ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Colombia

Remote

28th October to 16th November 2022 (20 days)

Mitu Extension

17th November to 22nd November 2022 (6 days)



Gold-ringed Tanager by David Hoddinott

Colombia is simply vast. With arguably the most diverse avifauna of any single country on Earth, there are far too many special and important habitats to visit in anything less than several months' time. As part of our continuing effort to do this magnificent country justice, our new Remote Colombia birding tour takes us into some seldom-explored areas in search of a whole host of rare, special and localised species. Targets are too many to mention but include such gems as Baudo Guan, Fuertes's Parrot, Baudo Oropendola, Bicolored, Thicket, Hooded, White-bellied and Streak-chested Antpitta, recently described Perija Tapaculo, Turquoise Dacnis, Recurve-billed Bushbird, Multicolored Tanager, White-mantled Barbet, Gorgeted Wood Quail, Green-bearded Helmetcrest, Antioquia Bristle Tyrant, Yellow-green Bush Tanager (Yellow-green Chlorospingus), Indigo-crowned and Lined Quail-Doves, Niceforo's Wren, Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, Esmeraldas and Magdalena Antbirds, Choco Tapaculo, Choco Brushfinch, Perija Metaltail, Perija Thistletail and Perija Brushfinch.

Colombia has a vast expanse of Amazonian rainforest habitat, and it is best accessed via the town of Mitu. The town itself is a fabulous base to work from, with comfortable hotel accommodations in town (even air-conditioning!) and some of the most enjoyable local guides anywhere. The birding sites are easy to access and the birds are plentiful, with many near endemics, white sand specialists, terra firme specialists and many scarce species readily seen. With a total of 5 days to immerse ourselves in this prime birding area, we have more than enough time to visit all of the important birding areas.

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

THE ITINERARY

Day 1	**Sumapaz and Chicaque**
Day 2	**Bogota to Cali, KM 18 and Upper Anchicaya**
Day 3	**Middle Anchicaya**
Day 4	**Dona Dora and Upper Anchicaya to Buenaventura**
Day 5	**Lower Anchicaya Road birding from Buenaventura**
Day 6	**San Cipriano to Buga via Laguna del Sonsa**
Day 7	**Bosque Yotoco, transfer to Pueblo Rico**
Day 8	**Santa Cecilia and transfer to Cerro Montezuma**
Days 9 & 10	**Cerro Montezuma**
Day 11	**Birding Apia area, transfer to Santa Rosa de Cabal**
Day 12	**Fuertes' Parrot site to Pereira, flight to Valledupar**
Day 13	**Los Besotes to Perija Lodge**
Day 14	**Perija Lodge environs**
Day 15	**Perija to Valledupar; flight to Bucaramanga**
Day 16	**Bucaramanga area, higher elevations**
Day 17	**Bucaramanga area, lower elevations**
Day 18	**Represa Sogamosa to El Paujil Reserve**

Day 19	**El Paujil Reserve**
Day 20	**Birding en route to Bogota**

MITU EXTENSION

Day 1	**Bogota to Villavicencio, flight to Mitu**
Day 2 to 5	**Birding Mitu and the Rio Vaupes**
Day 6	**Mitu to Bogota via Villavicencio and depart**

TOUR ROUTE MAP…



Colombia Remote



Bogota Rail by Rob Williams

Day 1: Sumapaz and Chicaque. Beginning this morning with an early departure from our hotel, we will make our way into the high elfin forests of Sumapaz National Park, where the sheer variety of flowers and orchids in an endless mosaic of moss-laden elfin stunted forest can be quite 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. As we reach the paramo, Espeletia flowers and terrestrial bromeliads characterise the landscape. It is here that we shall be searching for the endemic Green-bearded Helmetcrest, recently elevated to full species status. Our quest for the helmetcrest will likely have us panning through other hummingbirds, with Great Sapphirewing, Bronze-tailed Thornbill, Shining Sunbeam, Longuemare's (Amethyst-throated) Sunangel and Blue-throated Starfrontlet all possible.

We will dedicate as much time as possible to finding the endemic Apolinar's Wren, which unusually inhabits the high altitude paramo here, in comparison to those found around Bogota inhabiting lower altitude marshes. The marshes are a decent location for Bogota Rail, which will hopefully expose itself for good views. Tawny Antpitta is rather common, as are Chestnut-winged Cinclodes, Many-striped Canastero, while we would need a small dose of luck to find Silvery-throated Spinetail, Buff-breasted and Black-chested Mountain Tanagers.



