



ECUADOR

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

"AVIAN WONDERS OF THE ANDES & AMAZONIA"

MAY 6 - 21, 2027

Ecuador is a premier birding destination, thanks to its incredible habitat diversity, ranging from lush cloud forests and tropical rainforests to high-altitude paramo and coastal mangroves. This small but richly biodiverse country offers breathtaking landscapes, including towering Andes mountains, active volcanoes, and serene rivers. Ecuador's vibrant culture and warm, welcoming people add to the experience, providing an enriching journey through their traditions and way of life. With over 1,700 bird species, Ecuador promises unparalleled birdwatching opportunities, making it a must-visit for any nature enthusiast.

DC BIRD ALLIANCE

in partnership with **FLYWAY BIRDING TOURS** welcome you to an exclusive birding program in Ecuador. This itinerary has been carefully designed to provide outstanding opportunities for wildlife observation, exploration of diverse landscapes, and meaningful cultural engagement. Ecuador's biodiversity, combined with its variety of ecosystems, makes it an ideal destination for birders and naturalists who wish to experience an extraordinary range of habitats.

TOUCAN BARBET



SHINING SUNBEAM



PLATE-BILLED MOUNTAIN-TOUCAN



PRESENTED BY



DCBA ECUADOR BIRD PHOTOGRAPHY TOUR

This carefully designed journey explores Ecuador's extraordinary bird diversity across a remarkable range of habitats, elevations, and landscapes. Beginning in the northern Andes, the itinerary moves through high-elevation páramo, temperate forests, and the rich cloud forests of both the western and eastern slopes before descending into the Amazonian lowlands along the Napo River. Each region offers a distinct bird community and a deeper understanding of how geography, climate, and conservation have shaped one of the most biologically diverse countries in the world.

Highlights include Antisana Reserve, where we will search for Andean Condor and other high-Andean specialties; the celebrated birding areas of Mashpi and Ángel Paz Refuge; and several productive lodges and private reserves known for their forest trails, feeders, and long-term conservation work. Along the eastern slope, we will explore Guango and San Isidro, with opportunities to encounter hummingbirds, mountain-tanagers, antpittas, and other species associated with montane forests.

The final portion of the tour introduces an entirely different ecosystem during a three-night stay at Sacha Lodge in Ecuadorian Amazonia. Traveling by motorized canoe along the Napo River, we will enter a landscape of rainforest, oxbow lakes, river channels, and flooded forest. Exploration by canoe, motorboat, and forest trail may produce Hoatzin, parrots at clay licks, kingfishers, tinamous, antbirds, toucans, monkeys, river otters, and many other Amazonian birds and mammals.

Throughout the journey, comfortable accommodations, experienced local guides, and carefully selected reserves provide an excellent balance of productive birding, regional culture, conservation, and time to appreciate Ecuador's exceptional natural diversity.

GIANT ANTPITTA



COBALT-WINGED PARAKEET



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Days 1-2: Thu-Fri, May 6 -7 / Quito

Upon arrival at Mariscal Sucre International Airport, we will transfer to San Jose de Puembo Hotel , conveniently located approximately 20 minutes from the airport. Situated at an elevation of about 7,800 feet, the lodge provides a comfortable and welcoming start to our journey. Depending on arrival times, participants may explore the gardens and become acquainted with local species such as Black-tailed Trainbearer, Sparkling Violetear, Scrub Tanager, and Blue-and-yellow Tanager. Dinner will be at the lodge, providing an opportunity to meet the group and review the program. The following morning, we will travel to Antisana Reserve, reaching elevations of approximately 13,000 feet. Set against impressive views of Antisana Volcano, the reserve protects extensive high-Andean páramo and is one of Ecuador's most important areas for the conservation of the Andean Condor. Its grasslands, wetlands, and rocky slopes support a distinctive community of high-elevation birds and other specialized wildlife. During our visit, we will explore the reserve in search of Andean Condor and other páramo species while learning about the conservation of this fragile ecosystem. Lunch will be served at Tambo Cóndor, a community-based initiative supporting conservation and sustainable tourism. In the afternoon, we will return to the Lodge for dinner and overnight.

Overnight at San Jose de Puembo Hotel - (D)

The Andean Condor is one of Ecuador's most iconic yet threatened birds. Protected areas such as Antisana Reserve provide essential feeding and nesting habitat, while monitoring, research, and community conservation programs help protect the country's remaining population. With a wingspan that can exceed 10 feet, the Andean Condor is superbly adapted for soaring over open mountain landscapes while searching for carrion. Its slow reproductive rate and dependence on large, undisturbed territories make the species especially vulnerable.



