ROCKJUMPER

Worldwide Birding Adventures

Ecuador – Northern

Choco Cloud Forest II

1st November to 8th November 2022 (8 days)

Eastern Andes: Paramo and Cloud Forest II

8th November to 14th November 2022 (7 days)

Ultimate Amazon: Sumaco Foothills & Rio Napo II

14th November to 22nd November 2022 (9 days)



Giant Antpitta by Dubi Shapiro

Due to its diverse habitat array, ranging from the high Andes to excellent lowland rainforest, north-western South America has the highest avian diversity in the world. Ecuador is fortuitously situated within the heart of this fantastic ecological region, boasting a bird list of just over 1700 species! Furthermore, its small size, good infrastructure, unsurpassable scenery and friendly people make Ecuador one of the planet's most delightful birding destinations. From the fabulous Sani Lodge, with its world-famous Canopy Tower, the endemic-rich Andean slopes and Chocó cloud forests, these tours offer the very best in South American Birding!

THE TOUR AT A GLANCE…

CHOCÓ CLOUD FOREST

Day 1	**Arrival in Quito**
Day 2	**Yanacocha to Bellavista**
Day 3	**Bellavista to Mindo**
Day 4	**Refugio Paz de las Aves & Chontal**
Day 5	**Reserva Amagusa & Mashpi Road**
Day 6	**Rio Silanche**
Day 7	**Long-wattled Umbrellabird & Milpe reserve**
Day 8	**Mindo area to Quito**

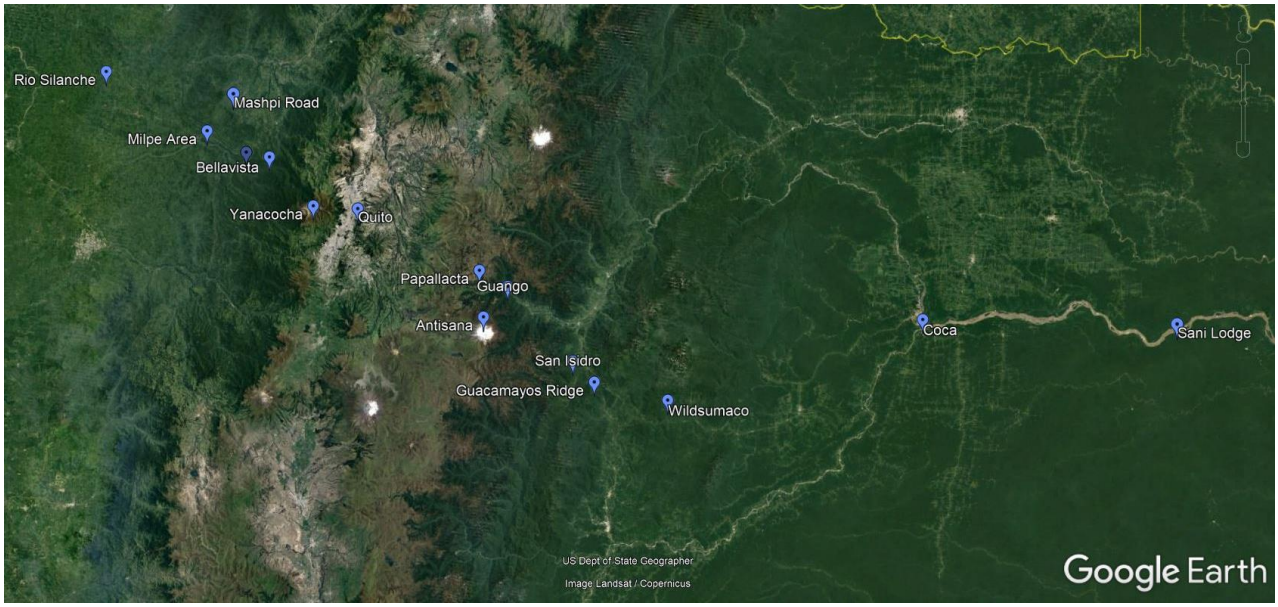
EASTERN ANDES: PARAMO & CLOUD FOREST

Day 1	**Arrival in Quito**
Day 2	**Day trip to Antisana**
Day 3	**Papallacta to Guango Lodge**
Day 4	**Guango Lodge to Cabañas San Isidro**
Day 5	**Cabañas San Isidro**
Day 6	**Day trip to Guacamayos Ridge**
Day 7	**Cabañas San Isidro to Quito / Arival in Quito, transfer to Cabañas San Isidro**

ULTIMATE AMAZON: SUMACO FOOTHILLS & RIO NAPO

Day 1	**Arrival in Quito, transfer to Cabañas San Isidro**
Day 2	**Cabañas San Isidro to Wildsumaco via the Loreto Road**
Days 3 & 4	**Wildsumaco**
Day 5	**Wildsumaco to Sani Lodge via Coca**
Days 6 to 8	**Sani Lodge**
Day 9	**Sani Lodge and flight to Quito, final departures**

TOUR MAP…



Choco Cloud Forest



Toucan Barbet by Jonathan Rossouw

This classic tour covers all the important birding sites found north-west of the capital city of Quito. This area is part of the Chocó bioregion that hosts a great number of endemics and specialities that are only shared with neighbouring areas of Colombia to the north. We will be based in the Tandayapa and Mindo valleys from where we will set out to bird the various renowned private reserves, affording us an outstanding opportunity to support local conservation projects for long-term habitat protection. A wide array of habitats will be birded, starting with the mystical elfin forest of the temperate zone, followed by bird-rich subtropical cloud forests. We will also venture deeper into tropical foothill forests to reach the mega-diverse lowlands. Iconic species that we will be searching for include Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Giant Antpitta, Plate-billed Mountain and Chocó Toucans, Toucan Barbet, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Club-winged Manakin, Glistening-green Tanager, Orange-breasted and Scaled Fruiteaters and Velvet-purple Coronet, to mention but a few. In case rarities such as Banded Ground Cuckoo or Rufous-crowned Antpitta show up in the area, we will do our very best to fit in a twitch. A great network of birding reserves together with excellent infrastructure, unsurpassable scenery and friendly people make the Northwest of Ecuador one of the planet's most delightful birding destinations.

