



COLOMBIA BIRDING TOUR

"CENTRAL & WESTERN ANDES SPECIALTIES"

MAY 4 - 15, 2026

FLYWAY BIRDING TOURS welcomes you to our exclusive **COLOMBIA BIRDING TOUR**.

This carefully designed itinerary offers unique opportunities for incredible birding, wildlife observation, breathtaking landscapes, and enriching cultural experiences.



MULTICOLORED TANAGER

Colombia is renowned for its biodiversity—and it shows. Birders encounter exceptional species richness across well-managed reserves and national parks, from cloud forest to lowland rainforest. Our approach strengthens conservation and community livelihoods through responsible, locally led partnerships. Rich nature, welcoming people, and purpose-driven travel make Colombia an easy yes for birders.

Tour Introduction:

Colombia is home to nearly 2,000 bird species, representing about 20% of global bird diversity. With 90 endemic and 193 near-endemic species, it stands as a premier destination for birders, naturalists, and wildlife photographers. The country's intricate geography supports 92 recognized ecosystems, fostering speciation across its territory.

The Andes in Colombia divide into three distinct branches, separated by the deep valleys of the Magdalena and Cauca rivers. These natural barriers have isolated populations inhabiting high mountain ecosystems for millions of years, leading to independent evolutionary paths and the emergence of unique species in each range.

This itinerary emphasizes the observation of endemic, near-endemic, and restricted-range species within the Andean and high Andean forests, while also encountering species shared with neighboring countries. Our route traverses two Andean ranges—the Central and Western—along with the dry forest of the Cauca Valley and the biogeographic Chocó region. The journey begins in Cali and concludes in Pereira.

The program balances birding at well-known feeder sites with traditional field experiences. Stops include locations where antpittas, high mountain toucans, tanagers, and hummingbirds can be observed at close range, as well as areas without feeders that provide pure birding opportunities. Some reserves are particularly suited for photography, while others focus on undisturbed habitats.

Travel logistics are designed to be safe and manageable, with moderate distances between birding sites and accommodations in high-quality lodges located near the field areas. Weather will vary from hot lowlands to cold highlands, so appropriate layered clothing is essential. Rubber boots are not required, though sturdy hiking boots are recommended.

Elevations range from approximately 2,800 to 13,500 ft above sea level. Some hides require short walks, and in certain reserves we will use tertiary roads on foot while maintaining vehicle access nearby. At two sites, 4x4 vehicles will be employed for access.

SHINING SUNBEAM



SICKLE-WINGED GUAN



TOUCAN BARBET



Day 1 / International Airport Cali / Monday, May 4th

Participants arrive at Alfonso Bonilla Aragón International Airport (≈3,150 ft). February in the Cauca Valley is typically warm and dry, with daytime temperatures ranging from 77–86 °F and evenings in the mid-60s. After completing arrival formalities, the group will transfer by shuttle to our hotel in Cali. Beyond its role as a modern hub, Cali is also one of Colombia's oldest colonial cities, founded in 1536.



Its position in the Cauca Valley made it a key crossroads for trade and agriculture, and today it preserves a strong cultural identity, blending Afro-Colombian traditions, music, and cuisine. In the evening, the group will meet for an orientation briefing and welcome dinner, reviewing the program's structure and conservation themes before beginning the journey the following day.

Overnight at Hotel Royal Elim International

Cali, in southwestern Colombia, is known for its beautiful parks and efforts to conserve urban wildlife. The city features colonial architecture and a vibrant cultural scene. Its location near the Andes and the Pacific coast makes it an ideal base for exploring natural wonders.



Day 2 / La Florida Birding / Tuesday, May 5th.

Today, we visit La Florida, a prime birding destination in the cloud forests of the Cordillera Occidental. The area is well known for its diversity, with strategically placed feeders and trails that provide excellent opportunities to observe endemic and colorful birds such as the Multicolored Tanager, Chestnut Wood-Quail, Little Tinamou, and Saffron-crowned Tanager. The surrounding forest creates a distinctive habitat that enriches the birding experience. This biodiversity is shaped by the region's varied geography and climate, which support a mosaic of ecosystems. Birding in La Florida not only offers outstanding sightings but also supports the conservation of these important habitats. Expect temperatures between 60–75 °F and elevations ranging from 5,600 to 7,200 ft. Araucana Lodge provides an ideal base for exploring the western slope, offering comfort, quiet surroundings, and close access to productive birding areas.

Overnight at Araucana Lodge

Day 3 / Doña Dora / Wednesday, May 6th.

Today, we head to Doña Dora feeders, a renowned spot for photography and birding, famous for its charismatic creator "Mrs. Dora."

Situated beyond the Western Cordillera, closer to the biogeographic Chocó region, the area offers excellent birding opportunities. A highlight here is the visit to a lek of Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, reached by a 20-minute walk along a steep dirt trail with steps in some sections. Notable species include Glistening-green Tanager, Toucan Barbet, and Rufous-throated Tanager.