Glowing Puffleg by Dubi Shapiro

Following lunch, we will then head to Chicaque Natural Park. A small number of conveniently placed hummingbird feeders provides an excellent assortment of species including Green and Sparking Violetears, Buff-tailed Coronet, Collared Inca, the very tricky Golden-bellied Starfrontlet, Tourmaline Sunangel and Glowing Puffleg. We will take a short walk along the dirt roads searching for other gems that might include Rufous Spinetail, Black-crested Warbler, Golden-fronted Whitestart, Pale-naped Brush Finch, Blue-capped Tanager, Capped Conebill, Grey-breasted Wood Wren, Superciliaried Hemispingus and Blackish Tapaculo, weather and time permitting.

Day 2: Bogota to Cali, KM 18 and Upper Anchicaya. After our flight to Cali, we shall depart the city and drive into the

mountains west of the metropolis to the famed Bosque San Antonio, also known as KM 18, and other spots en route. This is the area where many well-known Choco endemic species were first described to science! Superb forest still exists here, despite recent expansion into the area, and we will spend the day birding a few choice sites. The list of possible species is huge, some 300+ (!), so we will focus on specialities: Colombian Chachalaca, Chestnut Wood Quail, Greyish Piculet, Bar-crested Antshrike, Scaled Fruiteater, Yellow-headed Manakin, Chestnut-breasted Wren, and both Purplish-mantled and the mind-blowing Multicolored Tanagers, among many others.



Golden-bellied Starfrontlet by Clayton Burne

There are several nooks and crannies en route to Anchicaya, and we will make a few stops gleaning some species less likely encountered at the lower elevations of Anchicaya. These include Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Pacific Tuftedcheek, Olivaceous Piha, and Moss-backed and Glistening-green Tanagers, all of which are species endemic to the Choco bioregion!

Aside from the fabulous birding (including the occasionally mind-numbing mixed flock that defies reason), the scenery here is stunning, and the privilege of birding such an ornithologically famous area is undeniable. Due to a recent invasion of wealthy landowners from Cali constructing their mansions in the vicinity of KM 18, after we turn onto the Old Buenaventura Road and continue some 40kms, we will enter some of the best birding in the region.

Day 3: Middle Anchicaya. We will spend the entire day birding the various trails and forested stretches of road between km's 48 and 77 of the Old Buenaventura Road. The habitats will range from lower subtropical to Choco foothill forests and secondary forest, ranging from 1,400 to 500m in elevation. This is THE ideal birding transect in the heartland of the Choco-Pacific! More than 400 species have been recorded between Cali and Buenaventura. While neither time nor interest will take us all the way to the lower elevations at Buenventura, the majority of the species we will encounter today are highly sought-after and stunning birds.



Multicolored Tanager by Forrest Rowland

Baudo Guan, Semicollared Hawk, Dusky Pigeon, Pallid Dove, Indigo-crowned Quail-Dove, Violet-bellied, Purple-chested and Tooth-

billed Hummingbirds, Lanceolated Monklet, Rose-faced Parrot, Spot-crowned Barbet, Choco Woodpecker, Zeledon's and Esmeraldas Antbirds, Choco Tapaculo, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Green and Golden-collared Manakins, Sooty-headed Wren, Rufous-brown Solitaire, Choco Warbler, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Golden-chested, Blue-whiskered, Scarlet-browed, Grey-and-Gold, and Dusky-faced Tanagers, Crested Ant Tanager and Yellow-green Bush Tanager (Yellow-green Chlorospingus) are all regularly recorded in this insanely bird-rich area. Night birding might turn up Colombian Screech Owl or Cloud Forest Pygmy Owl, as well as some fancy reptiles and amphibians, in which a proportionate level of endemism is displayed!



Crested Ant Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 4: Dona Dora and Upper Anchicaya to Buenaventura. This morning, we will bird the upper elevations of the Anchicaya Valley, including a trip to Dona Dora's. Some of the species at these elevations include Choco Tapaculo, Black-headed Brushfinch, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Toucan and Red-headed Barbets, and many more! We will then make our way down to the coast and the city of Buenaventura.