Day 1: Arrival in Quito. Guests arriving from their various points of origin will be greeted at the airport, and transported to our hotel accommodations in Quito. A fine dinner in Quito will be our kick-off to this tour!

Day 2: Yanacocha to Bellavista. Today we travel to the north-western flanks of the Pichincha Volcano, climbing to an altitude of approximately 3 500m (11000ft). We wind our way up a gravel road where we will have a full morning's birding in the temperate zone of the western Andes. This spectacular area is especially productive for hummingbirds, and we can expect to find numerous representatives, including the incredible Sword-billed Hummingbird, Rainbow-bearded and the scarce Purple-Mantled Thornbills, Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted Puffleg and, if we are extremely lucky, the endemic, inexplicably rare and critically endangered Black-breasted Puffleg. Other possible species we may find as we sift through the twisted vegetation and open shrubby habitat include Andean Pygmy Owl (often located by its diurnal call), stunning Hooded and Black-chested Mountain Tanagers, and the equally striking Golden-crowned Tanager. Andean Guan, Superciliaried Hemispingus, White-chinned Thistletail, Blue-backed Conebill, Crowned Chat-Tyrant, and the beautiful, but shy Barred Fruiteater are also very likely.



Orange-breasted Fruiteater
by Dušan Brinkhuizen

After lunch, we will bird along the winding roadway into the Cloud forests of the old Nono-Mindo road. This road connects with the Tandayapa valley, and if time permits we will look for mixed-species flocks at these middle elevations. We aim to arrive at Bellavista Lodge before dark so that we can experience another large set of hummingbird species as they buzz around the lodge's feeders.

Day 3: Bellavista to Mindo. Deep in the heart of the cloud forest, Bellavista is a protected reserve surrounded by outstanding habitat that provides access to the mature forest canopy. An early morning start will take us to the top of the Tandayapa valley for the dawn chorus at. Mixed-species flocks

often hold the conspicuous Cinnamon Flycatcher, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Montane Woodcreeper, gaudy Flame-faced and Beryl-spangled Tanagers, Capped Conebill, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Plushcap, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Spectacled Whitestart and the beautiful Masked Trogon. Spillmann's Tapaculo is easy to hear, but harder to see in the dense undergrowth, as is the sought-after Ocellated Tapaculo. Other delightful specialities that we'll be looking for include the amazing Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, the stunning Grass-green Tanager, Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Powerful Woodpecker, Turquoise Jay, Pacific Hornero, Plain-tailed Wren and Streak-headed Antbird. Rare species that we may come across include White-faced Nunbird, Slaty Finch, Black-and-chestnut Eagle and the retiring Tanager Finch. We will also spend a little more time at the lodge feeders, taking in such gems as Violet-tailed Sylph, Gorgeted Sunangel, the tiny Purple-throated Woodstar and the exquisite White-booted Racket-tail. In the afternoon, we will bird our way down to our luxurious accommodations in the Mindo valley, which is no less a hummingbird paradise than Bellavista!



Ocellated Tapaculo by Dušan Brinkhuizen

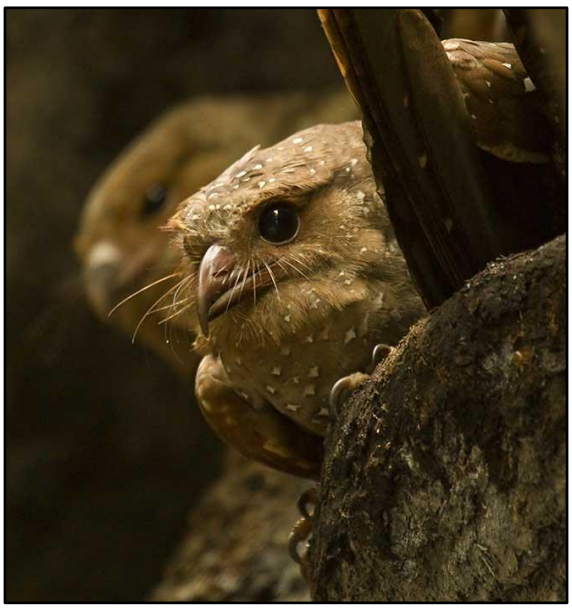
Day 4: Refugio Paz de las Aves & Chontal. This morning we will visit the famous Refugio Paz de Las Aves, a private cloud forest reserve and perhaps the most amazing bird show on earth. Walking along the forest trails, we will be searching for some of the more difficult forest undergrowth skulkers on Earth. A number of years ago, the entrepreneurial Ecuadorians brothers, Angel & Rodrigo Paz managed to coax a number of mega species into view through the use of daily feeding rituals! One of the stars of the show is undoubtedly the goliath Giant Antpitta, which often approaches to within only a few feet! Other specialities include Dark-backed Wood Quail, Ochre-breasted and Yellow-breasted Antpittas, Rufous-breasted Antthrush and Nariño Tapaculo as well as the more widespread species such as Sickle-winged Guan and Golden-winged Manakin. We will also visit a lek with a regularly attending population of Andean Cock-of-the-rock, one of the gaudiest of all South American birds! Along the way, we may find a fruiting tree attended by Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Scaled Fruiteater, the elusive Olivaceous Piha and the stunning Toucan Barbet. Lyre-tailed Nightjars are regularly found on their day roost here and rarities have included White-faced Nunbird, Cloud-forest Pygmy Owl, Ecuadorian Seedeater and Black-and-chestnut Eagle.



