ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Colombia

1 000 Bird Mega Tour II

12th November to 11th December 2021 (30 days)



Purplish-mantled Tanager by Adam Riley

Colombia is undoubtedly the most diverse and exciting country on Earth. With two coastlines, four cordilleras, and a vast expanse of Amazonian rainforest habitats, one could spend years searching out all the natural wonders that it holds. So, what could one see in a month? 600 species? 800? On this intrepid tour, we daresay 1 000 species of birds are possible in less than a month – and we have already accomplished this four time to prove it!

To do so we traverse all three Andean Chains and explore the depths of the Magdalena and Cauca Valleys. From the white sand and terra firme forests of Mitu, to the humid Choco, we will sample the

richest rainforests in the country. Finally, from the dry Caribbean coast, up lush slopes to the San Lorenzo Ridge, we will enjoy the best of the legendary, endemic-rich, Santa Marta Mountains. This tour is hands down the single most comprehensive offer to experience the most biodiverse nation in the world, and we welcome you to join us on this amazing challenge!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Arrival in Bogota**
Day 2	**Flight to Mitu**
Days 3 to 6	**Birding Mitu and the Rio Vaupes**
Day 7	**Mitu to Bogota, possible afternoon visit to PN Chicaque**
Day 8	**Chingaza National Park & Siecha Gravel Pits**
Day 9	**Parque La Florida to RNA Reinita Cielo Azul via Bucaramanga**
Days 10 & 11	**RNA Reinita Cielo Azul (Cerulean Warbler) and environs**
Day 12	**RNA Reinita Cielo Azul to RNA El Paujil (Blue-billed Curassow)**
Day 13	**RNA El Paujil**
Day 14	**RNA El Paujil to Rio Claro & Oilbird caves**
Day 15	**Rio Claro and environs**
Day 16	**Rio Claro to RNA Arrierito Antioqueno (Chestnut-capped Piha)**
Day 17	**RNA Arrierito Antioqueno**
Day 18	**RNA Arrierito Antioqueno to RNA Las Tangaras**
Day 19 & 20	**RNA Las Tangaras and environs**
Day 21	**RNA Las Tangaras to Rio Blanco via Cauca birding sites**
Day 22	**Rio Blanco Preserve**
Day 23	**Rio Blanco Preserve to Otun-Quimbaya via PNN Los Nevados**
Day 24	**Otun-Quimbaya to Barranquilla via Pereira**
Day 25	**PNN Isla Salamanca to Riohacha**
Day 26	**Los Camarones and the Guajira Peninsula, transfer to Minca**
Day 27	**Minca to El Dorado Lodge, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta**
Day 28	**High-elevation birding in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta range**
Day 29	**El Dorado Lodge to Santa Marta and flight to Bogota**
Day 30	**Final departures from Bogota**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



THE TOUR IN DETAIL…



Bogota Rail by Rob Williams

Day 1: Arrival in Bogota. Upon arriving in the city of Bogota, you will be met and transferred to a comfortable hotel in the city that is convenient to our birding destinations in this region. Here you will be met for a welcome dinner by your tour leader from Rockjumper Birding Tours with time to talk through some of the exciting adventures to come!

Day 2: Flight to Mitu. This morning we will catch our flights into the Amazon Basin for a fantastic few days ahead!!

Days 3 to 6: Birding Mitu and the Rio Vaupes. There is nowhere better to sample the variety of Amazonian habitats that the eastern lowlands of Colombia encompass than the environs of Mitu. With three full days in this avian-rich region, we will have ample time in the varied habitats within a short drive of the town itself, which will serve as our base.

While much of our time will be spent in the default habitat of the region, Terra Firme (upland) Primary Forest, we will have several walks through the nutrient-poor (but speciality rich!) White Sand Forest Belts that cover areas near town. Several of the species that are near-endemic to this region, and more easily seen here than at other sites in nearby Venezuela, or Brazil, are found in the seasonally flooded Varzea Forest and Gallery Forests along the mighty Vaupes River itself. Others are found atop the "cerros", tabletop mountains that stand hundreds of feet above the surrounding forest, breaking the endless green horizon dramatically. We will explore these seldom-visited, fascinating habitats in the company of a local ornithologist with ties to the local indigenous community, and who can teach us much about the local history and culture of this timeless realm.



Golden-bellied Starfrontlet by Clayton Burne

To list a relative few of the 400+ species possible at this site, we hope to encounter Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet, Red-fan and Orange-cheeked Parrots, Racquet-tailed Coquette, Fiery Topaz, Pavonine Quetzal, Brown-banded, Chestnut-capped and Collared Puffbirds, Yellow-billed, Bronzy and Paradise Jacamars, Tawny-tufted Toucanet, Orinoco Piculet, Bar-bellied Woodcreeper, Blackish-grey and Pearly Antshrikes, 10 species of Antwren including Cherrie's, Yellow-throated and Ash-winged, Black Bushbird, 17 species of Antbirds including Black-chinned, Black-headed, Grey-bellied and the magnificent White-plumed and Chestnut-crested Antbirds, Plum-throated, Spangled



Guianan Cock-of-the-rock by Adam Riley

and Pompadour Cotingas (!!!), Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, the rare Saffron-crested Tyrant-Manakin, sandy forest specialist Black Manakin, Yellow-crested(-crowned) and Striolated Manakins, Brown-headed Greenlet, Azure-naped Jay, White-bellied Dacnis, White-naped Seedeater, Plumbeous Euphonia, and many, many more....