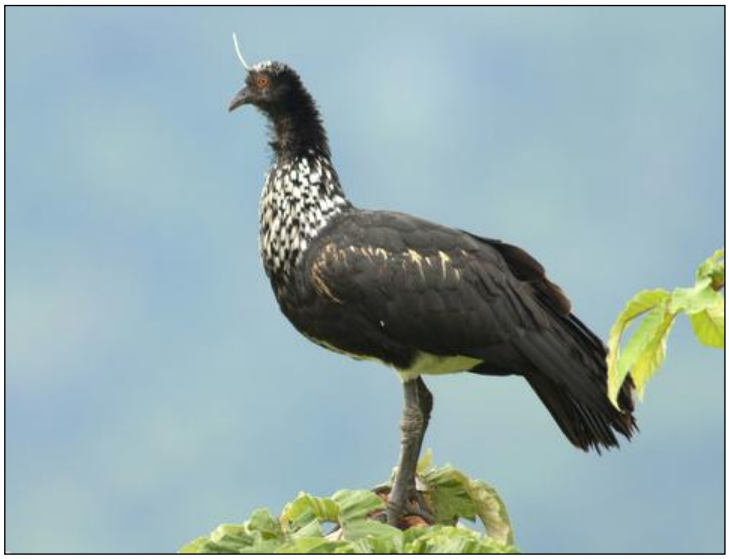
After getting checked in to our hotel, we will head back out for the evening for some Choco lowland birding. While this might entail a brief stopoff at some nearby mudflats or mangrove habitat, we will continue to focus on specialty species of the region. With the help of a local guide who we've worked with before, we'll check a few stakeouts in the hopes of finding a few of the following species: Brown Wood-Rail, Olive-backed Quail Dove, Choco Woodpecker, and Blue Cotinga.

Day 5: Lower Anchicaya Road birding from Buenaventura. Given the unrivalled access to the lower Choco rainforest biome, we will spend today on the lower reaches of the Anchicaya Road, and other local birding hotspots in the greater Buenaventura area. The habitats here vary from flooded forests to mangrove, rainforest, and lower foothill forests along the Anchicaya River. We will be able to concentrate, today, on some of the species we might have missed on days prior, as well as honing on some very special lower elevation and foothill birds. Among the most sought-after today will be Baudo Guan, Olive-backed Quail Dove, Pallid Dove, Humboldt's Sapphire, Black-breasted Puffbird, Lanceolated Monklet, Rose-faced and Saffron-headed Parrots, Rufous Piha, Checker-throated, White-flanked, Dot-



Sapayoa by Adam Riley

winged, and Pacific Antwrens, Stub-tailed Antbird, Thicket Antpitta, Black-headed Antthrush, Northern Barred and Black-striped Woodcreepers, Red-capped Manakin, Black-tipped and Blue Cotingas, Brownigh Twistwing, Stripe-throated Wren, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, and many more!



Horned Screamer by Murray Cooper

Day 6: San Cipriano to Buga via Laguna del Sonsa. Access to the rich forests of the escalarete area can only be reached by the amusing "brujas". These small, hand-powered, platform train cars take visitors up to the forest trails via the local rail system. Novel, and unique to this site in Colombia! The most-wanted species here is, perhaps, Five-colored Barbet. This is one of only three reliable sites for this beautiful Choco endemic. The monotypic Sapayoa, most closely related to African broadbills, is a very close second! Black-and-white Hawk Eagle, Bronzy Hermit, Band-tailed Barbthroat, Blue-tailed Trogon, Black-breasted Puffbird, Stub-tailed Antbird, Thicket Antpitta, Black-striped Woodcreeper, Pacific Flatbill, Black-tipped Cotinga, and Slate-throated Gnatcatcher are amongst the 250+ species that inhabit the area.

After lunch, we will journey to Buga stopping at Laguna del Sonso en route. Laguna del Sonso is a well-known hangout of Horned Screamer, though due to recent changes in water level maintenance, viewing this bizarre creature has become more difficult. Nevertheless, with dozens of hovering Snail Kite, roosting Common Potoo, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow Oriole, and a number of other great species are possible at this interesting site.