Rufous-breasted Antthrush by Dušan Brinkhuizen

In the afternoon, we will travel to lower elevations of the Guayllabamba drainage to look for Oilbirds, another iconic monotypic family species from South America. We will visit a day roost of these bizarre

looking creatures that are in fact nocturnal and strictly frugivorous. Like bats, they are known to use echolocation for navigating in the dark, something unique among birds. Other species of interest that we may encounter nearby include Striped Cuckoo, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Band-backed and Whiskered Wrens, Pacific Antwren and White-backed Fire-eye.



Oilbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 5: Reserva Amagusa and Mashpi Road. This newly discovered area holds some of the finest Chocó endemic cloud forest species. At the Amagusa Reserve, we will visit the fruit feeders where we have excellent chances of seeing the increasingly-rare Moss-backed Tanager, as well as a host of other, no less attractive, Tanager species, including Glistening-green, Black-chinned Mountain, Rufous-throated, Lemon-rumped, Flame-faced, Golden-naped and Golden. Crimson-rumped Toucanet and White-throated Quail-Dove also frequently squeeze into the tanager cast. The hummingbird feeders attract spectacular species such as Velvet-purple Coronet, Violet-tailed Sylph, Brown Inca, Purple-bibbed Whitetip and Empress Brilliant, all stunning Chocó endemics. If it is not too foggy (which is often the case at this cloud forest site) photographic opportunities will be outstanding.

We move on to the more famous Mashpi Road, which provides easy birding and access to elevations ranging from 1,600m down to 900m (5,000 – 3,000ft). We will be targeting endemics at several sites along the road, primarily looking for mixed-species flocks which often hold rare species such as Indigo Flowerpiercer, Chocó Vireo, Pacific Tuftedcheek, Uniform Treehunter and Orange-breasted Fruiteater. Stunners like Toucan Barbet and Glistening-green Tanager can be common in these flocks. If we get really lucky we might run into Black or Rufous-brown Solitaires which are present but rather secretive. In the understory, we will look for Zeledon's and Esmeraldas Antbirds amongst others. Rose-faced Parrot and Blue-fronted Parrotlet frequently fly by, but we'll need a bit of luck to see them perched. We start to reach lowland forest as we descend the lowest parts of the road with goodies such as Grey-and-gold Tanager, Scarlet-browed Tanager, Orange-fronted Barbet and Barred Puffbird. Very rare birds that have been seen here in the past include Banded Ground Cuckoo, Rufous-crowned Antpitta and Baudo Guan!



Andean Cock-of-the-rock by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 6: Rio Silanche. Today we will be exploring the lower areas of the Chocó region (500m / 1600ft) searching for specials that are only shared with adjacent Colombia. These forests are sadly disappearing at an alarming rate due to a combination of logging, mining and expansion of oil palm plantations. The canopy tower in the Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary (Mindo Cloud Forest Foundation) provides good

views of the forest canopy and we will spend some time here sifting carefully through the canopy for mixed-species flocks (with patience, they usually move by every hour). Targets in these flocks include Scarlet-breasted and Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Blue-whiskered, Grey-and-gold, Golden-hooded, Bay-headed, Rufous-winged and Scarlet-browed Tanagers, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Brown-capped Tyrannulet and Yellow-margined Flatbill. Larger birds in the forest are represented by Chocó, White-tailed, Black-throated and Collared Trogons, Cinnamon, Black-cheeked, Guayaquil and Crimson-bellied (rare) Woodpeckers, Dusky Pigeon, Chocó Toucan, Pale-mandibled Aracari, White-whiskered Puffbird, Orange-fronted Barbet, Black-striped and Northern Barred Woodcreepers, to name but a few. Hummingbirds that are commonly observed at this reserve include Purple-chested and Blue-chested Hummingbirds, White-whiskered Hermit and Band-tailed Barbthroat. The understory flocks often hold goodies like Checker-throated, Dot-winged and White-flanked Antwren, Tawny-faced Gnatwren and Black-crowned Antshrike while the understory skulkers here include Chestnut-backed and Bicolored Antbirds, Black-headed Antthrush and Southern Nightingale-Wren. Rare birds that we have seen in the area (sometimes frequently) include Scaly-throated Leaftosser, Black-tipped Cotinga, Brown Wood Rail, Plumbeous Hawk and Berlepsch's Tinamou!



Sword-billed Hummingbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Long-wattled Umbrellabird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 7: Long-wattled Umbrellabird & Milpe reserve. Today we have an early start to reach a Long-wattled Umbrellabird site near San Miguel de Los Bancos. A local community protects a small patch of forest where we have a good chance of seeing this spectacular, but rare Chocó endemic. In the early morning, several individuals often disperse from the forest patch and if we get lucky birds might perch nearby our viewpoint. After (hopefully) seeing this major target species we will also look for other local rarities such us Cloud Forest Pygmy Owl, Rose-faced Parrot and Black Solitaire.

