



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Giant Antpitta

Ecuador Photography Tour: A Kaleidoscope of Color

10 Nights/11 Days | June 12-22, 2020

With over 1,635 species recorded, Ecuador is a favorite among photographers for its diversity of colorful and accessible tropical bird species. This tour takes us to one of the most bird-tastic countries on Earth where we'll begin at 11,483 foot Yanacocha, and venture on to Mindo, Mashpi, Santa Rosa, and finally Sumaco/Guango on a relaxed and fun photographic adventure. Along our route we visit the best locations possible for various colorful species, the entire way enjoying capturing magnificent images of dazzling Tanagers, Mountain Toucans, Andean Cock of the Rock, and myriad Hummingbirds with names like Sunangel, and Pufflegs! And along the way we will make one nocturnal quest for the almost unbelievable-looking Pinocchio Lizard.

Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrival Quito Airport (UIO)
Day 2, 3, 4, 5: Yanacocha, Alambe, Milpe, Mashpe, Septimo Paraiso Lodge
Day 6: Santa Rosa Reserve
Day 7, 8, 9: Antizana National Park, Sumaco Lodge
Day 10: Guango Lodge
Day 11: Departure Quito Airport (UIO)

10 Night/11 Day Itinerary

Day 1, Arrival in Quito and transfer to our hotel:

Dinner is not included this evening due to varying arrival times, however there are ample restaurants in town, and if everyone arrives accordingly, we can choose and dine as a group.

Lodging in Quito

Day 2, Yanacocha Reserve/Mindo:

After breakfast we'll drive to Yanacocha Reserve. At 11,483 feet, Yanacocha is famous for its high-elevation specialties, and we spend the morning here photographing along the Trocha Inca Trail. Here we will see at least ten species of hummingbirds at the feeders including; Great Sapphirewing, Golden-breasted and Sapphire-

Andean Cock-of-the-Rock



vented Pufflegs, Sword-billed Hummingbirds, and much more. Scarlet-bellied and Black-chested Mountain Tanagers also visit the banana feeders here. We will enjoy a picnic lunch while taking in the grandiose montane vista, then begin the drive to Mindo via the Old Nono-Mindo Road, birding and taking photographs along the way. This road offers spectacular views of the forest and excellent birding and photo opportunities with the possibility of such sought-after birds such as Torrent Duck and White-capped Dipper.

If the time allows we will stop at Alambi reserve where another 10 species of Hummingbirds are possible such as; Booted Racket-tail, White-bellied and Purple-throated Woodstar, Brown and Lesser Violetear, Green-crowned,

Fawn-breasted, and Empress Brilliant, Buff-tailed Coronet, and Andean Emerald.

We will then arrive at the Septimo Paraiso Lodge in Mindo.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Septimo Paraiso Lodge*

Day 3, Mindo:

Today after breakfast, we'll have ample opportunities to photograph abundant species around the lodge such as; Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Green-crowned Brilliant, Violet-tailed Sylph, Andean Emerald, and Velvet-purple Coronet. We'll also stake out the banana Feeders for Orange-crowned Euphonia, Flame-rumped Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, and more.

In the afternoon, we'll visit the Milpe Bird Sanctuary to photograph Choco Toucans, Collared Aracari, Silver-throated Tanager, Rufous Motmot, Green Thorntail, White-whiskered Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, and Tanagers such as; Flame-rumped, Golden, Golden-naped, Rufous-throated, and Silver-throated. We'll also check the nearby Club-winged Manakin lek hoping it will be active to give us a great show.

Tonight we will also make a special search for the remarkable Pinocchio Lizard.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Septimo Paraiso Lodge*



Oilbird

Day 4, Mindo:

Early this morning we will head to Paz de Las Antpittas Reserve to observe the Andean Cock of the Rocks at their lek, where males assemble during the mating season and engage in competitive displays that attract females. Afterwards we will join Angel (the owner of the reserve) to meet his “charges” as they arrive for breakfast: Maria the Giant Antpitta, Willi the Yellow-breasted Antpitta, and Susan the Moustached Antpitta! We will then enjoy our local breakfast at their reserve, alongside Empress Brilliant Hummers, Crimson-rumped Toucanet and Toucan Barbet, Flame-faced, Golden and Golden-naped Tanagers.