Day 7: Bosque Yotoco, transfer to Pueblo Rico. This morning we will bird the seldom-visited RN Bosque Yotoco preserve which hosts one of only three stable populations of the endangered, endemic, Cauca Guan. It's a must stop on our route! The property here protects a small tract of high-quality subtropical forest. For local Cali birders, it is well-known, and considered quite a hotspot. Few international groups visit here, despite the wonderful array of interesting species. Some of the goodies we might find here include Chestnut Wood Quail, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Acorn and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, Bronze-winged Parrot, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant, White-throated Spadebill, White-bibbed and Striolated Manakins, and many more.



Cloud-forest Pygmy Owl by David Hoddinott

By mid-morning, we shall be on our way towards Montezuma Lodge. A possible stop

today could include a small reserve in Apia, though we have this scheduled later in the tour. If time does not permit an afternoon visit today, we will be sure to do so in the morning three days hence. Near a small school perched atop a rural mountain ridge, the stunted forest around Apia is home to both Yellow-headed Manakin and Turquoise Dacnis – two exceptional endemic species! Recent reports of Hooded Antpitta in the region might be worth a follow up, and with great luck we might run into Yellow-headed Manakin, among other exciting possibilities. Again, depending on our successes traveling today, we might delay this stop for a different day. We will overnight in Pueblo Rico, a strategic overnight for the following morning's activity.



Cauca Guan by Adam Riley

Day 8: Santa Cecilia and transfer to Cerro Montezuma. The Baudo Oropendola inhabits a small range of Choco lowland rainforest in north western Colombia. Insufficient data exists to ascertain how common the species is within its range, due to the near complete inaccessibility of this habitat. Due to the very low population in the region and extensive forest persisting in the Choco department of Colombia, it's probably stable, but it remains perhaps the least-encountered, and one of the most highly prized, of the Choco endemics. Today we will visit a known nesting area for this spectacular, huge, oropendonla. The habitat this species inhabits hosts some other very interesting species with limited ranges in South America, such as Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer, Choco Brushfinch, Choco (Blue-tailed) Trogon, the magnificent Blue Cotinga, and many other denizens of Choco lowland forest and edge.

Recent access improvements connecting Pueblo Rico to Quibdo have meant an uptick in recent discoveries of many exciting species along the newly improved road heading down the mountain into the deep Choco. We will take advantage this morning, by steering directly towards a breeding colony of the highly endangered Baudo Oropendola!



Beautiful Woodpecker by Rob Williams

Though more than an hour's drive down, the species is staked out at a newly-founded EcoLodge, Las Brisas. Most of our birding this morning will be from the road, as we want to keep in the open to scope for these massive, beautiful, birds that cover a fair bit of territory foraging throughout the day. We will plan to arrive shortly after dawn, to ensure that we locate them. After a bit of light birding in the area, we will head back up the mountain, and make our way to the incredible Cerro Montezuma.

Days 9 & 10: Cerro Montezuma. The mountain ridge of Cerro Montezuma rises

up from the valley beside our homestead, and we have two full days to immerse ourselves in the avian riches of this under-explored wilderness.



Ocellated Tapaculo by Dušan Brinkhuizen

The higher we ride the further into the unique Choco vegetation we will be until we reach our breakfast site at over 2,000 metres in elevation. Here the dawn chorus will greet us and one of the first birds we will likely see is the gaudy endemic Gold-ringed Tanager, a species with an extremely limited distribution. Localised hummingbirds endemic to the Choco region are also well in evidence, including the oversized Empress Brilliant, Brown Inca, Purpled-bibbed Whitetip, White-whiskered Hermit, and lovely Violet-tailed Sylph. Bird activity will have us all watching the moss-covered trunks for the scarce Star-chested Treerunner that can often be found associating with other flocking activity. Some of the other Choco endemics that we will be sifting through in such flocks include the bright Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Uniform Treehunter, Pacific Tuftedcheek, Glistening-green Tanager, Choco Warbler, Dusky Bush Tanager, and maybe even the rarely-seen Black Solitaire that sometimes gives away its presence with its ethereal song. Conspicuous movement might also give away the presence of another Choco endemic in the form of Beautiful Jay although we will have to concentrate on small mouse-like movements in the undergrowth to catch a glimpse of Choco and Nariño Tapaculos, also both specialities of the Choco.