We then continue to Milpe, another key reserve of the Mindo Cloud Forest Foundation which is one of the best sites in the world to see the Chocó endemic Club-winged Manakin. This bird is famous for producing a funny, computer-like buzzing sound with its wings! Fortunately, the species is often easy to locate - though there are some seasonal movements. Along the trails, we have good chances of running into large



Scarlet-breasted Dacnis by Dušan Brinkhuizen

mixed-species flocks that contain Chocó Warbler, Tropical Parula, Slate-throated Whitestart, Chocó Tyrannulet, Tawny-rumped Myiobius, Slaty Antwren, Spotted and Wedge-billed Woodcreepers, Brown-billed Scythebill, Buff-fronted, Ruddy and Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaners, Western Woodhaunter, Cinnamon and One-colored Becards, Silver-throated, Bay-headed, Rufous-throated, White-winged, White-shouldered and Ochre-breasted Tanagers, Yellow-tufted Dacnis, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia and many more! The banana feeders can be a true spectacle (although activity is highly seasonal), with stunners like Red-headed Barbet, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Chocó Toucan, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Rufous Motmot, Orange-billed Sparrow, Orange-bellied and Thick-billed Euphonias, Silver-throated, Rufous-throated, Blue-grey, White-lined and Blue-necked Tanagers all feeding at close range! The hummingbird feeders attract gems like White-necked Jacobin, Crowned Woodnymph, Green-crowned Brilliant, Andean Emerald and the tiny Green Thorntail. The adjacent Milpe Gardens has a great trail through mature foothill forest where we will continue to look for specialities. Rare birds that we have encountered here include Indigo-crowned Quail-Dove, Lanceolated Monklet, Orange-crested Flycatcher, Chocó Trogon, Scaly-throated Leaftosser, Crimson-bellied Woodpecker and Spotted Nightingale-Thrush.

Day 8: Mindo area to Quito. Today we'll work on the missing pieces of the puzzle and seek for bird species that might have eluded us before. The mid-elevation cloud forest of the lodge grounds can be very productive for species like Zeledon's Antbird, Rufous-rumped Antwren, Wattled Guan, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia and Golden-winged Manakin. The Mindo Valley itself holds nice riparian habitat with species like Bran-colored Flycatcher, Fawn-breasted Tanager, Slaty Spinetail and the recently described Coopman's Elaenia. At the fast-flowing rivers we can search for specialties such as Torrent Tyrannulet, White-capped Dipper, and if lucky, the stunning Sunbittern. We might also decide to revisit the old Nono-Mindo road for higher elevation species such as Tanager Finch, Grass-green Tanager and Ocellated Tapaculo.



Glistening-green Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

In the afternoon we will travel back to Quito, where those continuing onwards to our **Eastern Andes: Paramo and Cloud Forest Tour** will meet for dinner, while others will be transferred to Quito Airport for your international departures.

Eastern Andes: Paramo and Cloud Forest



Ecuadorian Hillstar by Dubi Shapiro



Carunculated Caracara by Dušan Brinkhuizen

This tour is a great introduction to birding the mighty Andes of South America. We will be exploring the vast east slope for local specialities, and will visit a wide array of fascinating habitats and elevations. Travelling from snow-capped volcanoes down to pristine cloud forests will be not only an incredible experience, but will also offer superb birding and scenery every day!

Stunning species that we will be searching for include Andean Condor, Carunculated Caracara, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Giant Hummingbird, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Torrent Duck, Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Inca Jay, White-bellied Antpitta, the San Isidro "mystery" Owl, Golden-headed and Crested Quetzals and Masked Trogon, to mention a few! Rare species that we will also be searching for include Andean Ibis, Andean Potoo, Red-rumped Bush Tyrant, Greater Scythebill, Bicolored Antvireo, Peruvian and Crescent-faced Antpittas, White-capped Tanager and Masked Mountain Tanager. A great network of birding reserves, together with good infrastructure, unsurpassable scenery, fine dining and friendly people make the eastern Andes of Ecuador another key destination on the world birding circuit.

Day 1: Arrival in Quito. Guests will be greeted at the airport and transported to our hotel accommodations in Quito, while others will be arriving at our hotel from our connecting **Choco Cloud Forest Tour**. A fine dinner will be our start to this great tour!



Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe
by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 2: Day trip to Antisana. We leave downtown Quito this morning and ascend the Andes, arriving at the Antisana Reserve situated high in the Andes at an elevation of approximately 4 000m (13 000ft). Visiting the tundra-like Paramo habitat surrounding the astonishing snow-capped Antisana Volcano will no doubt be an unforgettable experience, not only because of the breathtaking scenery but also because it offers us a great opportunity for finding the majestic Andean Condor. A truly iconic species of the South American Andes, it is also Ecuador's national bird! We will also be seeking out the near-endemic Carunculated Caracara, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, endemic Ecuadorian Hillstar, both Stout-billed and Chestnut-winged Cinclodes, Many-striped Canastero, Plumbeous Sierra Finch, Variable Hawk, Black-winged Ground Dove, Andean Gull, Andean Lapwing, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Paramo Ground Tyrant, Paramo Pipit and the rare Andean Ibis.



Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan
by Dušan Brinkhuizen

At La Mica, a beautiful lake at the base of the Antisana Volcano, we will scan for Andean Teal, Andean Duck, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Coot, Silvery Grebe and perhaps a few migrant shorebirds. We will also be on the lookout for rare raptors that occur here such as Aplomado Falcon and Cinereous Harrier. Scrubby habitat at lower elevations may turn up a number of gems such as Shining Sunbeam and Black-tailed Trainbearer, and the unrivalled Giant Hummingbird - the largest hummer on the planet! The reserve also gives us good chances for Andean Fox and White-tailed Deer. Today will be full of photographic opportunities, and the relaxed birding will make for a glorious kick-off in the high Andes.

Day 3: Papallacta to Guango Lodge. Today we start birding the treeline scrub and paramo on the western slope of the eastern Andes. The habitat is fairly similar to Antisana, although some different species can be found here. Our priorities include Paramo Tapaculo, the rare Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Blue-mantled Thornbill, Andean Tit-Spinetail, and Tawny Antpitta.

Weather permitting, we will drive up to the antennas to look for the highly sought-after Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, a unique and well-camouflaged shorebird that is only found in Ecuador at this particular site. If we get lucky, we also may also find the equally desirable Giant Conebill in *Polylepis* forest at a slightly lower elevation. The rare Red-rumped Bush Tyrant is known to show up at the pass on occasion.



Masked Mountain Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

At Papallacta Lake, we will swiftly scan for ducks and waterbirds, which might yield a few new species. The habitat surrounding the lake is good for mixed-species flocks which often include White-throated Tyrannulet, Spectacled Whitestart, Cinereous and Blue-backed Conebills, the localised Black-backed Bush Tanager, Buff-breasted and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers, Golden-crowned Tanager, Pale-naped Brushfinch and the rare Agile Tit-Tyrant. Similar mixed-species flocks will be looked for along the road to the Cayambe-Coca reserve, where we also have a good chance of finding such rarities as Masked and Black-chested Mountain Tanagers. Viridian Metaltail and Great Sapphirewing are regular at the treeline, and if we get lucky we may convince a Rufous Antpitta, or the even rarer Crescent-faced Antpitta into view. The enigmatic Spectacled Bear has been seen in the area multiple times, so fingers crossed! In the afternoon we will descend to our comfortable lodge and enjoy a number of new species of hummingbirds that visit the feeders.

Day 4: Guango Lodge to Cabañas San Isidro. This morning we will bird the grounds of Guango Lodge, which covers excellent temperate forest habitat at roughly 2 800m (9 200ft). Key targets that we will be looking for include Grey-hooded Bush Tanager, Hooded and Lacrimose Mountain Tanagers, Blue-and-black Tanager, White-banded Tyrannulet, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, Slaty Brushfinch, Turquoise Jay and Northern Mountain Cacique. At the fast flowing river, we will try for specialities such as Torrent Duck, White-capped Dipper and Torrent Tyrannulet. Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan and Andean Guan are frequently seen here, and much rarer species such as Mountain Avocetbill, Dusky Piha and Red-hooded Tanager are also possible.



White-capped Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Guango is well-known for hummingbirds, with the spectacular Sword-billed Hummingbird, Collared Inca, Long-tailed Sylph, Tourmaline Sunangel, Chestnut-breasted and Buff-tailed Coronets, Speckled Hummingbird, Tyrian

Metaltail, White-bellied Woodstar and the scarce Glowing Puffleg all visiting the copious feeders. In the afternoon we will descend the valley to lower elevation, sub-tropical cloud forests and our very comfortable lodge of Cabañas San Isidro.



Greater Scythebill
by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 5: Cabañas San Isidro. Cabañas San Isidro is a privately owned reserve that protects large tracts of pristine subtropical cloud forest at an elevation of 2 100m (6 800ft). The superb birding, great lodging and exquisite cuisine make it a true birder's paradise. In the morning, we will first target the garden birds that can be easily observed foraging at the garden lights. At night the lights attract insects, and during the morning we have a good chance to observe a feeding frenzy of insectivorous species! Inca Jay, Masked Trogon, Subtropical Cacique, Russet-backed Oropendola, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Black-billed Peppershrike, Slate-throated and Spectacled Whitestart, Brown-capped Vireo, Russet-crowned Warbler, Black-eared Hemispingus, Mountain Wren, Common Bush Tanager, Pale-edged and Cinnamon Flycatchers, Smoke-colored Pewee, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Montane and Olive-backed Woodcreeper frequently converge on the lights to hoover up the insect smorgasbord.

The extensive trail system gives us access to primary forest where we will search for understory skulkers such as White-bellied Antpitta and Long-tailed Tapaculo. Large canopy flocks might yield Marbled-faced and Variegated Bristle Tyrants, Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet, Barred Becard, Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Blue-winged Mountain, Saffron-crowned, Beryl-spangled, Flame-faced and Black-capped Tanagers, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia, Bluish Flowerpiercer, Golden-collared Honeycreeper and Green-and-black Fruiteater. We also have a good chance of coming across some of the rare species found here such as Bicolored Antvireo and Peruvian Antpitta. Birding the nearby Las Caucheras road is often very productive with great canopy flocks that include the likes of White-capped Parrot, Crested Quetzal and Andean Motmot.



Chestnut-bellied Coronet by Clayton Burne

The feeders at the lodge attract a good number and diversity of hummingbirds, including the spectacular Long-tailed Sylph, Collared and Bronzy Inca, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, Green and Sparkling Violetear (seasonal) and sometimes the rather cute Gorgeted Woodstar. After dusk, we will search for nocturnal species, with our main target being the San Isidro "mystery" Owl, a possible split from Black-banded Owl. Other species we hope to find include Andean Potoo and Rufous-bellied Nighthawk.

