Peru

Southern

Bird Photo Tour

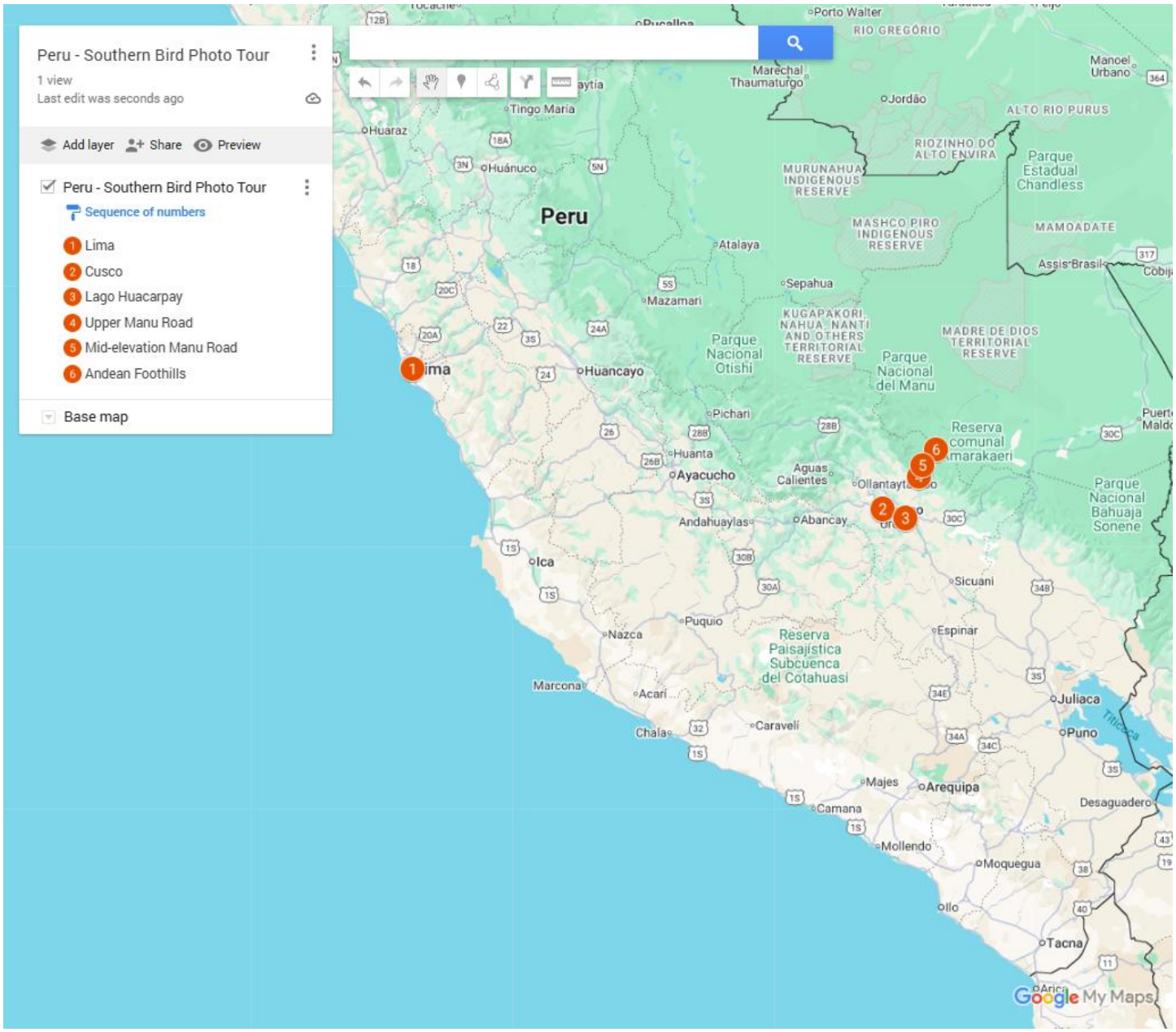


Saffron-crowned Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Peru is one of the world's top destinations for wildlife enthusiasts, combining breathtaking landscapes with incredible biodiversity. Stretching from the snow-capped Andes to the vast Amazon Rainforest, the country offers a rich tapestry of ecosystems, cultures, and experiences.