The site's varied habitat and strategic location make it an outstanding place to observe these birds. Expect temperatures between 70–80 °F, with elevations ranging from 3,600 to 4,600 ft. Then return to the lodge in the afternoon.

Overnight at Araucana Lodge

The Chocó biogeographic region, located along the Pacific coast of Colombia, is one of the most biodiverse areas on the planet. This region is known for its lush rainforests, abundant wildlife, and high levels of endemism. The Chocó features a variety of ecosystems, including mangroves, swamps, and tropical rainforests. It supports a rich array of flora and fauna, including numerous bird species, amphibians, and unique plant life.



ANDEAN COCK-OF-THE-ROCK



TOUCAN BARBET



Day 4 / Sonso Lagoon / Thursday, May 7th.

We will explore Laguna de Sonso, a vital wetland complex of the Cauca River, one of Colombia's most important waterways. The visit begins with a trail hike before we reach the observation tower to search for birds in the lowlands. Notable species here include the endemic Grayish Piculet and the Dwarf Cuckoo. With temperatures ranging from 65–85 °F and elevations between 2,800 and 4,000 ft, this site offers a distinctive birding experience. The reserve is managed in partnership with local communities, who benefit through ecotourism, environmental education, and sustainable livelihoods. After our time at Sonso Lagoon, we continue to our lodge for the night, located just 30 minutes away. This lodge is recognized for its high-quality accommodations, offering comfort and excellent meals prepared with fresh local ingredients.

Overnight at El Diamante Eco Lodge

Day 5 / El Diamante Reserve - Manizales / Friday, May 8th.

We spend the full morning birding the open country and gallery forest around El Diamante, a productive site in the northern Valle del Cauca characterized by dry scrub, pasture edges, and remnant woodland. This mosaic habitat supports a distinct lowland avifauna, and we focus on regional specialties such as Crested Bobwhite in grassy fields and Turquoise Dacnis in fruiting trees along forest margins.

Additional species typical of the Cauca River basin may include seedeaters, orioles, flycatchers, and other dry-forest associates active during the early hours. Terrain is generally flat to gently rolling at approximately 950–1,000 m (3,100–3,300 ft), with warm temperatures expected by late morning.

After completing our morning field session, we transfer to our hotel in the afternoon to rest and prepare for the following day's program.

Overnight at Hotel Quo



SPECTACLED PARROTLET

Day 6 / Coffee farm - Manizales / Saturday, May 9th.

We begin the morning with a short transfer to Hacienda Venecia, a traditional coffee estate set on the western slopes outside Manizales at approximately 1,500–1,700 m (4,900–5,600 ft). Shaded coffee plantations, secondary forest, and open gardens provide productive mid-elevation birding, where we focus on regional species such as Andean Motmot, Ultramarine Grosbeak, and Orange-bellied Euphonia, along with a variety of tanagers and hummingbirds. Following our walk, we take part in a guided coffee tour explaining cultivation and processing methods, with lunch served on site.

In the afternoon we return to Manizales, capital of Caldas and part of Colombia's UNESCO-designated Coffee Cultural Landscape. Founded in 1849, the city is known for its steep Andean setting, university presence, and strong coffee tradition. We will explore selected areas of the historic center and nearby viewpoints to gain cultural context on the region's development and identity. We return to the hotel in the evening.

Overnight at Hotel Quo

Rio Blanco Nature Reserve, located near Manizales in Colombia, spans 12,200 acres of cloud forest within the Central Andes. Established to conserve biodiversity and provide essential water resources for Manizales, the reserve offers nature trails and is home to a variety of bird species, making it a prime destination for birders.



Day 7 / Río Blanco Reserve - Hacienda El Bosque / Sunday, May 10th

Today we explore Río Blanco Reserve, an IBA-designated cloud-forest site on the outskirts of Manizales that protects headwaters essential to the city. Trails and viewing areas here provide opportunities for both feeder photography—antpittas, mountain toucans, and hummingbirds—and traditional track birding. Key targets include the endemic Brown-banded Antpitta, along with Bicolored Antpitta and Black-billed Mountain-Toucan. With temperatures between 55–75 °F and elevations from 5,200 to 8,000 ft, conditions remain favorable for birding throughout the morning.

In the afternoon we ascend to Hacienda El Bosque, our high-Andean base at about 10,000 ft. This working ranch integrates conservation with visitor access, offering hides and short trails for iconic species such as Equatorial Antpitta, Crescent-faced Antpitta, and Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan. Dinner will be at the lodge.

Overnight at Hacienda el Bosque

Day 8 / Hacienda El Bosque / Paramo / Monday, May 11th.