Day 7: Mitu to Bogota, possible afternoon visit to PN Chicaque. Given the complexities of flight schedules far in advance, we are slating this day exclusively for our flight travel to Bogota, though we will likely have some time in the morning for one last attempt for new birds at this fascinating site, and perhaps we can even make a run at the Chicaque Private Reserve, which is home to none other than the dazzling Golden-bellied Starfrontlet!

Day 8: Chingaza National Park & Siecha Gravel Pits. Beginning this morning with an early departure from our hotel, we will ascend into the high elfin forests near Chingaza National Park, near the BioAndino Preserve, where the sheer variety of flowers and orchids in an endless mosaic of moss-laden elfin stunted forest can be very impressive. Our birding adventure begins here, as we gradually work our way above 3,500 metres.

The trill of the endemic Rufous-browed Conebill may start off the morning, the skulking Pale-bellied Tapaculo should make an appearance, and we will lure the endemic Silvery-throated Spinetail into view. The white-faced form of Golden-fronted Whitestart is an especially smart addition to the avifauna at this elevation and flowers are likely to attract a variety of hummingbirds, including Coppery-bellied and Glowing Pufflegs, Longuemare's Sunangel, and, with luck, the endemic Blue-throated Starfrontlet. Undulated and Rufous Antpittas inhabit the densely vegetated gullies. The endemic Flame-winged Parakeet is resident in this area, and the nest boxes that have been set up for the continued survival of this rare species are successfully occupied. We have a high probability of great looks at this attractive bird!



Flame-winged Parakeet by Clayton Burne

Making our way higher in elevation, we can continue searching for Tyrian Metaltail, Masked and Glossy Flowerpiercers, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Black-capped Hemispingus, Andean Siskin, Barred Fruiteater, Pale-naped and Slaty Brushfinches, White-chinned Thistletail, Streak-throated Bush Tyrant, and Black-crested Warbler. We will also seek out the 'Northern' Tawny



Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager by Clayton Burne

Antpitta, a possible future split whilst scanning carefully for the localised Bronze-tailed Thornbill, as this is the best place in the world to see this species.

In the afternoon, we'll take vigil along the Siecha Gravel Pits at the edge of Bogota where the endangered endemic Bogota Rail can often be quite confiding, as can the normally difficult Noble Snipe, here perhaps at its easiest site in South America. Brown-bellied Swallows should be whipping about overhead while other rewarding sightings could include the isolated and endemic sub-species of Spot-flanked Gallinule and localised Merida Speckled Teal (a potential split from Andean Teal). We'll return late this afternoon to our familiar hotel for dinner and overnight in Bogota.

Day 9: Parque La Florida to RNA Reinita Cielo Azul via Bucaramanga. This morning, before our flight to the oak forested slopes of central Colombia, we will visit the famous Parque La Florida. Though we may have encountered Bogota Rail, Spot-flanked Gallinule and other exciting wetland species at Siecha a few days before, this is one of only two reliable sites in the area for the cute Subtropical Doradito and the local endemic, Apolinar's Wren! Other species of waterfowl, waders, Neotropical migrants and the beautiful *bogotensis* subspecies of Yellow-hooded Blackbird will keep us busy and having fun as well. This convenient birding site could not be more perfectly located, for it is a mere 5 minutes from the airport to board our flights for Bucaramanga, where, upon arrival, we will transfer to our first ProAves Reserve – the Reinita Cielo Azul (Cerulean Warbler Preserve). Situated at nearly 2,000m elevation, this site is ideal for enjoying East Andean cloud forest, which we will spend the following few days perusing.

Days 10 & 11: RNA Reinita Cielo Azul (Cerulean Warbler) and environs. ProAves' has a long history of purchasing tracts of land for the preservation of habitat for a specific species. Though this property was obtained to ensure wintering habitat for the declining Cerulean Warbler, it is home to no less than 9 Colombian endemic species! We have two days dedicated to finding these, and other, spectacular and rare species that inhabit the fine cloud forest thriving on the slopes of this property.



