



Natural Selections

BIRDING, WILDLIFE, AND PHOTO TOURS



Wire-crested Thorntail

Catherine Hamilton and Debby Kaspari, Birding & Sketching Peru

Main Tour

11 Nights/12 Days

With 1,800 bird species, Peru is one of the most avian rich countries on earth. This tour takes us across the eastern slopes of the Andean Mountains, high above the sweeping lowlands of the Amazon Rainforest, and descends through mystical cloud forests into the western edge of the Amazon basin. Here, regular swathes of clouds cloak the canopy in a dense mist, giving life to an abundance of mosses, lichen, bromeliads, orchids and more, and providing home to mountain toucans, golden-headed quetzals, and huge, roving mixed flocks of colorful tanagers and other species. Amongst the gnarled branches of the forest, Spectacled Bears, Gray Woolly Monkeys and vibrant orange Cock-of-the-Rocks all live unmolested. Catherine Hamilton and Debby Kaspari along with their Peruvian Guide will lead this tour, teaching participants how to field sketch amid awesome natural beauty, wildlife, and some of the very best birding in the world, while staying at lodges run by key conservation groups like the Amazon Conservation Association and Peru Verde. Catherine and Debby will provide plenty of individual attention to make sure everyone develops the skills to be successful in their artistic journey.

Main Tour Overview

Day 1: Arrive Cusco (CUZ), overnight Cusco

Day 2: Transfer to Wayqecha Lodge

Day 3: Wayqecha, Manu Road, Cock of the Rock Lodge

Day 4: Cock of the Rock Lodge

Day 5: Cock of the Rock to Villa Carmen Lodge

Days 6 and 7: Villa Carmen Lodge

Day 8: Transfer to Atalaya and Manu Wildlife Center

Days 9 and 10: Manu Wildlife center

Day 11: Transfer to Puerto Maldonado

Day 12: Depart from Puerto Maldonado (PEM) for Lima (or onto Chucho for extensionists).

11 Nights/12 Days Itinerary

Day 1, Arrive Cusco:

After arrival in Cusco, pick up at airport, transfer to our hotel and have dinner before resting up for the following day.

Meals: Dinner

Lodging at Casa Andina Standard Plaza

Day 2, Cusco to Wayqecha Lodge:

Today we'll leave our base in Cusco, heading eastward towards the immense Manu National Park, larger than the US state of Connecticut.

We'll travel paved and dirt roads across high-elevation grasslands where the open Andean landscape eventually gives way to dense



Gray-breasted Mountain Toucan

cloud forests where the Wayqecha ("brother" in Quechua) Birding Lodge is set within a 1,450-acre reserve overlooking Manu National Park.

Along the way will be opportunities for Cinereous Harrier, Variable Hawk, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and Aplomado Falcon and we'll stop at a convenient and scenic spot for a picnic lunch. Other targets will be the Andean Hillstar, Andean Flicker, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, and Chuiguanco Thrush. Further on we'll look out for the Scribble-tailed and Line-fronted Canasteros, Puna Wren, Puna and Diademed Tapaculos. As we descend further towards Wayqecha, the forest becomes denser and wetter and houses a different range of species including mixed species flocks with ovenbirds, flycatchers and tanagers, as well as mountain toucans, jays, caciques and more. Two special targets here are the endemic Chestnut-breasted

Mountain-Finch and Creamy-crested Spinetail and we will make special effort for these. Arrival at Wayqecha for check in and dinner.

Along the way we will have opportunities to stop and sketch the Andean views, cloud forest mists, waterfalls, birds and other wildlife. There will also be an on-the-go class: Gesture Drawing to Increase Speed and Looseness, which is so essential to field sketching. Demos by Catherine and Debby. In the evening there will be a class: Drawing Birds from Life. With the aid of anatomy charts, photographs, memory exercises, and modified blind contour drawing, this session will help everyone develop the skills they need to sketch birds in the field. 2 hours.

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

**Day 3, Birding Wayqecha Lodge,
transfer to Cock of the Rock Lodge:**

Today we will start birding at Wayqecha's garden feeders and take advantage of the lodge's bird bathing area for species like Hooded Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Golden-collared Tanager, Rust & Yellow Tanager, Grass Green Tanager and other species. This will be a great opportunity to sketch birds as they busily eat and bathe. This is a perfect opportunity to practice techniques we learned in the previous evening's bird-drawing session.

