



**SOUTH PERU: BIRDING THE INCA EMPIRE – FROM THE
ANDES AND MANU ROAD TO THE AMAZONIAN LOWLANDS**

20 JULY–04 AUGUST 2027



The highly sought-after Andean Cock-of-the-rock.

Overview

Peru has the second highest country bird list on the planet (second only to Colombia). With an incredible bird species list of 1,890 species and an equally amazing 113 country endemics, Peru is, quite simply, a must-visit birding destination. Our 16-day tour through southern Peru will take you to explore some of the classic highlights of this incredible country. Peru is also famous for being one of the richest countries on the planet for archaeology, with a staggering pre-Hispanic heritage that started around 5,000BC, making it easy to find remains of its ancient past around each corner. This tour will take you to explore some of the country's classic, famous birding sites of the southern part of the country: Machu Picchu, the Manu Road and the Macaw Clay Lick. The magnificent Andean scenery and archeological sites provide a grand backdrop to the birding.



We will spend time enjoying the famous Machu Picchu ruins (photo Christian Morales Callo).

Our tour will start in the city of Lima, the international point of entry to the country, and after being welcomed by our staff, we will spend a night in a comfortable hotel in the city. The following day we will catch a flight to the city of Puerto Maldonado, the capital of the Madre de Dios state, in the Peruvian Amazon. Puerto Maldonado provides the main point of access to the Tambopata National Reserve, a 1,060 square mile (2,700 square kilometers) wildlife haven which protects several Amazon rainforest ecosystems. This reserve is a refuge for a number of threatened and charismatic species including the likes of **Giant Otters**, **Jaguars**, **Harpy Eagles** and several species of loud and colorful macaws. We shall spend five days exploring this region which includes a couple of nights at the Chuncho Lodge, located near the famous Macaw Clay Lick along the Tambopata River. Here you will have the chance to witness one of the most incredible natural avian spectacles, with dozens of macaws and parrots congregating in a unique combination of

color and noise; a sensory overload if there ever was one! To maximize our chances of seeing the clay lick in its full splendor we have included two visits to it. During our stay in Chuncho Lodge, we will also spend time birding along a number of forest trails where we may be lucky enough to encounter other elusive forest creatures such as **Colombian Red Howler Monkey**, **Southern Amazon Red Squirrel**, **Tayra**, and, with luck, a **Lowland (Brazilian) Tapir** or even the elusive **Jaguar**. Our Best of Brazil tour birding and mammal tour, which includes the Pantanal, is the best option for seeing Jaguar and other charismatic South American mammals; in Peru they tend to be more elusive.

We will have the chance to visit a classic Amazon oxbow lake where we should encounter some similar widespread Amazon species similar to those found at Chuncho Lodge but with the addition of some aquatic birds such as the incredibly beautiful **Agami Heron**, **American Pygmy Kingfisher**, **Green Ibis**, **Sungrebe**, the famous leaf-eating **Hoatzin**, **Horned Screamer** and with some luck, the scarce and endangered **Giant Otter**.



*The strange-looking **Hoatzin** will hopefully be encountered in the Amazon rainforest.*

After six days in the Amazon basin, we will fly to the city of Cusco, at an altitude of 8,858 feet (2,792 meters), from where we will be transferred to the comfortable Hotel Pakaritampu in the nearby town of Ollantaytambo. In the hotel gardens we will hope to see a number of fantastic hummingbird species including **Bearded Mountaineer** and **Green-tailed Trainbearer**. The small tourist town of Ollantaytambo stands near the train station that will take us to the famous Machu Picchu ruins.

The next day we will take a 1.5-hour, magnificently scenic, Andean train ride to the town of Aguas Calientes (hot springs), the base from which we will enjoy the ancient Inca ruins of Machu Picchu (we will have a maximum of three hours at this site). We will use the time to see the site from all its classic angles and soak in the atmosphere of this world-famous archaeological wonder. While

we are here, we will also spend time tracking down the Peruvian endemic **Inca Wren**. The lush forest around Machu Picchu holds other interesting species such as the endemic **Masked Fruiteater**, the endemic **Green-and-white Hummingbird**, **Slaty Tanager**, **Sclater's Tyrannulet**, **Andean Cock-of-the-rock**, **Andean Motmot**, **Ocellated Piculet**, **Blue-naped Chlorophonia**, **Variable Antshrike**, **Rust-and-yellow Tanager**, **Andean Guan**, **White-eared Solitaire**, **Pale-legged Warbler**, **Oleaginous Hemispingus**, while the nearby river provides views of **Torrent Duck**, **White-capped Dipper** and **Fasciated Tiger Heron**.