White-plumed Antbird by Adam Riley

Our target species here, many of which can be seen in the gardens around the lodge, include the endemic Gorgeted Wood Quail, Barred Hawk, Lined Quail-Dove, the striking endemic Black Inca, the rare endemic Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, endemic Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Moustached Puffbird, endemic Parker's Antbird, skulky near-endemic Recurve-billed Bushbird, White-bellied Antpitta, endemic



Turquoise Dacnis by Dubi Shapiro

Magdalena Tapaculo, rare Yellow-throated Spadebill, Moustached Brushfinch, endemic Colombian Mountain Grackle, and perhaps the namesake Cerulean Warbler, among the myriad of tanagers, hummingbirds, flycatchers and spectacular birds in the region.

Due to recent discoveries on past tours in the coffee plantations and lower scrub below the lodge proper, we will also spend a full day birding the lower, disturbed elevations. The endemic Turquoise Dacnis, endemic Niceforo's Wren, Black-headed Brushfinch, endemic Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, Double-banded Greytail, Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Spectacled and Pale-vented Thrush and scores of tanagers, tyrannulets, seed-finches and seedeaters can be found in the lower elevations here, warranting more scrutiny by our party.

Day 12: RNA Reinita Cielo Azul to RNA El Paujil (Blue-billed Curassow). We will spend a few short hours birding the more open areas around the lodge this morning, before departing for even lower elevations, into the lush tropical vegetation of the lower Magdalena Valley. Birding en route to El Paujil, as the Blue-billed Curassow Preserve is known, can be quite good, and much of the day will be road birding.

As we travel towards our destination, we come out of the foothills into the rolling savanna of the lower valley, which consists of mostly of grazed grassland, gallery forest along the waterways and extensive wetland areas, all of which will be new habitats, meaning new species for our tour! Birds to look for along the way will include the unique Northern Screamer, Crested Bobwhite, Bare-faced Ibis, Limpkin, Blue-and-yellow Macaw, Spectacled Parrotlet, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, White-headed Marsh Tyrant and Pied Water Tyrant, along with plenty of waders, waterfowl and hopefully a tern or two.

Depending on water levels, we may walk into the lodge at El Paujil (with porters hauling our gear), or take a wonderful, short canoe ride to our abode for the next two nights. While a night walk might reveal Spectacled or Mottled Owl, it will certainly find us watching amusing Grey-handed Night-Monkeys, Mouse-Possum of one make or other, and perhaps even a Tayra or Ocelot!



Blue-billed Curassow by Clayton Burne

Day 13: RNA El Paujil. Like the previous site we visited, the namesake of this preserve, the elusive, endemic Blue-billed Curassow, is, in fact, a real possibility, and we will make every effort this morning to find this great bird. The large, intact stretch of forest that ProAves protects here also harbours a number of humid



Black Antshrike by Clayton Burne

forest species. Along the creeks, we will search for the endemic Sooty Ant Tanager, near-endemic Black-billed Flycatcher, vocal Black-breasted Puffbird, local Black Antshrike, aggressive Bare-crowned Antbird, Southern Bentbill, Slaty-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Speckled Mourner, Rufous Piha, Tawny-throated Leaftosser and the gorgeous Saffron-headed Parrot!

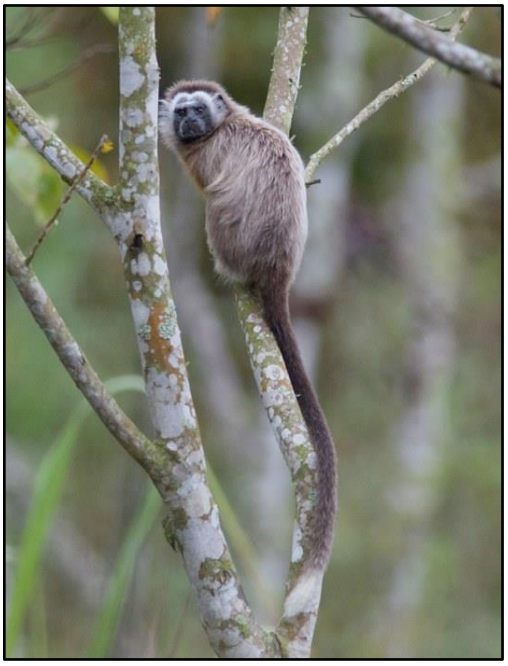
On the high trails, following the ridge, macaws and parrots of many species abound, while Barred Puffbird and 3 species of motmot sit quietly, awaiting a meal. Toucans sing from the treetops littered with mixed-flock tanager species such as Yellow-backed, Guira, White-shouldered, Crimson-backed and Swallow Tanagers. These same flocks hold the promise of skulking and scarce species including White-mantled Barbet, White-bibbed Manakin, Double-banded Greytail, Stripe-throated Wren, Slate-colored Gnatcatcher and Fulvous-vented Euphonia, among a huge host of flock-reliant species here. Not to be overlooked, El Paujil is home to a number of range-restricted mammals as well. Of these, we are most likely to encounter the endemic Variegated Spider Monkey and White-throated Capuchins!