Birding our way into the lower elevations, we can continue looking for fruiting trees that attract frugivores such as Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-collared Chlorophonias, Black-billed Peppershrike, Scaly and the stunning Orange-breasted Fruiteaters, and the Choco endemic Toucan Barbet. Two difficult species that occur here that we might be able to lure into view are the scarce Cloud-forest Pygmy Owl that is normally found in the high canopy, while in the darkest undergrowth we can try our luck with the elusive Yellow-breasted Antpitta. The sparkling White-tailed Hillstar generally prefers to be along riverside vegetation, which is also the preferred habitat of Bay Wren and the scarce Olive Finch. We'll wrap up our time on Cerro Montezuma this afternoon and head to Pueblo Rico for the night.



Golden-plumed Parakeet by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 11: Birding Apia, transfer to Santa Rosa de Cabal. As mentioned before, we will spend a bit of time near Apia in search of Yellow-headed Manakin and Turquoise Dacnis. The patches of forest here host

several other interesting species such as Parker's Antbird, Whiskered Wren, and Moustached Puffbird, all of which are very regularly encountered here. Four species of Antpitta will pose a worthy challenge, while mixed flocks hosting more than a dozen species of Tanagers will provide great diversion, but another important target here is the endemic Yellow-headed Brushfinch. We might also take some time, fingers crossed, hoping for flyby views of Yellow-eared Parrots! This beautiful, rare, parrot has been seen regularly along the stretch of highway locally known as Altos de la linea. This and some of the best coffee and breakfast on the tour will make for a great morning!



Tanager Finch by Dušan Brinkhuizen

The drive between Apia and Santa Rosa can take a couple hours, depending on traffic. We will schedule a bit of down time and a delightful meal at our nice accommodations this evening, to rest up for an early start tomorrow.

Day 12: Fuertes' Parrot site to Pereira, flight to Valledupar. This morning, we will venture up the mountain from our accommodations into some stellar Central Andean temperate forest. We will hope to encounter a myriad of high elevation species, many of which will only be possible here. While a wide array of bird will keep us entertained, the clear targets here are the critically endangered, endemic, Indigo-winged (Fuertes's) Parrot. Known from but a few locations in the area, this relatively new site is perhaps the best place on Earth to see the species. Golden-plumed Parakeet, White-capped Tanager, Bicolored Antpitta, Ocellated Tapaculo, Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Black-thighed Puffleg, Purple-backed Thornbill, and a huge host of Tanagers are possible today!

In the afternoon, we will take a short flight from Pereira to Valledupar for the night.

Day 13: Los Besotes to Perija Lodge. The lowlands around Valledupar, and the lower mountain slope of both the Santa Marta range, and the Perija range nearby hold some very interesting prospects. Today we will spend time at a few locations above Valledupar in both ranges. Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Scaled Dove, Double-striped Thick-Knee, Shining-green Hummingbird, Double-banded Puffbird, Chestnut Piculet, Military Macaw, Black-backed Antshrike, White-whiskered Spinetail, Slender-billed and Pale-tipped Tyrannulets, Venezuelan Flycatcher, Lance-tailed Manakin, Golden-fronted Greenlet, and Trinidad Euphonia are among some of the 150 species possible in the area today, adding



Fuertes's Parrot by David Hoddinott

a special component to the tour's birding and diversity!

The Chamicero Reserve was purchased in 2014 after the discovery of good forest tracts on accessible land for the entire suite (5 species) of Sierra de Perija endemics, including the yet-to-be-described Perija Tapaculo and another 35 subspecies that need further research. The local form of Golden-bellied Starfrontlet, Emerald Toucanet, Rufous Spinetail and Rufous Antpitta are all proposed splits that require more conclusive documentation.



Golden-breasted Fruiteater by Forrest Rowland

The most exciting development was when ProAves also decided to build a lodge on the premises of this remote tract of land for visiting birders! Our tour will be one of the first tour groups to explore the new establishment, recently opened to the public late in 2014. Situated in high-altitude forest, the Reserve occupies 1,800 hectares of temperate and treeline forest, subparamo scrub and true paramo grassland, while the road in transects several fincas with intact native vegetation ranging from dry forests at 800m through lush foothill and lower subtropical habitats. Our focus this morning will be directed to the higher elevation forests and scrub, where the harder-to-reach Perija endemics occur. Perija Metaltail, Perija Thistletail, and both the Perija form of Golden-bellied Starfrontlet (a certain split) and Perija form of Rufous Antpitta (which has confounded, somewhat, the Santa Marta ssp. situation) only occur in treeline scrub and forests above the lodge, all accessible by vehicle. The road up is a wonderful transect of foothill to mid-elevation cloud forest, though some human interference and habitat degradation has occurred up to the lower border of the reserve proper. We will take the full day to bird our way up the mountain.