Day 6: Day Trip to Guacamayos Ridge. The Guacamayos Ridge provides some of the best cloud forest birding in the country. The ridge drops all the way to the Amazonian basin, boasting an extraordinary level of biodiversity. However, it is also one of the rainiest and consequently cloudiest places on the east slope, as it is the first ridge where the warm Amazonian clouds strike the Andes. In the morning, we will bird the upper stretch of the trail which is slightly higher in elevation than Cabañas San Isidro (2 200m / 7 200ft). Target species that we will be looking for include Slate-crowned Antpitta, Flammulated Treehunter, Handsome Flycatcher, Grass-green Tanager, Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant, Sepia-brown Wren and Black-capped Hemispingus. If we are very lucky, we might get the spectacular White-capped Tanager or Black-billed Mountain Toucan which are both frequently seen here. We will also be on the lookout for one of the 'mega' mixed-species flocks that often pass by. While carefully sifting through the flock, we may find the ultra-rare Greater Scythebill. Guacamayos is perhaps the best place in the world to see it! We leave the afternoon program open for several options depending on the weather and possible target species that we may still require.

Day 7: Cabañas San Isidro to Quito. We have a few more hours this morning to bird around the lodge grounds before the tour concludes. For some, it will be the end of their Ecuador experience, and you will be transferred to Quito International Airport for your international departures. For those continuing onwards with our **Ultimate Amazon: Sumaco Foothills & Rio Napo Tour,** we shall have a few hours to rest today before meeting up with any new birders joining the tour this afternoon from Quito.

Ultimate Amazon: Sumaco Foothills & Rio Napo



Opal-rumped Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Gould's Jewelfront by Dušan Brinkhuizen

The tropical foothills of the eastern Andes, taken together with the lowlands of the Amazon basin, boast an incredibly high biodiversity and are arguably the most species-rich regions of the world. The Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary bird list alone surpasses 500 species, while the number of bird species recorded at Sani Lodge is fast approaching 600! The tour will focus on finding as many species and local specialities as possible by visiting multiple micro-habitats within the Upper Amazonian biome. Although the list of possible birds is immense, some of the more interesting species that we have good chances of seeing include: Harpy Eagle, Hoatzin, Zigzag and Agami Herons, Grey-winged Trumpeter, Sungrebe, Scarlet, Blue-and-yellow, Chestnut-fronted and Red-bellied Macaws, Gould's Jewelfront, Wire-crested Thorntail, Great and Long-tailed Potoos, White-throated, Black-mandibled and Channel-billed Toucans, Many-banded and Ivory-billed Aracaris, American Pygmy and Green-and-rufous Kingfishers, Gilded and Scarlet-crowned Barbets, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Rusty-belted Tapaculo, Long-billed Woodcreeper, Cinnamon Attila, Grey-tailed Piha, Screaming Piha, Golden-headed and Orange-crowned Manakins, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Bare-necked Fruitcrow, Plum-throated & Spangled Cotingas and dozens of antbird species!

Day 1: Arrival in Quito, transfer to San Isidro. Guests arriving at Quito airport will be transported to Cabañas San Isidro. Here they will meet their Rockjumper tour leader and fellow participants continuing onwards from our Eastern Andes: Paramo & cloud forest group. Time permitting, we will do some late afternoon birding around the grounds. After dinner, we will search for the San Isidro 'Mystery Owl', a possible future split of Black-banded Owl.

Day 2: Cabanas San Isidro to Wildsumaco via the Loreto Road. Cabañas San Isidro is a privately owned reserve that protects large tracts of pristine subtropical cloud forest at roughly 2 100m (6 800ft).



Wire-crested Thorntail by Dušan Brinkhuizen

In the early morning, we will bird the gardens for species attracted by the insect smorgasbord around the garden lights. At night the lights attract insects and during the morning we have a good chance to observe a feeding frenzy of insectivorous birds. Species that frequently attend these parties include Inca Jay, Masked Trogon, Subtropical Cacique, Russet-backed Oropendola, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Black-billed Peppershrike, Slate-throated and Spectacled Whitestart, Brown-capped Vireo, Russet-crowned Warbler, Black-eared Hemispingus, Mountain Wren, Common Bush Tanager, Pale-edged and Cinnamon Flycatchers, Smoke-colored Pewee, Montane and Olive-backed Woodcreepers and White-tailed Tyrannulet to mention but a few. At mid-morning we will travel

to lower elevations of the eastern Andes, birding along the Loreto Road. Here we will make several birding stops, targeting specialities such as Blackish Nightjar, Cliff Flycatcher, the scarce Western Striolated Puffbird, rare Orange-breasted Falcon, and mixed-species flocks that may contain Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer, Yellow-throated, Orange-eared and Golden-eared Tanagers, Bronze-green Euphonia, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Russet Antshrike and Yellow-breasted Antwren. In the afternoon, we settle in at Wildsumaco Lodge to enjoy the numerous hummingbirds that come to the feeders at the lodge deck.