Day 14: RNA El Paujil to Rio Claro & Oilbird caves. Depending on our success the day before, we may spend time walking the lower trails around the lodge, or venture up onto the ridge on our way out of the preserve. While we certainly don't want to neglect the fine birds of El Paujil, our next site beckons! Rio Claro is a general term for the Rio Claro Canyon Park area, which includes one of the best birding stops in the Magdalena Valley – Rio Claro Oilbird Caves. Not only does this locality provide us with wonderful, up-close views of dozens (if not hundreds) of bizarre Oilbirds, but the trail system up to the caves, and onto the hill beyond them, offers some great species besides.



Grey-cheeked Nunlet by Rich Lindie

We will begin the walk to the caves in the mid-afternoon, looking for skulking understory and secretive sub-canopy species including Barred Puffbird, the rare and local Grey-cheeked Nunlet, Great Antshrike, Dusky Antbird, Band-backed Wren, and, with a lot of luck, Spotted Antbird or Streak-chested Antpitta! We will take our time inside the caves, enjoying the unique sights and sounds produced by the Oilbirds, and the deep cool of the dark interior. Later, a steep trail leads us up a short hill to look for one of the most interesting of all Tyrannids, Brownish Twistwing, which we have been able to view in full display here on past tours. We have also encountered the dapper endemic Silvery-brown Tamarin here on



Silvery-brown Tamarin by Clayton Burne

multiple tours in the past, not to mention one sneaky Jaguarundi crossing the creek before us! After our hike, we will retire to our lodgings up the serene Rio Claro Canyon.

Day 15: Rio Claro and environs. The Rio Claro Canyon became popular with Colombian birders long before it was recognised as THE place to find the rare endemic Antioquia Bristle Tyrant. The canyon's beauty is attractive to anyone, and what better backdrop to search out such additional fine birds as Blue-tailed, Gartered and White-tailed Trogons, Rufous Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Checker-throated Antwren, Magdalena (Dull-mantled) Antbird, Brown-capped Tyrannulet, Black-tailed Flycatcher, Russet-winged Schiffornis, Orange-billed Sparrow, and many gorgeous tanagers and euphonias!

Day 16: Rio Claro to RNA Arrierito Antioqueno (Chestnut-capped Piha). This morning we will do a bit of light birding before making the long journey to RNA Arrierito Antioqueno, far to the north. Before we go, we will bird a private patch of preserved forest owned by a ceramic/gravel company. This area, though somewhat small, is incredibly productive, and is perhaps the best chance we have on the tour for Bare-crowned Antbird, Grey-cheeked Nunlet and endemic Beautiful Woodpecker – all amazing birds! Time permitting, we will bird a bit on the way, and perhaps do a spot of owling upon arrival at the Piha Lodge.

Day 17: RNA Arrierito Antioqueno. The lush forest that covers the hills and trails of "Arrierito", as the preserve is known to locals, isn't the only attraction. Though most of our birding will be on these forest trails searching for the headline species this site's bird list boasts, the nearby ponds, marshes and open areas won't be overlooked!



Chestnut-capped Piha by Adam Riley

Given the elevation range of the preserve and the access to pristine habitat, it's no wonder that this has become one of the most-revered birding sites in the country. The list of endemics we plan to find includes not only the namesake Chestnut-capped Piha, which can be found on the trails or right on the main road, and the otherworldly Multicolored Tanager, which frequents ridgeline mixed flocks; it also features Colombian Chachalaca, Chestnut Wood Quail, near-endemic Blue-fronted Parrotlet, endemic White-mantled Barbet, Bar-crested Antshrike, endemic Parker's Antbird, endemic Stiles's Tapaculo, near-endemic Sooty-headed Wren, endemic Black-and-gold Tanager, the absolutely stunning near-endemic Purplish-mantled Tanager, and the noisy, nomadic endemic Red-bellied Grackle, which has been proven to nest here of late. The species mentioned above are certainly of the highest

priority, but are by no means the extent of our targets here.



Beautiful Woodpecker by Rob Williams

While many of the birds that inhabit this lower subtropical elevation are found elsewhere on the tour, many are most readily found here. Of these, we will focus on finding Blackish Rail, Russet-crowned and Grey-breasted Crakes, the vocal but elusive Pavonine Cuckoo, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, a number of wonderful hummingbird species including Green-fronted Lancebill and Greenish Puffleg, Andean Motmot, adorable Lanceolated Monklet, confiding Moustached Puffbird, Brown-billed Scythebill, Ochre-breasted Antpitta, Northern White-crowned Tapaculo, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, Wing-barred Piprites, Golden-winged Manakin, and tons of mixed-flock species. Many of the tanagers, saltators and other fruit-eating species can even be found at the banana feeders, right off the back porch of the lodge! This site will certainly be a highlight of the tour.