*The brightly colored **Masked Fruiteater**.*

The last leg of our adventure will take us to explore the fantastic Manu Road, a famous (among birders especially), unpaved, old road that links the city of Cusco with the lowlands of Madre de Dios, in the Amazon basin. Manu Road provides us with dramatic altitudinal changes, ensuring we pass through many different habitat types which, in turn, means we will encounter a myriad of bird species. Manu Road is an essential inclusion on any birding tour to southern Peru. We will spend the following five days exploring habitats including arid scrub slopes, steep mountain slopes, cloud forest and lush humid tropical forest. We will look for an incredible set of species such as the endemic **Red-and-white Antpitta**, **Marcapata Spinetail**, **Creamy-crested Spinetail**, **Chestnut-breasted Mountain Finch**, **Masked Trogon**, **Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan** and **Golden-headed Quetzal**. Mixed-species flocks will be investigated for a number of tanagers such as **Paradise**, **Bay-headed**, **Spotted**, **Beryl-spangled**, **Blue-and-black** and **Golden-collared** as well as the gorgeous **Versicolored Barbet**.

The two-week-long odyssey will give you an introduction to South America like no other. On this tour we will visit two mega birding destinations, Manu Road and the Macaw Clay Lick as well as the world-famous Machu Picchu Inca ruins. This tour can be combined with our preceding **Cusco**

and Apurímac Jewels birding trip, where we target a number of classic Andean specials. Come and join us on this birding adventure which is sure to be an assault on the senses.

Detailed Itinerary (16 days/15 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Lima

This is a travel day. You will arrive at Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima and will 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 able to arrange an early check-in at the hotel (usually at a reasonable price), or we can organize an optional birding morning near the city.

Overnight: Hotel in Lima

Day 2. Flight to Puerto Maldonado and birding the town

After a 2.5-hour flight we will reach the Amazon town of Puerto Maldonado. Once in Puerto Maldonado, we will check in at the hotel and after lunch explore the Cachuela Road near town for our first set of birds.



Paradise Tanager is one of the many tanager species we should see on this tour.

The birding around Puerto Maldonado is quite good early in the morning and then again in the afternoon. The habitat consists of agricultural pastures with tropical secondary growth, which is

quite good for finding specials like the localized **White-throated Jacamar**. A population of **Brazilian Teal** has established itself around town, and we should have close-up views of this bird. Other birds include **Rusty-margined Flycatcher**, **Spotted Tody-Flycatcher**, **Cobalt-winged Parakeet**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Bare-necked Fruitcrow**, **Green Ibis**, **Roadside Hawk**, **Red-breasted Blackbird**, **White-tailed Kite**, **Chestnut-bellied Seedeater**, **Purus Jacamar**, **Great Antshrike** and **Barred Antshrike**.

Overnight: Hotel Cabaña Quinta (or similar), Puerto Maldonado

Day 3. Birding Sandoval Lake

We will have an early start to take our 45-minute-long boat trip along the river to the Sandoval Lake, a huge oxbow lake near the Madre de Dios River. The trail leading to the lake is roughly two miles (almost three kilometers) long and along the trail we will keep a look out for species such as **Black-fronted Nunbird**, **Buff-throated Woodcreeper**, **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker**, **White-bellied Parrot**, **Coraya Wren**, **Great Antshrike**, **Black-faced Antthrush**, **Plumbeous Pigeon**, **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Undulated Tinamou**, **Spix's Guan**, **Speckled Chachalaca**, **Black-tailed**, **Blue-crowned** and **Green-backed Trogons** and **Amazonian Motmot**.



Red-bellied Macaw is one of a number of parrot species we should see on this tour.

When we reach the lake, we will have a canoe ride across the lake where we expect to see the gorgeous **Blue-and-yellow Macaw**, and other birds such as **Green Ibis**, **Grey-cowled Wood Rail**, **Bluish-fronted Jacamar**, **Sungrebe**, **Sunbittern**, **Long-billed Woodcreeper**, **Point-tailed Palmcreeper**, **Horned Screamer**, **Limpkin**, **Capped Heron**, **Sunbittern**, **Greater Ani**, **Masked Crimson Tanager**, **White-throated Toucan**, **Black Caracara**, **Snail Kite**, **Ringed**, **Green**,

Amazon and **American Pygmy Kingfishers**, **Gilded Barbet**, and with luck the elusive **Agami Heron**. We shall pay special attention to **Red-bellied Macaws**, which roost in the Mauritian Palm trees. We will then take the trail back to the river to be transferred to Puerto Maldonado city.