Perija Thistletail by Bobby Wilcox

Day 14: Perija Lodge environs. We will begin our day's birding at sunrise, in the paramo, and work our way down from here. Perija Metaltail and Perija Thistletail are the main targets, though many other splendid species occur that will draw our attention. The local race of Streak-backed Canastero is common in paramo scrub, as are Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and White-rumped Hawk, which are seen frequently. Closer to the lodge, Black-and-chestnut Eagle, Crested Quetzal, Barred Fruiteater, Andean and Band-tailed Guans, Red-crested Cotinga, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, Perija Brushfinch, Plushcap, Paramo Seedeater and Black-fronted Wood Quail are all, apparently, fairly common! Many species are attracted to the feeders at the lodge itself, including Black Flowerpiercer, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Mountain Velvetbreast and both Chestnut-capped and

Slaty Brushfinch all regularly putting in appearances, while the toucanet and other fruit-eating birds only come sporadically.



Coppery Emerald by Forrest Rowland

The afternoon will be spent birding some of the good mid-elevation forest patches along the road from 2,400m down to about 1,800m elevation. The diversity only increases as we head down the road, getting into better habitat for birds including Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Golden-breasted Fruiteater, Wattled Guan, Streak-capped Treehunter, White-browed and Rufous Spinetails, endemic Perija Tapaculo, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, Variegated Bristle Tyrant, Yellow-billed Cacique, Oleaginous Hemispingus, Venezuelan Tyrannulet, Buff-breasted and Lacrimose Mountain Tanagers, as well as the endemic Black-fronted Brush Finch. One of the most exciting things about being remote is the opportunity for discovery.

The Perija Tapaculo, for example, was discovered by a visiting birder who queued into an unidentifiable sound. While finding a species new to science is about as rare as being struck by lightning…it does happen! At the very least, we will contribute to the expanding base of knowledge on the fauna of this isolated mountain range.

Day 15: Perija to Valledupar, PM flights to Bucaramanga. We will depart from the lodge with ample time to enjoy our final morning's birds in the foothills and coffee plantation forests of the lower slopes. While most of the endemics to Perija are found higher up, there are nevertheless some spectacular birds to be found lower down. In recent months, researchers and visiting birders have turned up some surprising records, as well as extended the ranges of several East Andes and Magdalena Valley species. This morning, we will most likely run in to species we have already encountered on the tour. However, Red-legged Tinamou, Crested Bobwhite, Coppery Emerald, Rufous-shafted Woodstar, Klage's Antbird, Rufous-breasted Wren, Grey-throated Warbler, Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Fulvous-headed Tanager and Golden-winged Sparrow might all be new for us! After another action-packed day, we shall drive back to Valledupar late this afternoon for our flights to our next exciting destination: Bucaramanga.



Black-fronted Wood Quail by Bobby Wilcox

Day 16: Bucaramanga area, higher elevations. Today we will spend all day on the road that heads east out of Bucaramanga, high into the Andes, towards Venezuela. As an altitudinal transect, this little-know road has a myriad of habitats home to some of the most sought-after birds in the country. Of note, mixed flocks of large birds often include Black-collared Jay, Northern Mountain Cacique, and the rare endemic Mountain Grackle! The mountain ridge forests here are home to a good population of the threatened Rusty-faced Parrot, which feeds almost exclusively on high-elevation Oak acorns. Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Black-billed Mountain Toucan, Moustached Brushfinch, Golden-bellied and Blue-throated Starfrontlets, Band-tailed Guan, glorious Grass-green Tanagers, Hooded and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers are relatively numerous along the route, as are Longuemare's (Amethyst-throated) Sunangel!



Niceforo's Wren by Dubi Shapiro

The mixed flock in the high eastern andes can be truly phenomenal. In just one massive flock on our 2018 tour, we encountered Rufous Wren, Rufous Spinetail, Spectacled Prickletail, Rusty-winged Barbtail, Striped and Flammulated Treehunters, Black-capped, Black-eared, and Oleaginous Hemispingus, Citrine and Black-crested Warblers, Golden-fronted Whitestart, and the always spectacular Plushcap, not to mention a ton of tanagers. We will hope for good weather to deliver us some amazing birds!