Day 18: RNA Arrierito Antioqueno to RNA Las Tangaras. After a wonderful day at Arrierito, we will depart southward early, into the Cauca Valley. The Cauca River is Colombia's second-largest mountain river, and much like the Magdalena River, it has cut a deep valley into the heart of the Andes. In doing so, it has created unique weather patterns, vegetation, and the endemic forms of life that accompany such a situation. We will take a few hours to stop at various spots en route to Las Tangaras preserve, nestled high in the Western Andes. The low-elevation stops within the dry forest of the Cauca Valley could net us some of Colombia's most range-restricted endemics including Greyish Piculet, Apical Flycatcher and the recently described (2012!!) Antioquia Wren. In some of the more humid stops along the way, we will try to lure Bay and Black-bellied Wrens into the open, and hope for a glimpse of Golden-collared or Green Manakin.



Red-bellied Grackle by Adam Riley

Aplomado Falcon, Bare-faced Ibis and Red-billed Scythebill are also among the possibilities today, as we leave the lower, dry valley up into the wet Choco subtropical forests. This afternoon, after our arrival at Las Tangaras, we will take some time to bird near the lodge and hold vigil at the hummingbird and banana feeders set about the grounds. In this biodiverse region, some 2,000m elevation on the Pacific Slope of the Andes, it seems that nature has decided to throw an additional splash of wild colour onto the palette, with the birds being as bright and



Gold-ringed Tanager by David Hoddinott

colourful as the orchids, bromeliads, ferns and hanging epiphytes that cover every visible foot of branch, trunk or root. Even the ground is a riot of blooming plants and moss. Some of the dazzling and bright species that visit the feeders and lodge grounds include Violet-tailed Sylph, the eye-searing Velvet-purple Coronet, scarce Empress Brilliant, White-throated Wedgebill, Masked Trogon, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, and 12 species of Tanagers including Flame-rumped, Metallic-green, Fawn-breasted, Golden and the showy, endemic Crested Ant Tanager...right at the lodge!

Days 19 & 20: RNA Las Tangaras and environs. This is the site for some of Colombia's best-known and most mythical birds. From the fantastic Gold-ringed and Black-and-gold Tanagers, known in bygone eras of Colombia's difficult past as the "guerrilla tanagers", to the recently described (2011) Alto Pisones Tapaculo, which proves there are yet species to be found in accessible areas. Las Tangaras and the road travelling down from the mountain village of El Carmen into the foothills and Choco rainforest will provide some of the most, if not *the* most, exciting birds and birding of the entire tour. Mixed-flocks are nearly constant; bird song emanates from behind every leaf the day long. No amount of enthusiasm would oversell this memorable site, remote in the forests and pastures of the rural West Andes.

The total bird list here seems more akin in quantity to a list from humid lowland rainforest, rather than a mountain slope. However, the mystique of the endemic habitats and species that populate Las Tangaras is given away by the high-quality endemic and range-restricted species present on the list.

Tantalising species we will search for along the car tracks and trails include Cloud Forest Pygmy Owl, Pacific Tuftedcheek, Golden-headed Quetzal, Toucan Barbet, White-tailed Hillstar, Yellow-vented, Crimson-mantled and Powerful Woodpeckers, Uniform Treehunter, Star-chested Treerunner, Bicolored Antvireo, Yellow-breasted Antpitta, Rufous-breasted Antthrush, Alto Pisones, Narino and Choco Tapaculos, Handsome Flycatcher, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Olivaceous Piha, Choco Vireo, Beautiful Jay, Chestnut-breasted Wren, Black Solitaire, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Purplish-mantled, Glistening-green, Rufous-throated and Flame-faced Tanagers, Indigo Flowerpiercer, and both Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-collared Chlorophonias – to name just some of the potential highlights!



Toucan Barbets by Adam Riley

Day 21: RNA Las Tangaras to Rio Blanco



Golden-plumed Parakeet by Dušan Brinkhuizen

via Cauca birding sites. There are few places to access the high-elevation temperate forests that rim the upper ridges of the West Andes. One of the best places to access this high-elevation habitat is above the village of El Carmen del Atrato. With luck we can find all of the high-elevation specials we are searching for, with the most notable of these being Black-collared Jay, the vociferous and endemic Munchique Wood Wren, skulking Tanager Finch, and the bulky, glowing White-capped Tanager.

Much of the remainder of our day will be spent on the road to Rio Blanco, 2,500m up the spine of the Central Andes. There are several good places along the way to bird and some spectacular vistas to enjoy. While we may encounter Andean Motmot, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher or perhaps a mixed-flock, we will take some time in the late evening for nightbirds. Often, there are Lyre-tailed Nightjars located on roost! Band-winged Nightjar frequents the road up to Rio Blanco, and both White-throated Screech Owl and Rufous-banded Owl can be found in the gardens. If we are really lucky, the local pair of Crab-eating Foxes will come into the compost too!