Afterwards, we'll follow the Manu Road towards an area known as "the tunnels" where Gray-breasted Mountain Toucan, Red-crested Cotinga, Barred Fruiteater, Citrine Warbler, Marcapata Spinetail, Marron-chested Chat-Tyrant, Mountain Wren, and a myriad of other species present themselves in the endless forests along the way. We'll stop along the way to sketch not only birds but trees,

waterfalls, and views of the rainforest.

In the afternoon we'll head down-slope from Wayqecha's cloud forests, and descend through subtropical forests full of epiphytic plant species and a variety of ecological niches home to birds such as Montane Woodcreeper, Streak-tuftedcheek, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Glossy Black Thrush, Blue-banded Toucanet, Barred-bellied Woodpecker, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Dusky capped Flycatcher, Maroon-chested Chat-Tyrant, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Blue-backed Conebill, Plushcap, and others. The epiphytes offer a magnificent sketching opportunity in themselves. We'll draw the bromeliads, vines, mosses, and orchids that compose the visual excitement of the rainforest's colorful biodiversity.

Traveling along the winding Manu Road through these pristine forests permits us to enjoy this area's spectacular avifauna that also includes Yungas Pygmy Owl,

Golden-headed Quetzal, Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, Versicolored Barbet, Inca Flycatcher, Handsome Flycatcher, Unadorned Flycatcher, Bolivian Tyrannulet, Smoke-colored Pewee, Brown-capped Vireo, Gray breasted Wood Wren, Andean and White-eared Solitaire, Pale-legged Warbler, Russet-crowned Warbler, Slaty Tanager, Blue and black Tanager, and Fawn-breasted Tanager. Among the many hummingbird species, we will encounter are; Bronzy Inca, Mountain Velvetbreast, Long-tailed Sylph, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, and Brown and Green Violetear.

As we enter lower elevation forest, the birdlife changes correspondingly, and we may encounter Solitary Eagle, Inca Jay, Crested Quetzal, Highland Motmot, and mixed flocks with Montane Foliage Gleaner, Deep Blue and Bluish Flowerpiercer, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Yellow-throated Tanager, Common and Short-billed Bush-Tanager, Yungas Manakin, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Streak-necked Flycatcher, Three-striped eared Hemispingus, Blue-naped Chlorophonia and others.

Late this afternoon we'll arrive at Cock of the Rock Lodge and explore the garden's hummingbird feeders for Many-spotted Hummingbird, Violet-fronted Brilliant, Speckled Hummingbird, White-bellied Woodstar, Wire-crested Thorntail and the spectacular Booted Rackettail. Sketching at the feeders will be delightful, exciting, and restful all at the same time. Class: How to

Red and Green Macaws





Hoatzin

Sketch Hummingbirds, either perched or in flight, and how to capture iridescence in watercolor, with demos by Catherine and Debby. 1-2 hours.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Cock of the Rock Lodge

Day 4, Cock of the Rock Lodge:

We will sketch around the lodge, hoping to encounter mixed-species flocks where we can put our gesture sketch skills to good use. We'll have a short class on sketching purely for identification purposes vs. sketching for aesthetics, and then set up at the El Mirador overview where we can look for raptors and have a lesson in drawing birds of prey. We will sketch in pencil, adding color afterward, and for longer studies we can incorporate habitat elements as we go.

Today will be an easy day of birding around the lodge for mixed-

species flocks of Blue-necked Tanagers, Paradise Tanagers, Bush Tanagers, Slaty-capped Flycatchers, Slate-throated red stars, Olive-backed and Mountain Woodcreepers, Mountain Foliage Gleaners, Blue-banded and Chestnut-tipped toucanets, Crimson-bellied and Golden Olive woodpeckers, and Highland Motmots. El Mirador is a great place to spot raptors as well such as Black & Chestnut and Solitary Eagles.

Other species encountered at these lower elevations include; Red-billed Scythebill, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Foothill Antwren, White-backed Fire-eye, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, Stripe-chested Antwren, and Cabani's Spinetail. We'll also hope for Golden-bellied Warbler, Ornate Flycatcher, Cinnamon-faced Tyrannulet, rare Peruvian Pietail (endemic hummingbird) and then return to the lodge for lunch and time enjoying the garden feeders.

Probably the highlight today will be our visit a nearby known lekking site of the spectacular Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, the national bird of Peru. We'll get a chance at this unforgettable site to watch and sketch the colorful males gather and dance to attract females of their species. Be sure to pack your warmest red watercolors!

