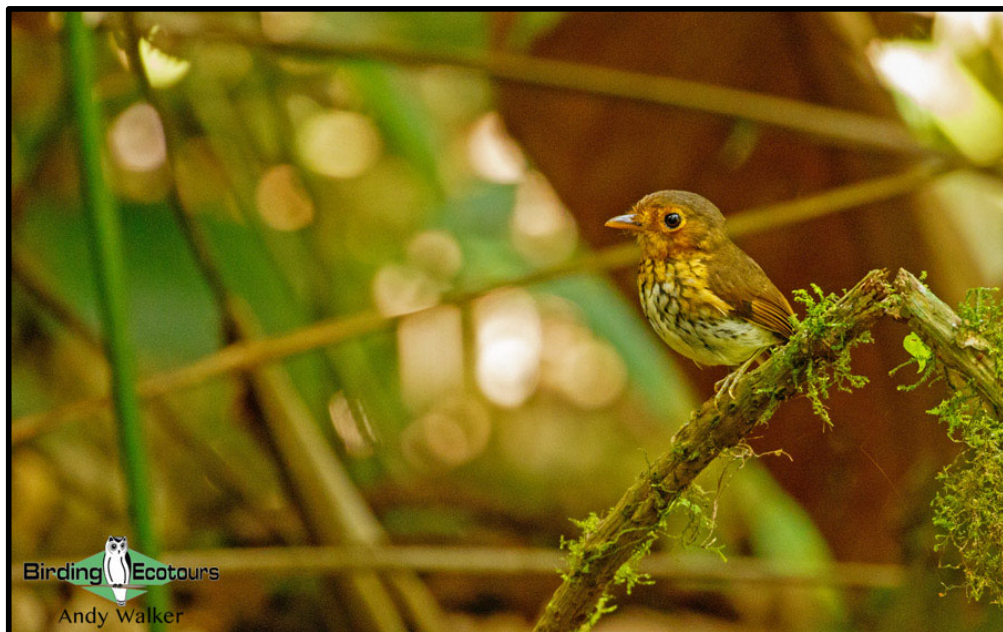
Loreto Road we have chances to see **Green-backed Hillstar**, **Cliff Flycatcher**, **Lemon-browed Flycatcher**, our first **Paradise Tanager**, **Crested Oropendola**, **Yellow-browed Sparrow**, **Black-billed Thrush**, **Violaceous Jay**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Greyish Saltator**, **Swallow Tanager**, **Orange-eared Tanager**, **Rufous-naped Greenlet**, and **Montane Foliage-gleaner**.

We will arrive at 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**.



*Ochre-breasted Antpitta* visits the antpitta feeding stations at WildSumaco.

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: Hotel in 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. In addition, we sometimes have to use a different international guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling.*

**Duration:** 17 days  
**Group size:** 4 - 8  
**Dates:** 09 - 25 November 2024  
**Start:** Quito  
**End:** Quito  
**Prices:** US\$7,080 per person sharing (2024)  
**Single Supplements:** US\$790 (2024)

**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:**

All flights  
Any activity or service on day 1 (if arriving in the morning)  
Dinner on day 1 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 (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))  
Any expenses on day 17 except breakfast and transfer to the airport