Birding along the Manu Road is widely regarded one of the premier birding experiences on the planet. We'll descend the eastern Andean slopes, birding through temperate zones, montane cloud forest and Andean foothills, with chances to see an incredible variety of exceptional species. Highlights may include Cerulean-capped and Yungas Manakins, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Blue-banded Toucanet, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Inca Flycatcher, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer, and Peruvian Piedtail. We will also visit an Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek, where numerous males sometimes congregate to perform their strange mating ritual. Optional night birding in this area might yield uncommon species such as Napo and Rufescent Screech Owls, Rufous-banded Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, and possibly even Andean Potoo. Recent improvements to the road as well as the establishment of several new feeding stations and photography blinds have only improved both access and enjoyment of this iconic road.

Itinerary & Map



Day 1	**Arrival in Lima**
Day 2	**Lima; flight to Cusco. Pisac, Lago Huacarpay & Urubamba area**
Day 3	**Cusco to Upper Manu Road (Elfin Forest)**
Day 4	**Upper Manu Road**
Day 5	**Upper to mid-elevation Manu Road**
Days 6 & 7	**Mid-elevation Manu Road**
Day 8	**Mid-elevation Manu Road to Andean foothills**
Days 9 to 11	**Andean foothills**
Day 12	**Andean foothills to Cusco**
Day 13	**Cusco; flight to Lima & final departure**

Highlights

- ***Experience one of the world's most legendary birding routes—Manu Road, descending from high Andean passes through lush cloud forest to the edge of the Amazon basin.***
- ***Unparalleled bird diversity, with chances to see rarities like Amazonian Umbrellabird, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Cerulean-capped Manakin, Golden-headed Quetzal, and Inca Flycatcher.***
- ***Multiple elevations visited (3,800m to 500m), each with distinct species and spectacular scenery, from snow-capped peaks to tropical lowlands.***
- ***Comfortable, birding-focused lodges with fruit and hummingbird feeders, blinds for lek viewing, and excellent photo opportunities.***
- ***Several spectacular hummingbirds including Giant Hummingbird, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Thorn-crested Wiretail and Rufous-crested Coquette.***
- ***New feeders showcasing several difficult species of tinamou (Cinereous, Undulated) and Antpitta (Urubamba, Red-and-white).***

Birding sites in detail

Cusco. The historical Incan capital city of Peru perched some 3 382 metres above sea level. While construction of the city was started by the indigenous Killke culture, it is the building by the Inca and consequent destruction by the Spanish that the city is best known for. Since 1200CE, the Inca lived and enhanced the city for more than 300 years. The arrival of the Spanish conquistador Francisco Pizarro spelt the end of Cuzco, for despite re-naming it the "Very noble and great city of Cuzco", the Spanish pulled most of the stonework down and re-constructed the city in their own image. A strong earthquake in 1950 toppled many of the Spanish constructions,



Barred Fruiteater by Dušan Brinkhuizen

while the original Incan walls remained intact - some testament not only to the beauty of the architecture but also its incredible design. The adventurous or brave may try tucking into some traditional Incan Cuisine such as Cuy (Guinea Pig) or the far more palatable Ceviche (raw fish marinated in citrus juice).

Sacred Garden Reserve. This small private conservation area is dedicated to the protection of hummingbirds and native Andean flora. Its excellent hummingbird feeders and peaceful setting in the Sacred Valley make it a sought-after photographic site. We'll likely see several common hummingbirds such as Sparkling Violetear, Green-tailed Trainbearer and Giant Hummingbird, but our primary reason for visiting are to enjoy the endemic Bearded Mountaineer, Chestnut-breasted Mountain Finch and, Creamy-crested Spinetail.



Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Huacarpay Lake. We will spend the early part of the morning around the scenic Huacarpay Lake. The lake is surrounded by both Incan and pre-Incan ruins, and we will have time to look for a wide variety of typical high-Andean waterfowl. These include Puna, Yellow-billed and Cinnamon Teals, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Duck, Silvery Grebe, Andean Coot, and many other wetland-associated species. We will also search the surrounding reed beds for the furtive Wren-like Rushbird, beautiful Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Yellow-winged Blackbird, Puna Ibis, and Andean Negrito. The seemingly barren arid scrub that covers the surrounding hillsides is loaded with birds, and we will search for the endemic Rusty-fronted Canastero and Streak-fronted Thornbird. The yellow flowers of tobacco bushes regularly hose Giant Hummingbird, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Greenish Yellow Finch, Blue-and-yellow Tanager and Peruvian, Ash-breasted and Mourning Sierra Finches. We may also encounter some raptors, including Aplomado Falcon, Cinereous Harrier, Variable Hawk, and the larger Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle.

Santuario de Colibries. Above the small town of Urubamba, a local chef and nature enthusiast created a hummingbird sanctuary which has already drawn more than 30 species. Amongst the highlights are Sword-billed, Green-and-white, Speckled and Giant Hummingbirds, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Great Sapphirewing

and Black-tailed Trainbearer amongst others. Other possibilities include the shy Undulated Antpitta, Rust-and-yellow Tanager and Red-crested Cotinga.

Cusco to Acjanacu. Making our way up towards the famed Manu Road, we'll make several birding stops as we ascend, searching the inter-montane valleys for some very localised endemics. Our first stop is likely to be at a site for the endemic Chestnut-breasted Mountain Finch whilst also watching for the high-altitude Andean Hillstar, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, Chiguanco Thrush and the endemic Creamy-crested Spinetail.



Wire-crested Thorntail by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Acjanacu. This is the last Andean pass where Andean Condors can sometimes be seen cruising high above. If the weather is clear, it may be possible to look out from this final range of the Andes, over the infinite expanse of the Amazon basin stretching to the horizon. Doubtlessly, the Incas also stood at this same place in ancient times worshipping the sun rising over the endless rainforest. Birding the roadside scrub might yield Scribble-tailed and Line-fronted Canasteros as well as Puna Tapaculo.

Upper Manu Road (Elfin Forest). We will begin birding through the upper limits of the eastern slopes before gradually working our way down the eastern edge of the Andes during the coming week or so. Here the forest becomes more contiguous than in the highlands, as we make our way to our idyllically located elfin forest lodge perched at almost 2 800m (9 000 feet) above sea level. In the evening, we will have the opportunity to search for the exquisite Swallow-tailed Nightjar, Yungas Pygmy Owl and perhaps even White-throated Screech Owl.

Beginning from our lodge, some of the birds we will set out searching for this morning include Red-and-white Antpitta, Moustached Flowerpiercer, Tit-like Dacnis, Golden-collared Tanager and Puna Thistletail. We will spend most of the day birding through lush forest seeking out mixed feeding flocks that are sure to contain a variety of tanagers, flycatchers and *furnarids* (ovenbirds), including Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, White-collared Jay, and Mountain Cacique. Grass-green Tanager, Hooded Mountain Tanager, Black-throated Tody-

Tyrant and Barred Fruiteater. Some of the scarcer denizens of the forest here include Peruvian Treehunter, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Kalinowski's Chat-Tyrant and Greater Scythebill.

Mid-elevation Manu Road. As we move down the little-travelled forested road to lower elevations (approaching 1 600m / 5 000 ft), we will be keeping an eye out for White-rumped Hawk, Trilling Tapaculo, Black-and-chestnut Eagle, Andean Guan, Scaly-naped Amazon, Crimson-mantled and Bar-bellied Woodpeckers, the endemic Marcapata Spinetail, White-throated Antpitta, Band-tailed Fruiteater, Ochraceous-breasted Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Pale-footed Swallow and Citrine Warbler. This area also supports a wide variety of dazzling hummingbirds such as Collared Inca, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Purple-backed Thornbill, Scaled Metaltail and White-bellied Woodstar.



Golden-collared Tanager by Dubi Shapiro

Our lodge offers an exquisite lounge overlooking fantastic hummingbird and fruit feeding stations. The mammal front may also get a boost here, with Brown Capuchin Monkey and Tayra both possible, the latter often arriving at night to pick through fruit scraps from the feeding station.