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Cock of the Rock Lodge

Day 5, Cock of the Rock Lodge to Villa Carmen Lodge:

After an early breakfast we'll hop into our vehicles and continue birding and sketching along the Manu Road down to the Villa Carmen Lodge and Biological Station.

Villa Carmen is a 7,600-acre property in the so-called transitional zone (at 1640 feet elevation) where the last foothills of the Andes begin to flatten out into the lowland Amazon Basin. Butterfly bushes around the gardens here attract numerous hummingbird species including the Rufous-crested Coquette, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Blue-tailed Emerald, Black-eared Fairy, White-bearded Hermit, Gray-breasted Sabrewing and the endemic Kopeck's Hermit.

We'll bird here in the lodge's gardens, as well as in floodplain and elevated rain forest habitats. Some of the species we will be looking for include the Black-capped Tinamou, the Strange (and

common here!) Hoatzin, Buckley's Forest Falcon, Wattled Guan, Military Macaw, Blue-headed Macaw, Pheasant Cuckoo, Bluish-fronted Jacamar, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Fine-barred Piculet, Red-billed Scythebill, Dark-breasted Spinetail, Dusky-cheeked Foliage-gleaner, Bamboo Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Rusty-belted Tapaculo, and many more.

The garden and surrounding forests and floodplains present us with the opportunity to play with landscape sketches and botanical studies. If the hoatzins cooperate, we can have a session with them, sketching their dinosaur-like oddness. Class: The Six-Foot Landscape, 2 hours.

Landscapes, especially tropical rainforest landscapes, can be intimidating to draw. But they're a lot less intimidating when you focus on what's right in front of you. We will each choose our own patch of nature and sketch our way through these smaller, more intimate landscapes.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Lodging at Villa Carmen Lodge

Day 6, Villa Carmen Lodge:

Birding in the morning before breakfast, searching for species like Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Blue-throated Piping Guan, Purplish Jay, Red-capped Cardinal, Mofle-backed Elaenia, Red-billed Tyrannulet, Johanne's' Tody-tyrant, Yellow-browed Tody-flycatcher, Black-backed Tody -Flycatcher, Band-tailed, Fiery-capped and



Jaguar

Round-tailed Manakins, Golden-bellied (Cuzco) Warbler, Turquoise Tanager, Masked Crimson Tanager, Black-faced Dacnis, Long-tailed Tyrant. Birding the abundant bamboo forests here along the river Piñipiñi, we'll look for White-cheeked Tody Tyrant, Manu Antbird, Bamboo Antshrike, Dusky-cheeked Foliage Gleaner, Rufous-headed Woodpecker and other birds restricted to this thicket vegetation.

After breakfast Class: Drawing Trees: leafy canopies, bark patterns, epiphytes, vine tangles, and those wonderful tropical buttresses. 2 hours.

After lunch Class: Watercolor technique for the Field Sketcher: mixing colors, using washes over pencil sketches, pen and ink with color, the differences between watercolor paper and regular sketchbook paper. We'll draw closeup objects such as seedpods, forest fruits, leaves, and anything else that we find. Demos by

Catherine and Debby. 2 hours.

Nighttime at Villa Carmen will find us owling for species like Mottled Owl, Black-banded Owl, and Tawny-bellied Screech-owl, as well as Great, Long-tailed and Common Potoo. Night walks can produce some amazing invertebrates, frogs, and reptiles to draw and even a chance of sketching sleeping birds on their roosts.

Villa Carmen is also gaining fame for their Tinamou feeder stations, and is one the best places to observe, photograph, and sketch the Undulated, Cinereous and Black-capped Tinamou.

Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner Lodging at Villa Carmen Lodge

Day 7, Villa Carmen Lodge:

Today in addition to relaxing, birding and sketching around the lodge, we'll also visit the Mirador Pico de Hoz bird sanctuary, which is a local initiative just outside the nearby village of Pilcopata.



Andean Cock-of-the-Rock

At Mirador Pico de Hoz, we'll hope for birds like White-necked Jacobin, Gould's Jewelfront, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Blue-tailed Emerald, White-bearded Hermit also Magpie Tanager, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, plus have great possibilities to see the Scarlet-hooded Barbet.