Many-banded Aracari
by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 3 & 4: Wildsumaco. The Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary is located in the eastern foothills at the base of the impressive Sumaco Volcano (1 500m / 5 000ft). It is a prime birding site with great lodging, an extensive trail system and excellent cuisine where we will spend two full days birding! The lodge feeders attract a great variety of hummingbirds and if we are lucky, we might get upwards of 15 species! Local specialities that attend the feeders include the rare Gould's Jewelfront, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Napo Sabrewing, Rufous-vented Whitetip, Black-throated Brilliant, Violet-fronted Brilliant, Peruvian Racket-tail (sporting orange leg puffs), Many-spotted Hummingbird, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Green Hermit, White-tailed Hillstar (possible split in future), rare Blue-fronted Lancebill and the stunning Wire-crested Thorntail, while the *verbena* flowers in the garden often attract Violet-headed Hummingbird and Gorgeted Woodstar.

The viewing from the lodge deck is excellent, with Swallow-tailed Kite and Chestnut-fronted Macaw frequently flying over. Military Macaw is also a possibility, though less common. The *Cecropia* trees attract various tanagers and other goodies such as Red-headed Barbet, Crested Oropendola and Golden-collared Toucanet. A banana feeder usually attracts a small troop of the adorable Napo Tamarin (a distinctive sub-species of Black-mantle Tamarin which is often considered a full species). Mixed flocks in the garden can be productive, with species including Olivaceous Greenlet, Golden-faced and Ecuadorian Tyrannulets, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Paradise, Blue-necked, Spotted, Bay-headed and Yellow-bellied Tanagers, Golden-collared Honeycreeper and Tropical Parula. Lined Antshrike, Blackish Antbird and Black-billed Treehunter are often found in the garden.



Hoatzin by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Zigzag Heron by Dušan Brinkhuizen

The trails at Wildsumaco provide excellent forest birding, although many of our targets are in fact rare species - and forest birds in general can be tricky to observe. We will search for both Plain-backed and Ochre-breasted Antpitta, species that the local bird guides have been able to attract in the past by putting out earthworms. Both Fiery-throated and Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater are present, but move around a lot and are therefore rarely encountered. White-crowned and Blue-rumped Manakins are more frequently seen in their territories while the local Buff-throated Tody-Tyrant is often vocal from the high canopy. With a little luck, we may find Grey-tailed Piha or Yellow-throated Spadebill, both rare Wildsumaco specialities. We will also carefully check the understory flocks that could hold such sought-after species as Plain-winged Antwren and White-streaked Antvireo. Other understory skulkers include Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Northern White-crowned Tapaculo, Short-tailed Antthrush, Wing-banded Wren, Foothill Antwren, Spot-backed Antbird, Dusky Spinetail and Spotted Nightingale-Thrush. Birding along the road is far easier compared to the forest interior, with species like Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Black-mandibled Toucan, Silver-beaked, Swallow and Magpie Tanagers, Lemon-browed and Olive-chested Flycatchers, Scaled Pigeon and Yellow-cheeked Becard all being regular. The roadside banks provide the near-endemic Coppery-chested Jacamar with a nesting site, and we certainly hope to get good views of this species.



Blue-crowned Trogon by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Day 5: Wildsumaco to Sani Lodge via Coca. In the early morning, we will make a short birding stop at a bamboo patch lower down the Pacto Sumaco road for specialities that may include Large-headed Flatbill, Euler's Flycatcher, Black-and-white Tody-Tyrant, White-winged Becard and Yellow Tyrannulet. Time permitting, we might make other birding stops along the Loreto Road, but our time is generally dictated by the departure of our motorised canoe in Coca.

From Coca, we will continue our journey into the deep Amazon with a 2-3 hour boat trip along the Rio Napo. While the boat travels relatively quickly, it will be possible to pick up a number of new species from the boat, including Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, Yellow-headed and Black Caracaras, Yellow-billed and Large-billed Terns, the scarce Pied Plover, White-banded and White-winged Swallows, Grey-breasted Martin and Swallow-winged Puffbird. Disembarking our motorised boat, we have a short walk on a raised platform through the rainforest to reach

the lodge creek and switch to a non-motorised canoe ride to our lodge. The pristine habitat is absolutely superb, and we could find the likes of Undulated Tinamou, Scarlet and Blue-and-yellow Macaws, Green-backed and Black-tailed Trogons, White-chinned, White-eared and Great Jacamars, Scarlet-crowned Barbet, Black-fronted Nunbird, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Salvin's Curassow, Silvered, Plumbeous, White-shouldered and Dot-backed Antbirds, Amazonian Streaked Antwren, Yellow-crowned Elaenia, Lesser Kiskadee, Red-capped Cardinal, Black-capped Donacobius and even the odd-looking Hoatzin!



Harpy Eagle by Forrest Rowland

Day 6, 7, & 8: Sani Lodge. We have three full days to explore this superb lodge in the heart of Amazonia. Few other lodges on Earth offer the diversity that Sani Lodge does - comfortable accommodation, good food, all the birds that one can handle, and access to both banks of the Rio Napo! Together with our local guides, we will establish the best birding plan for each day, trying to find as many species as possible. Aside from birding around the lodge itself, we will also visit a variety of micro-habitats within the Amazon rainforest by private canoe. The Kichwa community that owns the land and runs the lodge have not hunted on the property for more than 20 years, the well-represented wildlife is a testament to this fact.



Great Potoo by Dušan Brinkhuizen

On one of our days here, we will bird excellent terra firme forest, the most species rich habitat of the Amazon basin. Cocha Antshrike sits highest on our priority list, as Sani Lodge is one of the only reliable sites on earth to see this highly range-restricted species. Other highly sought-after species include the rare Harpy Eagle, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Amazonian and Green-backed Trogons, White-crowned and Western Striped Manakins, Yellow-billed Jacamar, Brown Nunlet, Rufous-capped and Striated Antthrush, Ochre-striped and Thrush-like Antpittas, Scaly-breasted Woodpecker, Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper - there are far too many species to mention here!