Overnight Hotel Cabaña Quinta (or similar), Puerto Maldonado

Days 4–6. Macaw Clay Lick and Amazon rainforest

We will spend the next three days exploring the Chuncho Lodge located along the Tambopata River. This lodge can only be reached by a combination of land and river transportation from Puerto Maldonado and is located near the Tambopata National Park in the Amazon lowlands.

The lodge is strategically located near the famous Chuncho Macaw Clay Lick where (weather permitting) we can witness the daily ritual of several species of parrots and macaws coming to ingest the clay from which they obtain nutritional supplements and antioxidants to eliminate potential toxins from their usual diet.

The Chuncho Macaw Clay Lick provides us with chances of seeing **Chestnut-fronted Macaw**, **Red-and-green Macaw**, **Scarlet Macaw**, **Blue-and-yellow Macaw** and **Blue-headed Macaw**, which should hopefully give us six macaw species for the trip.

Other parrots seen at the clay lick include **Southern Mealy Amazon**, **Yellow-crowned Amazon**, **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Orange-cheeked Parrot**, **White-eyed Parakeet** and **Dusky-headed Parakeet**.



Blue-necked Tanager, yet another gorgeous tanager.

The river trips from the lodge to the clay lick can be delightful with some of the following fantastic species likely: **Capped Heron**, **Cocoi Heron**, **White-banded Swallow**, **White-winged Swallow**,

Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Black Caracara, Great Black Hawk, Swallow-winged Puffbird, Roadside Hawk, Sunbittern, and perhaps even our first encounters with **Colombian Red Howler Monkeys** and **Capybaras**. If we are lucky, we may see the scarce **Orinoco Goose**; this is one of the best places to see this species in Peru.

The forest interior holds skulking species such as **Striated Antbird, White-browed Antbird, White-lined Antbird, Silvered Antbird, Plumbeous Antbird, Goeldi's Antbird, Chestnut-tailed Antbird, Black-faced Antthrush, Undulated Tinamou** and **Moustached Wren**. Other canopy and sub-canopy forest species that we might see include **White-necked Puffbird, Semicollared Puffbird, Lemon-throated Barbet, Lettered Aracari, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Band-tailed Manakin, Screaming Piha, Crimson-crested Woodpecker,** and **Red-necked Woodpecker**. With luck, we might also find the elusive **Razor-billed Curassow, Pavonine Quetzal** and **Pale-winged Trumpeter**.

At night we can try for **Crested Owl, Spectacled Owl** and **Tawny-bellied Screech Owl**.

Overnight: Chunchu Lodge (or similar)



Sparkling Violetear, one of the many hummingbird species we will likely encounter on this trip.

Day 7. Flight to Cusco and transfer to Ollantaytambo

Today we will be transferred back to the city of Puerto Maldonado and catch a flight to Cusco in the Peruvian Andes.

The city of Cusco is well-known as the capital of the ancient Inca Empire and is certainly one of the most important archaeological destinations in the world. Cusco is a busy tourist destination with good facilities and we will overnight in Cusco later in the tour; today we'll instead proceed

further to Ollantaytambo. We should hopefully arrive in this small, fascinating Andean town in the Urubamba Valley, the “sacred valley of the Incas” in the afternoon.

The gardens of the hotel are very good for hummingbirds such as the endemic **Bearded Mountaineer**, spectacular **Black-tailed** and **Green-tailed Trainbearers**, **White-bellied Hummingbird**, **Sparkling Violetear** and a number of other species including **Greenish Yellow Finch** and **Golden-billed Saltator**.

Overnight: Hotel Pakaritampu (or similar), Ollantaytambo

Day 8. Birding Machu Picchu

Ollantaytambo is a very busy, yet small, tourist town. From here, we will take a 1.5-hour train journey to the village of Aguas Calientes (hot springs), the entry point to the famous Machu Picchu ruins. This is the most scenic part of the journey and through the train windows it is possible to see **Torrent Ducks** on the rapids of the Urubamba River. We will then take a 20-minute bus drive to the top of the mountain and will then enter the renowned Inca ruins of Machu Picchu. Despite the crowds of tourists, we will do our best (weather permitting) to ensure you get all the classic Machu Picchu views and appreciate its fine and impressive stone work. Please note, the visit does not include the complete cultural and comprehensive tour that can take over three hours, as there are also some important target birds for us to look out for while here.