Day 22: Rio Blanco Preserve. Rio Blanco was the first birding location in Colombia to develop 'Antpitta feeders'. That's right ... Antpitta feeders! The early morning hours, however, will be spent on the main road searching out mixed flocks and *Psittacids*, including Rusty-faced Parrot, Golden-plumed Parakeet and Scaly-naped Amazon. Next, we will accompany the local guide and lodge caretaker to feed endemic Brown-banded and Bicolored, Chestnut-crowned, Chestnut-naped and the charismatic Slaty-crowned Antpittas. 5 species possible in one morning! Other birds that frequent the bamboo feeding areas include Grey-browed Brushfinch, Blackish and Ash-colored Tapaculos and Masked Saltator.

We will walk uphill later in the morning and spend most of the day on the upper trails of the preserve in search of Andean Guan, Black-billed Mountain Toucan, Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Flammulated Treehunter, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Spillman's and Ocellated Tapaculos, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Rufous-headed Pygmy Tyrant, Smoky Bush Tyrant, Dusky Piha, Barred Fruiteater, Hooded, Lacrimose and Buff-breasted Mountain Tanagers, Grass-green Tanager, Plushcap, and many more...



Tanager Finch by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 23: Rio Blanco to Otun-Quimbaya via PNN Los Nevados. This morning will be the highest elevation birding of the tour, and offers some exciting prospects! Though species diversity dwindles markedly as one rises in elevation, the



Bicolored Antpitta by Clayton Burne

species become more visibly adapted to their niches in the harsh environments near, and above, the treeline. This will be evident in the amazing array of birds we can find at Los Nevados.

The elfin forest and paramos of this massive park are home to endemic species including the rare and localised endemic Rufous-fronted Parakeet and near endemic Black-thighed Puffleg. Starting in the elfin forests, we will look for these two species along with Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Viridian Metaltail, Shining Sunbeam, Glowing and Golden-breasted Pufflegs, Great Sapphirewing, Paramo Tapaculo and a slew of beautiful tanagers, including one of the most gorgeous birds on the continent – Golden-crowned Tanager! We can also expect to find Andean Duck, Black-capped Tyrannulet, Blue-and-black Tanager, Blue-backed Conebill, Black-backed Bush Tanager and Andean Siskin.

Once above treeline, in the alpine grasslands dotted with *Espletia* Sunflowers and Puya Yuccas, Andean Condors and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles soar overhead, the delightful Buffy Helmetcrest flits from flower to flower, and various skulkers such as Andean Tit-Spinetail, Many-striped Canastero and Tawny Antpitta call from the scrub. It will be a unique experience to walk this high, over 12,000-feet in elevation, amongst the highest peaks and volcanoes in the country!

This afternoon, we will then make the return drive into the Cauca Valley, and back up again, further south to Otun-Quimbaya Sanctuary, home of another endemic, the Cauca Guan.

Day 24: Otun-Quimbaya to Barranquilla via Pereira. This is *the* place to see Cauca Guan. Not only is the species readily found on this lush, subtropical property, it is also prolific! (Daily counts range from 1 to 28). Sickle-winged Guan is also frequently seen, so a long history of hunting prohibition here has certainly paid off. Other Colombian endemics that are often seen include Crested Ant Tanager, the vibrant Multicolored Tanager and Stiles's Tapaculo, while this is also our best opportunity to view the elusive Chestnut Wood Quail.



Paramo Tapaculo by Adam Riley

While most of these other endemic species are likely encountered elsewhere on the itinerary, it is the magnificent Red-ruffed Fruitcrow and near-endemic Colombian Screech Owl that are our targets here. Other species we hope to see well, which are difficult elsewhere, include Rusty-winged Barbtail, Variegated Bristle Tyrant, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher and Chestnut-breasted Wren. After a full morning's birding, we will take the short drive into Pereira for our afternoon flights to the Caribbean Coast at Barranquilla.



Cauca Guan by Adam Riley

Day 25: PNN Isla Salamanca to Riohacha. Isla Salamanca National Park provides our only opportunity to bird some unique habitat – coastal mangrove and deciduous woodland. This morning will be our only time in this distinct habitat, and we will do our best to find all the exciting local species that occur here. Though there are but a few true Colombian endemics to be found, the overall host of birds is distinct. We will look for the endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca, recently split and endemic Bronze-brown Cowbird, Sapphire-throated, Shining-green and the critically endangered endemic Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird, the latter of which is only known from this and one other locale! Additional species only found in this habitat are Black-collared Hawk, Golden-green Woodpecker, Panamanian and Venezuelan Flycatchers and Bicolored Conebill.

The mangroves are fantastic for wintering Neotropic migrants, with the gorgeous Prothonotary Warbler being among the commonest migrants here. In recent years our tours have encountered a number of vagrants and rare winter Warblers including Bay-breasted, Magnolia, Black-throated Blue, Townsend's and Prairie. Impressive, and always exciting to turn up a rare bird! The salt flats and estuaries around the mangroves will net just as many new species for the tour, being host to a huge array of wintering shorebirds, herons, egrets, gulls, terns and waterfowl.