Day 17: Bucaramanga area, lower elevations. Bucaramanga only recently began to receive the acclaim it deserves as a birding destination in and of itself. While any previous mention of the area focused on the high elevation forests, which are impressive, it has recently been recognized as hosting some prize species of the Magdalena foothills, and dry forests, as well. Today, we will be able to explore some of the lower elevation forest patches near to Bucaramanga. Though the edge of the range of drier-forest specialists, there are a few nearby stakeouts for special endemic species, such as the critically endangered Niceforo's Wren and Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird!! Other species we may run into include Sickle-winged Guan, Lined Quail-Dove, Geoffrey's Wedgebill (rare), Bronzy Inca, White-booted Racket-tail, endemic Bar-crested Antshrike, Montane and Lineated Foliage-gleaners, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Ashy-throated Bush Tanager, Tennessee, Cerulean, Bay-



Lined Quail-Dove by Forrest Rowland

breasted, Blackburnian and Canada Warblers, Speckled and Golden-naped Tanagers, and many more!

Wetter foothill forested areas within an hour's drive of the city are home to the Recurve-billed Bushbird. This range-restricted near endemic is only know from three areas in Colombia, and one in Venezuela. Nesting in chusqea bamboo below 1500m elevation means this species is restricted due to its nature. It is considered vulnerable due to the continuing habitat fragmentation and loss rampant at the elevation it prefers. There are two very good stakeouts for this species near Bucaramanga that we can visit in search of this wonderful bird! Other species we might encounter during our search include Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Blue-lored Antbird and Black-headed Brushfinch.



Indigo-capped Hummingbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 18: Represa Sogamosa to El Paujil Lodge. Continuing in the spirit of discovery, the seldom-birded areas around Bucaramanga hold some very interesting records. South of the city is the deep valley formed by the Rio Sogamosa. This steep-sided canyon sits in a rain-shadow and has evolved a very dry habitat. As mentioned before, should time permit and the road be in stable condition, we might spend a bit of time searching for Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, Bar-crested Antshrike, Apical Flycatcher, and other dry forest species here. Another fine option this morning is the search for Recurve-billed Bushbird. This spectacular, somewhat enigmatic species inhabits dense foothill tangles on the western slope of the East Andes. During the few surveys done in the area, this species has been encountered along with Black-headed Brushfinch, Black-bellied Wren, Yellow-browed Shrike Vireo, and other fascinating birds inhabiting slightly more humid slopes facing the mighty Magdalena River. On last year's tour, we opted to visit the humid scrub and forest near the newly-formed Sogamosa Reservoir. We found more than 120 species, including Black Antshrike, Jet Antbird, the rare Antioquia subspecies of Foothill Elaenia, and many other exciting birds!



Recurve-billed Bushbird Dušan Brinkhuizen

As we travel towards our destination, we come out of the foothills into the rolling savannah 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! Species 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.



Blue-billed Curassow by Clayton Burne

Day 19: El Paujil Reserve. ProAves' has a long history of purchasing tracts of land for the preservation of habitat for a specific species. The namesake of this preserve is the stunning Blue-billed Curassow. A success story of late, with numbers more than doubling in the area due to captive breeding and release programs, as well as reduced hunting and local awareness, some 120 Curassows are thought to roam this large reserve and the surrounding forests and farms now! As recently as five years ago, the likelihood of seeing this critically endangered species was slim. After a compost heap was begun, and a few bold individuals began frequenting it, guests to the Paujil Lodge are delighted, nearly every morning of the year, to the sight of several of this rare species! Sometimes, they march right through the dining area during breakfast. Amazing. This is but one of the targets at this bird rich Lodge.