ANDEAN CONDOR

Days 3-4-5-6: Sat-Tu., May 8- 11 / Mindo

Over the next four days, we'll explore the Mindo area, located on the western slope of the Andes. Mindo is renowned for its rich biodiversity and vibrant birdlife, making it a premier destination for birdwatching. During these four days, accommodations will be divided between Guaycapi Lodge and Sachatamia Lodge, providing convenient access to the region's principal reserves and photography locations. Some of the main birding locations we'll visit include:

Zuro Loma Reserve: This high-altitude reserve is known for its extensive cloud forests. It's a perfect spot for observing species like the Sword-billed Hummingbird and White-throated Screech-Owl. The reserve plays a crucial role in conserving the cloud forest ecosystem

Angel Paz Refuge: Famous for its dedication to bird conservation, this family-run reserve offers the chance to see rare species such as the Andean Cock-of-the-rock and Antpittas. Angel Paz Refuge is a model of community-based conservation efforts.

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Río Silanche: A lowland site known for its tropical bird species, providing a contrast to the highland birding sites. It's part of the Chocó bioregion, which is recognized for its high level of endemism.

Mashpi-Amagusa Reserve:

This reserve offers a mix of habitats and is home to many endemic and rare bird species, including the Toucan Barbet. The area represents the influence of the Choco biodiversity hotspot. After each day's excursions, we return to Sachatamia Lodge.



ANDEAN COCK-OF-THE ROCK



Overnights at Guaycapi Lodge & Sachatamia Lodge - (BLD)



SWORD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD



Day 7: Wednesday, May 12 / Guango

After an early breakfast, we'll head east towards Guango Lodge. Along the way, we'll stop at Cayambe-Coca National Park, located at 13,500 feet along the Papallacta Pass. This high-altitude site offers dramatic Andean landscapes and opportunities to see high-elevation bird species such as Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill. With some extra luck and the help of our extraordinary local guide, we might be able to find the unique Spectacled (Andean) Bear, a rather rare and usually secretive inhabitant of the high Andes. Continue to Guango Lodge, located at an elevation of 9,200 feet, surrounded by lush temperate forest and clear rivers. The lodge is famous for its hummingbird feeders, which attract numerous species such as Sword-billed Hummingbird and in nearby river we have fair chances to spot the Torrent Duck. Our dinner will be served at the lodge.

Overnight at Guango Lodge. (BLD)

Days 8-9: Thu - Fri, May 13- 14 / Cosanga

We will spend the morning birding along the trails and gardens of Guango Lodge, including the forested banks of the Papallacta River. After lunch, we will continue toward the Cosanga area, arriving at San Isidro Lodge in the late afternoon. Located at approximately 6,200 feet on the eastern slope of the Andes, San Isidro protects an extensive area of montane forest and is well known for its long-term conservation work. The lodge is also associated with the enigmatic San Isidro Owl, whose taxonomic identity remains unresolved, as well as occasional records of Mountain Tapir in the surrounding forest.

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"SAN ISIDRO" OWL



Over the next two days, we will explore the lodge grounds, forest trails, and nearby areas in search of eastern-slope specialties such as White-capped Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, and many other species characteristic of this highly diverse region. Meals and overnight accommodations will be at the lodge.

Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)

Days 10-11: Sat - Sun, May 15- 16 / Sumaco

Depart for Wildsumaco Lodge, making strategic stops for birding along Guacamayos Ridge and Loreto Road. Guacamayos Ridge is renowned for its lush cloud forests and panoramic views, offering sightings of species like the Green-and-black Fruiteater and Black-billed Mountain-Toucan.

The ridge forms a critical part of the Andean cloud forest ecosystem and is home to a diverse array of flora and fauna. Along the way, we will learn about the Kichwa indigenous people, who have lived in harmony with these lands for centuries and contribute significantly to the preservation of its rich biodiversity.

Wildsumaco Lodge, nestled at an elevation of 4,900 feet, is within a private reserve dedicated to conservation, aimed at protecting the surrounding forests from deforestation.

The lodge provides spectacular birding opportunities with unique species such as the Coppery-chested Jacamar and Wire-crested Thorntail. The private reserve is a beacon of hope in the fight against habitat loss, showcasing effective conservation practices.

Nearby, Sumaco National Park is a biodiversity hotspot, located at the intersection of the Amazonian and Andean ecosystems. The park is dominated by the imposing Sumaco Volcano, an active stratovolcano that rises majestically from the dense rainforest.

The lodge's location in the Amazon-Andes transition zone provides a unique opportunity to experience the incredible variety of life in this region, from the towering Andean peaks to the lush Amazonian lowlands. These diverse habitats support a myriad of species, making it an ideal destination for nature enthusiasts and conservationists.

Overnight at Wildsumaco Lodge. (BLD)

Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), also known as the Andean Bear, is the only bear species native to South America. Found in the Andes mountains, these bears are known for the distinctive white "spectacle" markings around their eyes.

Papallacta Pass, located northeast of Quito, is one of the prime locations to spot these elusive creatures in their natural habitat.

The paramo ecosystem at Papallacta provides a rich food source for these mostly herbivorous bears, including grasses, bushes, and the unique Puya plant. Conservation efforts are crucial to protect these bears and their habitat, as they play a vital role in seed dispersal and maintaining the health of Andean forests.