We then make a more-or-less direct transfer to the Gaujira Peninsula, to make the most of our short duration here. We hope to visit Los Camarones with enough time to leisurely scan through flocks of wintering shorebirds, gulls and terns. On past tours, we have had great luck with the regular species, such as American Flamingo, 5 plover species, Whimbrel, Short-billed Dowitcher, both Yellowlegs, Willet, Red Knot, numerous sandpipers, Laughing, Franklin's and Lesser Black-backed Gulls, and Gull-billed, Caspian and Royal Terns. We have also turned up some real rarities: Marbled Godwit, Herring Gull and Common Tern were delightful surprises on past tours. A single Forster's Tern, Colombia's 2nd-ever record, and 3rd for the South American continent, was shocking!

Time permitting, we will visit a local roost site for the range-restricted Rufous-vented Chachalaca. The deciduous, dry habitat this species prefers is also the favourite of other great birds including Russet-throated Puffbird, Slender-billed Inezia, Northern Scrub Flycatcher and Striped Cuckoo. Grey-capped Cuckoo and Indigo Bunting are two of the rare birds we've seen here, while patiently awaiting the chachalaca's return to roost. You never know what will turn up near the Caribbean Coast!



Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird by Clayton Burne



Chestnut Piculet by Rob Williams

Day 26: Los Camarones and the Guajira Peninsula, transfer to Minca. The arid, xerophytic scrub here hosts a great many birds we have not encountered previously on the tour, most of which are restricted to the Guajira Peninsula, with ranges only barely lapsing into Venezuela. Though we visited Los Camarones the afternoon before, the focus this morning will be away from the estuary and saltflats, and will instead be on the scrub and vegetation.

Our main targets here are Bare-eyed Pigeon, gorgeous Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Buffy Hummingbird, cute Chestnut Piculet, searing Vermilion Cardinal, dapper White-whiskered Spinetail, Black-crested Antshrike, Northern White-fringed Antwren, Buff-breasted Wren, Glaucous Tanager, boldly-marked Orinoco Saltator, the skulking Tocuyo Sparrow, gorgeous Venezuelan Troupial, and the scarce Trinidad Euphonia.

Our next destination is the rural, tourist town of Minca. Attracting national tourists, foreign hikers, bikers and birders alike, Minca's charm is undeniable. It is very conveniently located in the foothills of the famed Santa Marta Mountains, home to no less than 22 accessible endemic species. This will be our first taste of the great birding the Santa Marta range has to offer. While few of the birds in and around Minca are true endemics, many are rare and range-restricted, or just plain beautiful! This afternoon and evening we will be looking for Coppery Emerald, Rufous Nightjar, Keel-billed Toucan, Black-backed Antshrike, Pale-tipped Inezia, Pale-eyed Pygmy Tyrant, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, the striking Lance-tailed Manakin, Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and-white Wrens, and the boldly coloured Golden-winged Sparrow.

Day 27: Minca to El Dorado Lodge, Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The drive from La Minca to El Dorado is one that no birder can forget. The views are impressive, the birding grand, and the road up the mountains is a river of huge rocks, potholes and seemingly impassable stream crossings that our drivers, in 4X4 Land Cruisers, will deftly manoeuvre to deliver us safely and comfortably to the loveliest lodge of the tour – it makes for an exciting day! We will start out checking a roost site for the striking Black-and-white Owl. We will also make stops to walk the road in search for Rusty-breasted Antpitta and mixed flocks that may contain Scaled Piculet, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Groove-billed Toucanet, Specious Tyrannulet, Yellow-legged Thrush and Black-headed Tanager. With luck, we might come across an antswarm, attracting the likes of



Santa Marta Parakeets by Adam Riley



Santa Marta Screech Owl by Rob Williams

Ruddy Woodcreeper, Grey-headed Tanager and other opportunists. There are several choice territories we will also check in our quest for all of the Santa Marta specialities. En route we have good chances to lure out the endemic Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, Santa Marta Antbird (only recently split from Long-tailed Antbird), Santa Marta Tapaculo, and a stakeout for the lovely Santa Marta Blossomcrown, which we have managed to locate on every previous tour.

After taking some time to get settled in at El Dorado, we will hold vigil at the feeding stations and prowl a trail or two for some of the great birds that turn up within a few hundred meters of the Lodge proper. And the grounds are truly beautiful! Landscaped with native flowers, tucked perfectly into the cloud forest amidst thousands of acres of untouched habitat, and a clear view of the Caribbean Coast some 30 miles to the north, this lodge is one of the favourites for our participants, and never disappoints.