This morning we make a field trip to Nevado del Ruiz (≈13,500 ft) in search of Buffy Helmetcrest and other high-páramo specialists. By late morning we descend to Termales del Ruiz (≈11,500 ft) for lunch. Participants may choose to soak in the hot springs or continue birding in the lodge gardens and nearby elfin forest. Expected species include Hooded Mountain-Tanager and Golden-breasted Puffleg, with several high-elevation hummingbirds frequently attending the feeders. Afternoon temperatures around the lodge range from 45–70 °F. The páramo—representing nearly half of the world's total yet covering only about 3% of Colombia—is vital for biodiversity and water security.

Our visit supports ongoing conservation through responsible access. After a full day at Termales del Ruiz and in the high páramo, we return to the lodge for dinner.

Overnight at Hacienda el Bosque

Day 9 / Hacienda El Bosque - Pereira / Tuesday, May 12th.

Hacienda El Bosque is renowned for its well-managed feeding stations that draw antpittas, tanagers, hummingbirds, and mountain toucans. The surrounding landscape blends extensive high-Andean forest with pastures for livestock and potato fields, creating productive edges and open clearings. Conditions range from 45–65 °F at elevations of 9,500–10,800 ft. These mixed habitats generate strong species turnover, while the lodge's commitment to conservation and sustainable tourism safeguards ecosystems and provides excellent access for birders.



Morning birding focuses on the lodge grounds, where feeders, hides, and nearby forest edges offer outstanding chances to see Equatorial Antpitta, Crescent-faced Antpitta, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, and Sword-billed Hummingbird. Short trails and quiet blinds make viewing and photography straightforward. After lunch we depart and continue to our next hotel, where we check in later in the afternoon.

Overnight at Mandalay 1941 Hotel

Day 10 / Otún Quimbaya / Wednesday, May 13th.

Today we explore the Otún Quimbaya Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, situated on the western slope of the Central Andes. Together with the adjacent Ucumarí reserve, these 40-year-old native and reforested forests act as a buffer for Los Nevados National Park and play a vital role in water conservation. Consistently ranked among eBird's top five birding sites in Colombia, the sanctuary offers birding in its purest form—without feeders. We will use 4x4 vehicles to access the area's trails and forest edges. Key species include the Cauca Guan and Crested Ant Tanager, both endemic and critically endangered. With temperatures ranging from 50–65 °F and elevations between 4,900 and 7,000 ft, the site provides a cool montane environment. Conservation and reforestation initiatives here have fostered thriving bird populations, making this sanctuary one of Colombia's most important birding destinations.

Overnight at Mandalay 1941 Hotel

Otún Quimbaya Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, located near Pereira in Colombia, is a protected area spanning 1,200+ acres. It features diverse ecosystems, including rainforest vegetation and sub-Andean forest, making it an ideal spot for birding and butterfly watching.



Day 11 / Guasimo Trail / Thursday, May 14th.

We spend the day in the lowlands at Guásimo DMI (Distrito de Manejo Integrado) in the Inter-Andean Cauca Valley—a protected mosaic of remnant tropical dry forest, the most threatened forest type in Colombia, with only about 8% remaining due to ranching, agriculture, and urban expansion. Morning birding will take place along quiet tertiary roads and a short trail, with 4x4 vehicles providing access to back roads. Target species here include the endemic Apical Flycatcher, along with Guira Tanager and Golden-collared Manakin. After lunch, we visit the CRARSI Wildlife Rehabilitation Center for an in-depth orientation and guided walk, learning about rescue and release programs. After a short drive we will arrive to our comfortable hotel located outside the city of Pereira next to a coffee farm where we'll enjoy our farewell dinner.

Overnight at Sonesta Hotel

Day 12 / Transfer International Airport Pereira / Friday, May 15th.

After breakfast, we will transfer to Matecaña International Airport in the city of Pereira, concluding our birding tour through Colombia.

PEREIRA



Pereira, located in the heart of Colombia's Coffee Cultural Landscape, is a dynamic city known for its coffee culture, stunning landscapes, and vibrant urban life. Visitors can explore lush coffee plantations, enjoy scenic views of the Andes mountains. The city is also a gateway to various nature reserves and parks, making it an ideal destination for eco-tourism and birdwatching. With its warm climate and friendly atmosphere, Pereira is a captivating blend of tradition and modernity.

This itinerary is classified as moderate to intense due to several factors: Participants should be prepared for varying terrain conditions, which may include uneven and rugged paths. It also includes visits to high elevation sites, which may pose challenges for those not accustomed to altitude. Participants are advised to be in good physical condition and to bring appropriate gear and clothing to handle the diverse conditions encountered during the trip.

Included in the program:

- Professional Naturalist & Birding Guide .
- Coach transportation throughout the program
- All meals from dinner day 1 to breakfast day 12
- All lodging in standard occupancy
- All entrance fees and excursions.
- Updated bird check-list.
- Purified Water

Not included in the program:

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



DATES:
MAY 4 - 15, 2026

PRICE PER PERSON (6 - 8 BIRDERS)
DOUBLE \$3700
SINGLE SUPPLEMENT \$650

FOR MORE INFO & REGISTRATION:
info@ywaybt.com

COLOMBIA BIRDING TOUR MAY 2026