An understory mixed-flock may produce Long-winged, White-flanked, Rufous-tailed and Yasuni Antwrens, Cinereous and Dusky-throated Antshrikes, Olive-backed Foliage-gleaner, Long-billed Gnatwren and Tawny-crowned Greenlet. If we run into swarming army ants we will hit the proverbial jackpot: Reddish-winged Bare-eye, White-plumed, Sooty, Lunulated, Scale-backed, White-cheeked and Spot-backed Antbird are species that frequently attended ant swarms, so let's hope we get to witness

such a spectacular feeding frenzy! After lunch, we may venture out on the canoes again, or make an afternoon visit to the canopy tower.

The canopy tower is another of the many highlights of Sani Lodge, located in pristine terra firme forest. At dawn, we shall walk the trail to the tower which can be very productive, such rarities as Wire-tailed Manakin, Banded Antbird and Collared Puffbird being seen frequently. In the past few years, Harpy Eagles have been seen regularly from the tower, and we will scan carefully for the major price of a bird. The main canopy tower itself is a spectacular structure (over 30m high!), and allows us an unparalleled opportunity to view canopy species that would otherwise be difficult, if not impossible, to see from the ground. A myriad of parrots, macaws, tanagers, toucans, barbets, cotingas, woodpeckers and raptors can be expected during a morning's birding from the tower.

Our afternoon birding will again depend on what species we desire, so we may explore the nearby forest trails or take another canoe ride through one of the creeks searching for the rare Zigzag Heron that's best seen at dusk.

On another day we will head over to the Rio Napo islands. These islands, with early succession growth host an interesting array of avifauna, many of which are strictly tied to the island only. Specialists that we will be searching for include Olive-spotted Hummingbird, Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant, Black-and-white Antbird, White-bellied and Parker's Spinetails, Lesser Hornero, Castelnau's Antshrike, Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, Fuscous Flycatcher, River Tyrannulet, Orange-headed Tanager and the beautiful Oriole Blackbird. Nearby parrot clay licks often host Yellow-crowned and Southern Mealy Amazons, Blue-headed and Orange-cheeked Parrots, Dusky-headed and Cobalt-winged Parakeets and the scarce Scarlet-shouldered Parakeet!

Day 9: Sani Lodge to Quito, final departures. Today we will depart Sani Lodge before dawn and bird our way out if time permits. During the canoe ride, we have a last chance to add some new forest dwelling species to our list. After arriving at the Rio Napo, we will switch to our motorised canoes and head up the river to the city of Coca. From Coca, we will take a short internal flight back to Quito where the tour will conclude.

FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:

Tour dates, prices, single supplement rates, approximate flight costs (where applicable) and spaces available for this tour are displayed on our website. Please see under IMPORTANT NOTES.

The tour fee includes:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 8 of the Choco Cloud Forest tour; from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 7 of the Eastern Andes: Paramo & Cloud Forest tour and from dinner on day 1 to lunch on day 9 of the Ultimate Amazon: Sumaco Foothills and Rio Napo tour;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- Ground transportation (including boat transfers);
- Extra activities mentioned in the itinerary;
- All national park and other 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:

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 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.

Please note:

- In some areas, it may be very hot, especially in the Amazonian lowlands. We will thus make good use of the early mornings and will have many early starts to avoid, as far as possible, birding in the middle of the day. Furthermore, in rainforest areas the humidity will be high and potentially uncomfortable.
- It is important for the comfort of your fellow travellers that you do not over-pack. Kindly stick to 20 kg (44 lb) for check in luggage and 8 kg (+-18 lb) for hand luggage.
- These Ecuador tours do not require a high level of fitness, but participants should be in good general health as most of the birding will be done on foot, and may require walking for several hours at a time. Guests will be notified when longer walks may be undertaken. If you have any physical limitations, please notify us in advance of departure.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a good standard, and the hotels and resorts that we make use of range from comfortable to rather luxurious. There is no camping on this trip.

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.

ARRIVAL & DEPARTURE DETAILS:

This tour **does not** include **ANY** airfares. The Choco Cloud Forest tour will begin in Quito on Day 1, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time before 17:00. The tour will conclude in the mid to late afternoon of day 8 at Quito International Airport.

The Eastern Andes: Paramo & Cloud Forest tour will begin in Quito on Day 1, as this is scheduled as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time before 17:00. The tour will conclude after breakfast on day 7 at Cabañas San Isidro. For those concluding their tour here, you will have a private transfer to Quito International Airport. The Rockjumper Tour Leader will not accompany you on this transfer, remaining at Cabañas San Isidro. For those continuing onwards with our Ultimate Amazon: Sumaco Foothills and Rio Napo tour, you will have lunch and an afternoon at leisure before we meet up again for dinner. Your Rockjumper Tour Leader will advise you of potential birding opportunities at the time.

The Ultimate Amazon: Sumaco Foothills and Rio Napo tour starts on Day 1 at Cabañas San Isidro, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. We shall arrange for a single group transfer from Quito to Cabañas San Isidro, at a time to be determined. The tour will conclude after our flight from the city of Coca to Quito International Airport on day 9.

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:

Mariscal Sucre International Airport, Quito (IATA: UIO), Quito is the major port of entry into Ecuador for this tour. **Please DO NOT book any flights until you have consulted the Rockjumper office for confirmation on the status of the tour.**