We'll check the new banana feeders where we expect to photograph, Toucan Barbet, Sickle-winged Guan, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, and Golden tanagers. In the afternoon we will have another chance to photograph the fabulous Andean Cock of the Rock.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Septimo Paraiso Lodge*

Day 5, Mashpi and Oilbirds:

This day we will visit Masphi reserve to photograph the endemic Moss-backed Tanager, Glistening Tanager, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, as well as Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Indigo Flowerpiercer, Golden Tanager, Golden naped Tanager, Ornate Flycatcher, and more.

After this show of dazzling avian colors we will make the 1.5 hour drive to the famous Oilbird Cave for photographs of this enigmatic bird.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Septimo Paraiso Lodge*

Pinocchio Anole



Day 6, Santa Rosa, Toucans, and Quito:

Today we will visit Santa Rosa reserve to photograph the endemic and spectacular Plate-billed Mountain Toucan and Gorgeted Sunangel, and hope for chances of the rare Hoary Puffleg, plus many more birds before our drive back to Quito.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at San Jose de Puembo Hotel*

Day 7, Antinaza National Park to Sumaco:

After breakfast, we head for Antizana National Park where we will search for Andean Condor, Black-faced Ibis, Paramo Pipit, Black-winged Ground Dove, Giant hummingbird, Tawny Antpitta, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Black-tailed Trainbearer, and other Paramo specialties before our 4 hour drive to Sumaco Lodge.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Sumaco Lodge*

Days 8 and 9, Hummers and Feeders of Sumaco Lodge:

The next two days we'll spend immersed in the multitude of feeders around the lodge (at least 15 species of hummers here), and the nearby road is very good for mixed flocks of Coppery-chested Jacamar, Gray tailed Piha, Blue-rumped Manakin. Species at the feeders include Napo Sabrewing, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Wire-crested Thorntail, Rufous-vented Whitedtip, Green Hermit, Many-spotted Hummingbird, Booted Racket-tail (orange legs), and much more. At dusk, we will try for Band-bellied Owl and Foothill Screech Owl.



Golden Tanager

We'll continue in this same area for species such as Chestnut-crowned Gnatcatcher, Golden-collared Toucanet, Gilded Barbet, Rufous-naped Greenlet, Coraya Wren, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, and stunningly beautiful species of tanagers including Magpie, Paradise, White-lined, Silver-beaked, Blue-browed, Orange-eared, Spotted, Yellow-bellied and Golden-eared.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Sumaco Lodge*

Day 10, Sumaco to Guango:

Today, we will re-target some of the previous day's birds, and transfer to Guango Lodge.

The feeders at Guango allow "in-your-face" views of many highly sought-after hummingbirds, star among which is the amazing Sword-billed Hummingbird! Other

special hummers include Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Mountain Velvet-breast, Tourmaline Sunangel, Mountain Avocetbill and many more. We will walk the nearby trails looking for mixed flocks and check the Papallacta River for Torrent Duck and White-capped Dipper.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Guango Lodge*

Day 11, Transfer from Guango to Airport:

After an early breakfast we'll spend the morning photographing the forest edge around the lodge looking for Black-capped Hemispingus, Barred Becard, Turquoise Jay, Lacrimose and Hooded Mountain-Tanagers, the rare Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan and many more.

In the afternoon we will transfer to the airport for our flights home.



Toucan Barbet

Included in this Itinerary

In-country accommodations, ground transportation, tours, meals, soft drinks, guide and entrance fees.

Not Included

Personal items such as alcoholic beverages, gift shop, laundry, etc. are not included.

Travel Insurance

We highly recommend purchasing travel insurance. In the event that you need to cancel your trip due to medical or other reasons, this insurance will protect you.



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