SPECTACLED BEAR

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COPPERY-CHESTED JACAMAR



Days 12-14: Mon-Wed, May 17- 19 / Napo

After breakfast, we will begin our journey toward the Amazonian lowlands and the Napo River. Upon arrival at the river, we will board a motorized canoe for an approximately two-hour ride downstream through the heart of Ecuadorian Amazonia. After reaching Sacha Lodge's river dock, we will continue by canoe through a narrow forest channel before arriving at the lodge. Depending on our arrival time, we may begin exploring the surrounding forest and waterways in search of our first Amazonian species.

We will spend two full days exploring the diverse habitats surrounding Sacha Lodge. Our activities will include outings by motorized canoe and traditional paddle canoe, walks along the lodge's forest trails, and visits to observation towers and other productive birding areas. The oxbow lakes, flooded forest, river

channels, and terra firme rainforest support an exceptional variety of wildlife. Possible highlights include Hoatzin, kingfishers, tinamous, antbirds, toucans, parrots, and colorful Amazonian tanagers. We will also visit parrot clay licks, where large numbers of parrots and parakeets may gather to feed on mineral-rich soil. In addition to birds, we may encounter several species of monkeys, river otters, caimans, and other wildlife characteristic of the upper Amazon Basin.

Overnight at Sacha Lodge. (BLD)

Day 15: Thursday, May 20 / Puenbo

After breakfast, we will depart Sacha Lodge and travel by canoe and motorized boat back along the Napo River to Coca. From there, we will take a domestic flight to Quito and transfer to our hotel. The remainder of the afternoon will be available to settle in and relax before gathering for a farewell dinner to reflect on the journey and the remarkable diversity of birds, wildlife, and landscapes experienced throughout the tour.

Overnight at San Jose de Puenbo Hotel . (BLD)

Day 16: Friday, May 21

Transfer to Quito International Airport for departing flights.

Ecuador's exceptional range of elevations and ecosystems makes it one of the world's leading birding destinations. Responsible birding tourism supports protected areas, private reserves, local guides, lodges, and rural communities, creating direct economic incentives for habitat conservation. From Andean páramo and cloud forest to Amazonian rainforest, birding tourism helps demonstrate the long-term value of intact habitats.



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Tour Difficulty: Moderate

This tour is rated moderate, with most activities designed around a steady but manageable birding pace. Daily outings will include a combination of lodge gardens, forest trails, roadside birding, observation areas, and boat excursions. Most walks will range from approximately one to three hours, often with frequent stops for birding. Trail conditions will vary from well-maintained paths to uneven, muddy, or occasionally steep sections, particularly in the cloud forests and Amazonian lowlands. Participants should be comfortable walking on natural surfaces, using steps, and entering or exiting canoes and motorized boats with assistance.

The itinerary covers a wide range of elevations, from the Amazon Basin near the Napo River to high-Andean habitats reaching approximately 13,000 feet at Antisana Reserve and Papallacta Pass. Activities at the highest elevations will generally involve limited walking and frequent stops, but the thinner air and cooler conditions may still be noticeable. Travelers should allow time to adjust to altitude and should inform the tour leaders of any relevant health concerns before the trip.

Driving times will generally range from two to four hours, although some travel days may be longer depending on road conditions, traffic, and birding stops along the way. The transfer to Sacha Lodge includes an approximately two-hour motorized boat ride on the Napo River, followed by additional canoe travel. Amazonian conditions will be warm and humid, with the possibility of rain, muddy trails, insects, and early morning departures.

Participants should be in good general health and able to maintain a flexible schedule that may include pre-breakfast outings, long field days, and occasional changes based on weather or bird activity. While the tour does not require strenuous hiking, a reasonable level of mobility, balance, and stamina will help participants fully enjoy the experience.

Included in the program:

- Professional Naturalist & Birding Guide services throughout the program.
- Coach transportation throughout the program.
- All meals indicated with B (Breakfast), L (lunch) and D (Dinner).
- All lodging in standard double occupancy (single supplement available at extra cost).
- All entrance fees and excursions.
- Domestic flight from Coca to Quito.
- Updated Ecuador bird check-list.
- Purified water.
- Gratuities.
- Conservation donations

Not included in the program:

- Airline ticket
- Travel insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal expenses



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PRICE PER PERSON

DOUBLE ROOM:
\$7000 (10 people)
\$7400 (8 people)
\$7850 (6 people)

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT:
\$1000



ROSE-FACED PARROT

DATES: MAY 6 - 21, 2027

FOR INFO & REGISTRATION PLEASE CONTACT:
info@flywaybt.com



HOSTED BY:

DC BIRD ALLIANCE



DCBA ECUADOR 2027

- San Jose de Puembo Hotel
- Guaycapi Birding Lodge
- Sachatamia Lodge
- Guango Lodge
- San Isidro Lodge
- WildSumaco Lodge
- Sacha Lodge