This afternoon and evening we will look for Band-tailed Guan, near-endemic Black-fronted Wood Quail, the handsome endemic Santa Marta Screech Owl, striking endemic White-tailed Starfrontlet, rare Lazuline Sabrewing, Santa Marta Woodstar, White-tipped Quetzal, 'Santa Marta' (White-throated) Toucanet, Grey-throated Leaftosser, Santa Marta Antpitta (which sometimes comes to feeders), Foothill Elaenia, Golden-breasted Fruiteater, Black-hooded Thrush, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, endemic White-lored Warbler and both Sierra Nevada and Santa Marta Brushfinches.



Blue-naped Chlorophonia by Clayton Burne

Day 28: High-elevation birding in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta range. We will dedicate the entire day for high-elevation species that are endemic to the upper subtropical and temperate forests of the Santa Marta Mountains, of which there are a great many. Frequently we are met with success by lunchtime, in which case we will return to the environs of the lodge for opportunities at any key species we might've missed the previous afternoon.

Near the highest reaches of the road, just shy of a telecommunications and army installation atop the San Lorenzo ridge, we will park in the early morning and begin birding our way downhill. Key species here include Military Macaw (rare), the endangered endemic Santa Marta Parakeet, recently split Hermit Wood Wren, Rusty-capped and Streak-capped Spinetails, the *spatiator* subspecies of Rufous Antpitta (a certain split), Brown-rumped Tapaculo, Santa Marta Bush Tyrant, Santa Marta Mountain Tanager, endemic

sub-species of Paramo Seedeater, Yellow-fronted Whitestart, a decent chance for the endemic Black-backed Thornbill and the finely-patterned Santa Marta Warbler.

Day 29: El Dorado Lodge to Santa Marta and flight to Bogota. Though an early-morning departure may be prudent, we might elect to spend an hour or two near the lodge in search of any remaining specialities missed thus far. We will slowly make our way down the mountain, birding en route before taking an early evening flight back to Bogota. Here we shall have a grand farewell dinner together to reminisce and enjoy one another's company before parting ways; or, depending on flight times and availability, to spend our final night in Bogota before catching our flights home the following day. (Please note: this final night's accommodation is included in the tour cost if you do stay the night in Bogota). We will also take our final tally and calculate whether we managed to find 1000 species in under a month, on the most comprehensive and exciting Colombia tour on offer!

Day 30: Final departures from Bogota. Today we will transfer to the airport to catch our departure flights home.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT INFORMATION below.

The tour fee includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 30;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Extra activities mentioned in the itinerary;
- Reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services).

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights;
- Any drinks;
- Special gratuities; and
- Telephone calls, laundry and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: The single supplement cost for this tour will be charged if you wish to have single accommodation. If RBL cannot provide you with a rooming partner for these nights although you choose to share, the single supplement will become applicable. We will make all reasonable efforts to ensure that a rooming partner is found if you do wish to share.

IMPORTANT NOTES:

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is however fixed only in the currency printed in bold, and the actual cost in the other currencies listed will be adjusted according to prevailing exchange rates at the time of final invoicing (usually 4 months before the tour.) The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates, which are also quoted in the respective fixed currency.**

- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration a small party supplement will have to be charged.**
- **Furthermore, these costs are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary at short or no notice due to unforeseen circumstances; please be aware that we will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

Tipping: As noted above, gratuities (drivers, hotel staff, restaurants etc.) are included on this tour. However, this does not include your Rockjumper leader/s. If, therefore, you feel that he/they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them.

Special Notes:

- This tour involves very little arduous walking. We will, however, be at fairly high altitude on some occasions and on some days we will be on our feet for most of the day. You should, therefore, be in good health and of reasonable fitness to undertake this tour. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions of any sort, please let the Rockjumper office know in advance of the tour.
- We will be birding in some remote areas well away from modern medical facilities.
- The hotels are of comfortable yet sometimes basic standard throughout.
- Transport is by small coach or minibus and the roads are mostly in good condition. However, due to the nature of the topography, there is the possibility of landslides interfering with our trip, though we have minimised this risk by undertaking the tour during the drier season.
- We expect the weather to be mostly dry and often sunny; it can be hot and occasionally humid in the lowlands, such as at Rio Claro. The Mitu area can be especially uncomfortable with high levels of humidity and is often very hot too. At higher elevations, it can be cool to cold, especially at night. There is likely to be some rain, which can be heavy at times.
- It is recommended that you take measures to prevent insect-bites, especially in rural areas. There is a possibility of encountering biting flies along the coast.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The tour will depart from El Dorado International Airport (IATA: BOG), Bogotá on Day 1 and, as it is an arrival day, you are welcome to arrive any time before 17:00. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 30 at El Dorado International Airport (IATA: BOG), Bogotá.

The above information in respect of arrivals and departures is a guide only. Precise arrival and departure information will be sent to you in your **Tour Confirmation** package once the tour has been officially confirmed. If you wish to arrive early and/or depart late and would like assistance in this regard, kindly contact the Rockjumper office.

FLIGHTS:

The tour will start and finish at El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá (IATA: BOG), which is the main port of entry for international flights into Colombia. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**