*We'll look for the distinctive local subspecies of **Collared Inca** in the Machu Picchu area.*

The lush forest around Machu Picchu holds great species such as **Andean Motmot**, **Collared Inca**, **Slate-throated Whitestart**, **Green Hermit**, **Plum-crowned Parrot**, **Torrent Duck**,

Torrent Tyrannulet, Black Phoebe, Silver-backed Tanager, Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet and the Peruvian endemic Inca Wren.

Overnight: Aguas Calientes (or similar)

Day 9. Birding the Urubamba River, return to Cusco

We will spend a full morning along the Urubamba River, looking for the endemic and most-wanted **Masked Fruiteater** as well as the endemic **Green-and-white Hummingbird**. We will look out for mixed-species flocks which often contain **Sclater's Tyrannulet, Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet, Ashy-headed Tyrannulet, Blue-necked Tanager, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Ocellated Piculet, Slaty Tanager, Fawn-breasted Tanager, Barred Becard, Azara's Spinetail, Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, Capped Conebill, Mitred Parakeet, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Golden-olive Woodpecker and Grey-breasted Wood Wren.**

After lunch we will take the train back to Ollantaytambo and then drive back to Cusco to our hotel located just a few blocks from the main Cusco square.

Overnight: Andean Wings Boutique Hotel (or similar), Cusco

Day 10. Birding the Manu Road

Today we will explore the famous road that connects the Andes of Cusco with the Amazon rainforest, the Manu Road. The Manu Road passes through different types of habitat like dry high-altitude Andean mountains, elfin forest, cloud forest, and moist montane forest. We shall leave Cusco in the direction of the Manu Road with the first stop on the Huacarpay Lake. Here we shall have a quick look for several species of Andean waterfowl, like **Yellow-billed Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail, Puna Teal, Cinnamon Teal, and Andean Duck**. Other birds include **Plumbeous Rail, Andean Coot, Yellow-winged Blackbird, Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Streak-fronted Thornbird, Wren-like Rushbird, Andean Gull, Andean Lapwing, Andean Flicker and Cinereous Harrier**. We will also look for **Giant Hummingbird**, the largest hummer in the world, as well as for the endemic **Rusty-fronted Canastero**.

We will drive up the mountains to 12,500 feet (3,800 meters), where we will have chances of seeing **Slender-billed Miner, Mountain Caracara, Andean Flicker, Brown-bellied Swallow, Puna Thistletail, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, White-throated Tyrannulet, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, White-banded Tyrannulet**, along with two fine Peruvian endemics, **Creamy-crested Spinetail and Chestnut-breasted Mountain Finch**. In the evening we will look for **Swallow-tailed Nightjar**, which is often seen along the road.

Overnight: Wayqecha Biological Station near Manu National Park

Day 11. Birding the Manu Cloud Forest

We will explore the area around the lodge including the Wayqecha Canopy Walkway and the famous Pillahuata area looking for two important Peruvian endemics, **Red-and-white Antpitta and Marcapata Spinetail**, as well as other great birds such as **Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan**,

Band-tailed Fruiteater, Masked Trogon, Southern Mountain Cacique, Red-crested Cotinga, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, Trilling Tapaculo, Barred Fruiteater, Fulvous Wren, Moustached Flowerpiercer, Masked Flowerpiercer, White-collared Jay and Montane Woodcreeper. We will search through mixed-species feeding flocks where we may pick out a number of tanager species such as **Golden-collared Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager** and **Hooded Mountain Tanager**. With some luck, we might find **Yungas Pygmy-Owl**, which is often seen in the cloud forest around Wayqecha. After a hopefully good morning birding session, we will start our slow drive through the magical humid montane forest including the Rocotal area where we can get our first looks at **Blue-banded Toucanet, Chestnut-crested Cotinga** and **Andean Cock-of-the-rock**.

Near the Union bridge, we will check the fast-flowing waters of the Kosñipata River looking for **Torrent Duck** and **White-capped Dipper** and with luck **Lyre-tailed Nightjar** at its daytime roost.

After a great day's birding, we will arrive at the Cock of the Rock Lodge which will be our base for the next three days.