Afterwards, we'll visit another project known as the Jardin de Picaflores Inkamazonia, home to over 15 species of hummingbirds such as Rufous-crested Coquette, Koepcke's Hermit (endemic), and Blue-fronted Lancebill. This site also provides great possibilities of viewing the Black-bellied Thorntail. We can have fun with gesture drawing, floral studies, and capturing the incredible iridescence of all those hummingbirds.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Villa Carmen Lodge*

Day 8, Transfer to Manu Wildlife Center:

We depart early this morning for Atalaya, a rustic port along the upper Madre de Dios River, where we'll board our covered boat for the 6-hour ride downriver to Manu Wildlife Center Lodge.

Our journey downriver will be through immense lowland forests, and we will be on the lookout, and stop, for any and all available wildlife along the way. We will take reference photos and keep our sketchbooks open for quick landscape and cloud studies as we travel along the river. Lots of inspiration here. Class: Cloud forms, 1 hour.

Manu Wildlife Center is along the Madre de Dios River, in the heart of vast, pristine Amazonian rainforest. Private bungalows set within the forest here offer access to two canopy towers, 30 kilometers of rainforest trails, 2 ox-bow lakes with floating catamarans, over 600

species of birds, 11 species of primate, plus much other mammal life such as Jaguars, Tapirs, Brouck Deer, and Giant Anteaters. Our main focus though will be the nearby Blanquillo Clay Lick, where each morning and evening, hundreds of electric green Mealy Parrots, Blue-headed Parrots, and Flamboyant Red and Green Macaws gather to feed on nutrients from the nearby cliff-face. We will arrive mid-afternoon, and in time for a visit to one of the Lodge's ox-bow lakes.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Manu Wildlife Center*

Day 9 and 10, Manu Wildlife Center:

Our mornings at Manu Wildlife Center will be dedicated to visiting the Blanquillo Clay Lick, where our elevated vantage point will be from a well-established and furnished structure, roofed and with comfortable seating (and even a restroom). The clay lick will give us hordes of macaws and other parrots that congregate to eat the mineral-rich clay that helps them neutralize toxins in their diet. We can sit comfortably to sketch (and photograph, too) this amazing, rarely seen spectacle of brilliant feathers and parrot fabulousness. Class: Sketching Parrots – a primer of the unique shapes and proportions of the psittacine family, 30 minutes, then we sketch. Catherine and Debby will demo.

Red-and-Green and occasionally Scarlet Macaws, and huge flocks of Blue-headed, Orange-cheeked, Mealy and Yellow-Crowned



Peruvian Andes

Parrots gather at the Clay Licks here approximately 125 feet away, providing excellent, well-lit opportunities for shots of the birds feeding and in flight. We normally end the morning around 11:00 or so and will return to the Lodge for lunch before visiting an ox-bow the late afternoon for a change in scenery. Ocelots and Jaguars have

been recorded at Blanquillo's clay licks feeding on Macaws and Parrots, and if we are lucky, well....

Depending on activity at the lake, we may have a chance of Hoatzins, Herons, Capybaras, and even Giant Otters

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Manu Wildlife Center*

Day 11, Blanquillo Clay Lick, transfer to Boca Colorado and Puerto Maldonado:

After a morning visit to Blanquillo clay-lick, our boat will head for the village of Boca Colorado, where we'll switch over to a land transfer

to the Amazonian town of Puerto Maldonado. Dinner will be here in town, and we can take time to organize gear, do communications, or relax.

*Meals: Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner
Lodging at Cabana Quinta*

Day 12, Departure from Puerto Maldonado to Lima (or on to Chuncho Lodge for extensionists):

We'll leave on departing flights from Puerto Maldonado close to mid-day today for Lima. Those taking the Tambopata extension will take the ground transport to Chuncho Lodge on the Tambopata River.

*Meals: Main Tour- breakfast.
Extension- Breakfast, Lunch, Dinner*

[Click for Machu Picchu Pre-tour Itinerary](#)

[Click for Tambopata Clay Lick Post-tour extension Itinerary](#)

Included in this itinerary:

Accommodations from nights 1 to 11, meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 12, soft drinks, one way flight from PEM to LIM on day 12, all ground and water transport, bilingual bird guide for the entire trip, entrance fees to Cock of the Rock lek, Blanquillo clay lick, entrance fees to Pico de Oz and Inka Amazonica birding overlook, airport transfers.

Not Included:

International flights to Cusco, travel insurance, international calls, medical issues, laundry, tips, alcoholic beverages, souvenirs and other items of a personal nature.

Travel Insurance is recommended for this and all travel. Please see <https://www.naturalselectionstours.com/travel-insurance/> for details.



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