We'll spend our time within pristine cloud forest of the mountains of Manu, only a few minutes' walk from a spectacular Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek site. Furnished with comfortable blinds from which to observe these vibrant birds during their incredible dawn mating rituals, you should be sure to bring you camera and a spare battery or two. An adjoining trail system enables us to see right into the cloud forest understory where we may find the endemic Cerulean-capped Manakin or bump into Rufous-breasted Antthrush or Slaty Gnateater. The surrounding area also allows for views of several spectacular waterfalls as well as a plethora of beautiful orchids, with at least 80 species recorded in the lodge vicinity alone!

We will take the time to concentrate on the different altitudinal zones, spanning from 2 500m to 1 500m (7 700 to 4 600 ft). This upper tropical forest zone has sadly disappeared from much of the Andean slopes throughout South America due to its suitability for cash crops such as tea, coffee, and cocoa, but in this part of Peru, the forest remains virtually untouched.

Among the many species on offer here, we will be searching intently for White-rumped Hawk, Montane Solitary Eagle, Rufous-capped Thornbill, both Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Masked Trogon, Andean Motmot, Black-streaked Puffbird, the charismatic Blue-banded Toucanet, Plum-crowned Parrot, Chestnut-collared Swift, Long-tailed Sylph, Versicolored Barbet, Russet Antshrike, Dusky-green Oropendola, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, White-winged Tanager, the striking Yellow-throated Bush Tanager, Amazonian Umbrellabird, scarce Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Scaled Fruiteater, endemic Inca Flycatcher, Yungas Manakin, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Yellow-rumped and Slaty Antwrens, Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer and the endemic Peruvian Piedtail.

Optional night birding in this area might yield the uncommon Napo and Rufescent Screech Owls, Rufous-banded Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar and possibly Andean Potoo.



Rufous-crested Coquette by Rob Williams

Andean foothills. Our lodge is situated in the transitional zone between the foothills of the Andes and the flat lowlands of the Amazon Basin proper, and boasts an almost unbelievable bird list of over 550 species! At these lower altitudes of around 500m (1 500 ft), we should by woken by the songs of Andean Solitaire and Paradise Tanager!

We'll spend our time birding different habitats in the area including the niche bamboo forest for Point-tailed Palmcreeper, Pavonine and Pheasant Cuckoos, Ornate and Dot-winged Antwrens, Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher, Bamboo Antshrike, Manu Antbird, White-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-billed Nunbird, Peruvian Recurvebill and Rufous-headed Woodpecker.

We will also have time to explore the fabulous grounds of our lodge where numerous butterfly bushes often attract a variety of hummingbirds, including the attractive Rufous-crested Coquette, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Western Emerald, Black-eared Fairy and Black-bellied Thorntail.

We will also ensure we spend time along the floodplains and hill forest. While the avian possibilities are enormous, some specific species we will be searching for include Wattled Guan, Military and Blue-headed Macaws, Pheasant Cuckoo, the endemic Koepcke's Hermit, Rufous-webbed Brilliant, Bluish-fronted Jacamar, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Fine-barred Piculet, Red-billed Scythebill, Bamboo Foliage-gleaner, Bamboo and

Chestnut-backed Antshrikes, Ornate Flycatcher, Cuzco Warbler, the rare Buckley's Forest Falcon, Black-faced Dacnis, and Band-tailed, Fiery-capped and Round-tailed Manakins. We will also have the option of night birding here and possibilities include Mottled and Black-banded Owls, Tawny-bellied Screech Owl and Great, Long-tailed, and Common Potoos.