Our target species here, many of which can be seen in the gardens around the lodge, include Marbled Wood Quail, Greater Ani, Great and Common Potoos, Band-tailed Barbthoat, Shining-green and Violet-bellied Hummingbirds, Russet-crowned Crake, Grey-necked Wood Rail, Choco Screech Owl, Crested and Spectacled Owls, Black-tailed and Gartered Trogons, Barred and White-whiskered Puffbirds, White-mantled Barbet, Citron-throated Toucan, Beautiful and Cinnamon Woodpeckers, Blue-and-Yellow, and Chestnut-fronted Macaws, 5 species of Parrots, Black Antshrike, Bare-crowned Antbird, Black-faced Antthrush, White-bearded, Striolated, and Golden-headed Manakins, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Russet-winged Schiffornis, Southern Bentbill, Olivaceous Flatbill, Black-billed flycatcher, Rufous Mourner, Fulvous-vented Euphonia, and Sooty Ant-Tanager. An amazing list of special birds awaits us here! Though the second-to-last day of the tour, it will promise a shocking number of new species for us to experience.



Black Antshrike by Clayton Burne

Day 20: Transfer to Bogota and final departures. After breakfast we head towards Bogota, and approximate 6 hours' drive, where the tour will conclude. We will have a few light birding stops en route, making sure we've all had our fill of Northern Screamer and other wetland species, as well as perhaps making a brief stop at the hummingbird feeder array of the famed Jardin

Encantado. Though this last stop will depend very much on timing, and traffic. This evening will be our final meal as a group, and some participants will have overnight flights home, as is often the case in Colombia.

Mitu Extension



Cherrie's Antwren by Sue Wright

Day 1: Bogota to Villavicencio, flight to Mitu. This morning we drive to Villavicencio, the 'The Gateway to the Llanos'. We may have time to bird en route, before catching our flights into the Amazon Basin for a fantastic few days ahead!!

Days 2 to 5: 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 four 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.

Our first morning will most likely see us birding near the community of Urania. Here we shall bird the bridge and river edge searching for a good selection of species including Amazonian Inezia, Bronzy Jacamar, Plumbeous Euphonia, Zimmer's Woodcreeper, Slender-billed Xenops, Azure-naped Jay, Black-chinned Antbird, Versicoloured Emerald, Black-capped Parrot, Red-fan Parrot, Maroon-tailed Parakeet, Dusky-billed Parrotlet, Scarlet Macaw, Opal-crowned Tanager, White-vented Euphonia and Rufous-bellied Euphonia.

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.



White-plumed Antbird by Adam Riley

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



Green-and-gold Tanager by Dubi Shapiro

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

Day 6: Mitu to Bogota via Villavicencio and depart. After breakfast today, we will take a flight back to Villavicencio. The tour will conclude after a transfer to El Dorado International Airport (IATA: BOG), Bogotá.

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.

This includes:

- All meals from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 20 for those on the main tour, and from lunch on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 of the Mitu Extension;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation;
- Reserve entrance fees; and
- All guiding services (including tips for local guides and services.)

The tour fee does not include:

- Visa fees;
- **ANY** flights (see above);
- 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:
a) 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.
b) Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small party supplement will have to be charged.
c) Furthermore, these costs are subject to major foreign exchange fluctuations and unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.
d) Lastly, we may be forced to change or alter the itinerary and / or the designated Rockjumper leader/s 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, porters and restaurants) 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 is designed to visit remote and seldom birded locations. The style of birding is hard-core and fast. While this tour involves very little arduous walking, but we will be at fairly high altitude on some occasions. You should be in good health and of good fitness to undertake this tour. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions of any sort please do 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 reasonable standard throughout, although on occasion they will be basic.
- Transport is by small coach or minibus, and 4x4 vehicles where required. 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, and it can be hot and occasionally humid in the lowlands. At higher elevations visited, it can be quite cool, especially at night. There is likely to be some rain, which can be heavy.
- The lowland Amazonian rainforests are however very humid, and can be equally hot depending on local weather conditions. 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.
- Our guides are very experienced Neotropical birders who have led tours to Colombia previously and are fluent Spanish speakers.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:
This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. Day 1 of the main tour is set aside as an arrival day, please arrive in Bogota by 17:00 so as to have enough time to partake in our welcome dinner. The tour will conclude in the evening of day 20 at Bogotá International Airport.

The Mitu extension will depart from Bogotá on day 1 with a drive to Villavicencio for our flight to Mitu. The tour is scheduled to conclude on day 6 after a drive from Villavicencio to El Dorado International Airport (IATA: BOG), Bogotá but is dependent on final flight times. It is thus suggested that you do not book your international departure flights before the early evening.

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:

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