Overnight: Cock of the Rock Lodge (or similar), Manu Cloud Forest



*Huge and brightly colored **Blue-and-yellow Macaws** (photo Riccardo Boschetti).*

Days 12–14. Birding around Cock of the Rock Lodge

We have three full days to explore the area around the Cock of the Rock Lodge, looking for amazing flocks of tanagers such as **Bay-headed Tanager, Golden Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Orange-eared Tanager, Spotted Tanager, Paradise Tanager, Straw-backed Tanager, Green-and-gold Tanager, Golden-eared Tanager** and **Beryl-spangled Tanager**. We

will also of course look for many other birds like **Blue Dacnis**, **Black-faced Dacnis**, **Versicolored Barbet**, **Montane Foliage-gleaner**, **Peruvian Warbling Antbird**, **Stripe-chested Antwren**, **Chestnut-backed Antshrike**, **Western Fire-eye**, **Yungas Manakin**, **Olive-backed Woodcreeper**, **Plumbeous Pigeon**, **Lemon-browed Flycatcher**, **Slaty-capped Flycatcher**, **Black-and-chestnut Eagle**, **Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher**, **Magpie Tanager**, **Long-tailed Tyrant**, **Blue-banded Toucanet**, **White-eared Solitaire** and **Andean Cock-of-the-rock**. At night we may find **Rufescent Screech Owl** and with luck the scarce **Band-bellied Owl**.

Then we have another day to explore the lower altitude parts of Manu Road, here we can find **Bamboo Antshrike**, **Red-billed Scythebill**, **Dot-winged Antwren**, **White-lined Antbird**, **Ornate Stipplethroat**, **Scaly-naped Amazon**, **Buff-rumped Warbler**, **White-winged Tanager**, the endemic **Black-backed Tody-Flycatcher**. Hummingbird feeders provide great views of **Violet-fronted Brilliant**, **Wire-crested Thorntail**, **Rufous-booted Racket-tail**, **Fork-tailed Woodnymph**, **Speckled Hummingbird**, **Sparkling Violetear**, and **Many-spotted Hummingbird**.

We will be lucky to find the secretive **Brown Tinamou** which sometimes visits the Cock of the Rock Lodge gardens, also a good place to try for the elusive endemic **Cerulean-capped Manakin** and **Yungas Manakin**. The feeders in the garden often attract other wildlife such as **Tayra**, **Bolivian Squirrel** and **Margarita Island (Large-headed) Capuchin**.

The viewpoint known locally as the “Mirador” a few kilometers above the lodge, is a good vantage point to look for **Black-and-chestnut Eagle** and **Solitary Eagle**, truly spectacular raptors, while we will have our work set out for us as we keep a look out for **Andean Potoos** at their day roosts. Other mixed flocks often contain **Cuzco Warbler**, **Two-banded Warbler**, **Grey-mantled Wren**, **Streak-necked Flycatcher**, **Capped Conebill** and with luck **Yellow-rumped Antwren**.

Overnight: Cock of the Rock Lodge (or similar), Manu Cloud Forest

Day 15. Transfer to Cusco

On our final day on the Manu Road we will drive from Cock of the Rock Lodge back to Cusco, making selective stops along the road while looking for species we may have missed on previous days.

Overnight: Andean Wings Boutique Hotel (or similar), Cusco

Days 16. Flight to Lima and departure

You will fly out from Cusco to Lima city and connect to your international flights.

Overnight: Not included

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 guide from the one advertised due to tour scheduling or other factors.

Tour Details

Duration: 16 days
Group size: 3–8
Date: 20 July–04 August 2027
Start: Lima
End: Lima
Price: US\$ 9,522 per person sharing plus around US\$ 587 for your domestic flights, which we will book for you (2027)

Single supplement: US\$ 1,233 (2027)

Price includes:

All accommodation (hotels and lodges)
Private bilingual tour leader
Private transportation (includes train tickets and bus tickets for Machu Picchu) River transport
All meals (except where indicated)
Bottled water in the field
Admission fees for Machu Picchu ruins and Tambopata National Park

Price excludes:

All flights
Meals in Lima on Day 1 and lunch and dinner on Day 16
Personal expenses such as phone calls, internet access, laundry, souvenirs, etc.
Gratuities (please see our [tipping guidelines blog](#))
Any activity, tour, excursion, visit, or city tour to a place which is not described above
Any service on Day 16 after you arrive at Lima airport
Any birding activity in Lima on the first day in case you arrive in the morning or early afternoon