Marcapata Spinetail by Stephan Lorenz

Tour Grading & Key

Photography	■ ■ ■	Good. Several hummingbird, antpitta, tinamou & fruit feeders. Opportunistic roadside birding. Weather & habitat conditions can be challenging.
Overall Ease	■ ■ ■	Moderate paced tours suited for those in good health with good levels of fitness. Not suited for anyone with mobility challenges or serious medical conditions.
Accommodation	■ ■ ■	Good to very comfortable.
Walking / Trails	■ ■ ■	Mostly roadside, lodge gardens, feeder & some trail birding. Several high-altitude sites, most birding and walking is downhill.
Vehicles / Roads	■ ■ ■	Reasonable quality asphalt roads for the most part, including the recently paved Manu Road.
Birding Ease	■ ■ ■	Moderate. Paramo, alpine & elfin habitat provides easy birding, cloud & foothill forest is more difficult. Night birding is optional.
Annoyances	■ ■ ■	High altitude, winding roads, variably weather conditions including below freezing temperatures at times. Lowlands will be hot & humid, with biting insects present.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

Tour dates, prices, single supplement, approximate flight costs and tour spaces are displayed on our website.

Tour inclusions:

- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 13;
- 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.)

Tour exclusions:

- Visa fees;
- ANY flights;
- Any beverages (including mini-bar charges at hotels);
- Optional excursions;
- Special gratuities;
- 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.

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 you feel that they have given you excellent service, it is entirely appropriate to tip them at your discretion.

- **Due to constantly fluctuating exchange rates, we quote our tours in 4 currencies. The tour price is 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. The same applies to approximate flight and single supplement rates.**
- **Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registrations, a small group supplement will be offered to confirm the tour.**
- **Tour prices are subject to unforeseen increases in tour related costs and may have to be adjusted as a result.**
- **The designated tour leader/s may be changed at short due to unforeseen circumstances.**
- **The itinerary is indicative only. Changes may need to be made to the order in which the tour is conducted, or some of the venues we visit closer to departure. We will attempt to adhere as close to the original program as possible.**

- 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.
- Accommodation throughout the trip is of a good standard, and the hotels and resorts that we make use of are comfortable to very comfortable. There is no camping on this trip.
- Fitness: We will be birding some mountainous and high-altitude areas on foot. A good level of fitness is required for this tour.
- Peru is a large country and there is great variety in the climate, mostly determined by altitude. While we time our tours to coincide with the relative ‘dry’ season, rain is to be expected, and you should bring adequate rain gear as well as an umbrella.

- We spend some days at high altitude, which may be very cold and windy with the potential for snow and sleet; warm gear is certainly required.
- The thinner atmosphere exposes one to higher concentrations of ultraviolet light, precautions should therefore be taken against sunburn, sunglasses are advised.
- We will be birding in some very remote areas well away from modern medical facilities.
- Crime is not commonplace for tourists visiting Peru; however, it is prudent to exercise caution as you would for any travel destination. Do not unnecessarily flaunt cash and valuables and do not leave valuables exposed in the vehicle.
- Our route involves travel to areas affected by landslides. Whilst these are more infrequent during the drier months, they do have the potential to impact the tour (ie: along the Manu Road where no alternate access is route is available.)

Bird Photo Tours

- Our Bird Photo Tours are a hybrid between our Classic birding tours and dedicated photographic tours. You don't have to be a professional photographer or have the biggest lens; this is for everyone with an interest in photography and birding. Whether you're using a bridge camera or the latest body and prime lens, our aims are the same.
- These tours are not aimed at seeing the most species possible on the route, rather taking time to photograph key targets and any other interesting species we may find. Naturally, the overall species list will be lower than a comparable birding focused tour.
- Whilst we may use blinds, feeders and hide setups on some of these tours, we will not be spending an entire day nor even several hours fixed in one spot.
- These tours are suitable for photographers who prefer opportunistic photography over entire days in a hide.
- Our leaders will assist in helping everyone secure good photographic opportunities and advise as much as they can on camera setup. However, they are not professional photographic tour leaders.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour will begin in Lima on Day 1, and as this is scheduled as an arrival day, you are free to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude by mid-morning of day 13 at Lima International Airport.

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.

Jorge Chávez International Airport, Lima (IATA: LIM) is the main port of entry for international flights into Peru.

Visa requirements differ by country, nationality of the traveller and duration and purpose of your intended stay. It may be necessary to obtain a visa or an electronic travel authorization in advance of your travel. It is therefore vitally important that you check with your travel agent/consulate/embassy for exact visa requirements.

DO NOT book any flights until the Rockjumper Team have officially confirmed the tour