Colombia

Highlights

Santa Marta Extension



Bogota Rail by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Our comprehensive highlights of Colombia tour cover all three Andean ranges and both inter-Andean valleys, as well as lower tropical rainforests in search of numerous endemics and regional avian specialties. We will be searching for a remarkable collection of birds that are likely to exceed 400 species, including over 60 species of colourful tanagers, 8 species of furtive antpittas, and nearly 50 species of dazzling hummingbirds! Combined with spectacular scenery, friendly locals, and pleasant lodges situated within prime birding areas, this tour of Colombia offers the very best of South American birding!

Our Santa Marta tour takes us to the Santa Marta Mountains and the Guajira Peninsula on the northern coast of Colombia. The Santa Marta massif is an isolated mountain range, and its snow-capped peaks are the highest coastal mountains in the world. It is also one of the most endemic-rich regions of South America, hosting nearly 50 endemic and regional specialities plus numerous endemic subspecies several of which, upon further taxonomic review, are likely to be elevated to full species status in the future.

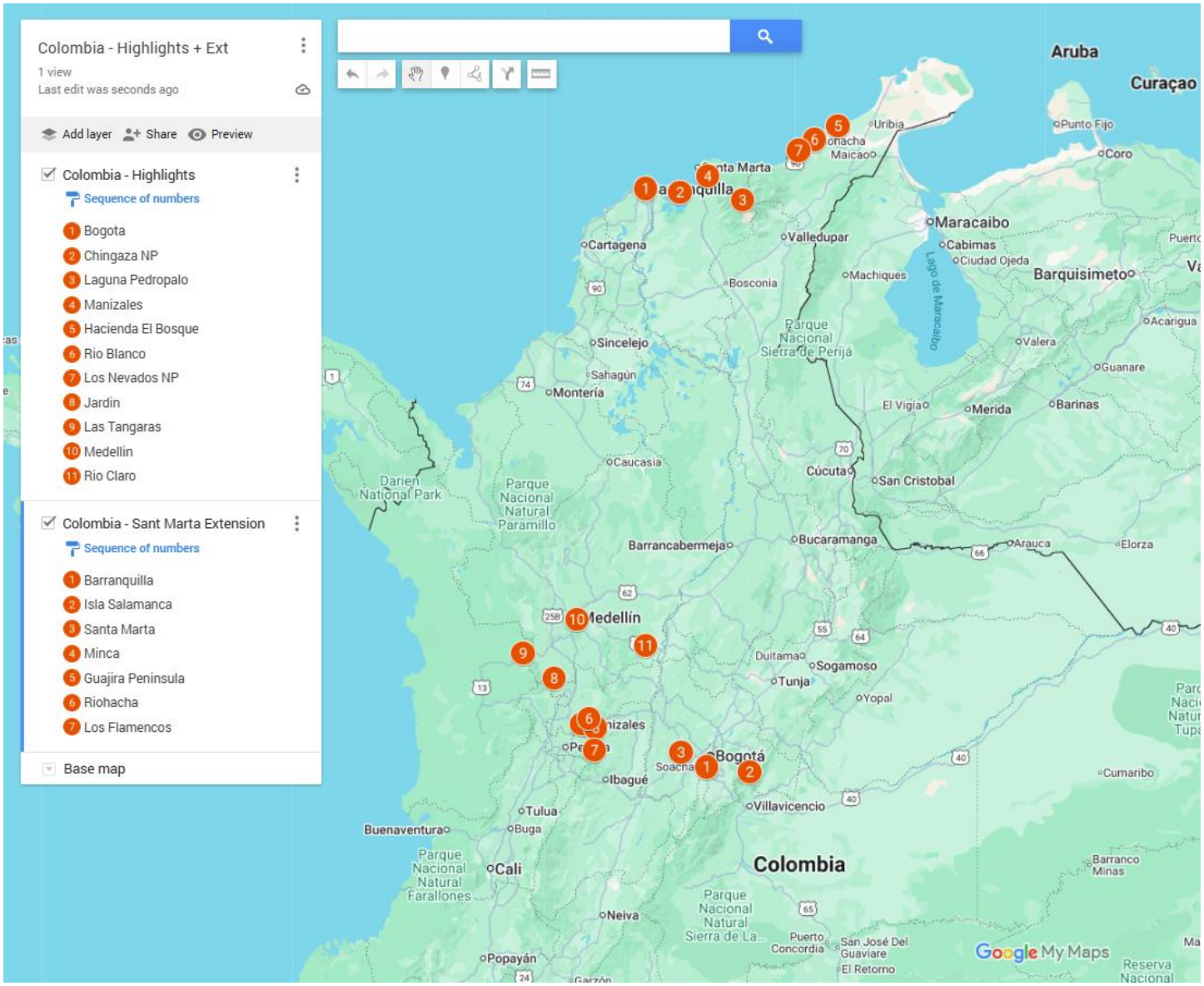
Itinerary & Map

Highlights

Day 1	Arriva into Bogota
Day 2	Chingaza National Park
Day 3	Laguna Pedro Palo & La Florida, flight to Manizales
Day 4	Hacienda El Bosque & Manizales area
Day 5	Rio Blanco
Day 6	Manizales to Jardin via Los Nevados National Park
Day 7	Jardin to Las Tangaras
Day 8	Las Tangaras
Day 9	Las Tangaras to Medellin
Day 10	La Romera Park to Rio Claro Preserve
Day 11	Rio Claro & surrounds
Day 12	Rio Claro to Bogota & final departure

Santa Marta

Day 1	Arrival in Barranquilla
Day 2	Barranquilla to Santa Marta via PNN Isla Salamanca
Day 3	San Lorenzo Ridge
Day 4	Santa Marta to Minca
Day 5	Minca to Riohacha via Los Camarones and the Guajira Peninsula
Day 6	Riohacha to Bogota via PNN Los Flamencos & final departure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Birding sites in detail



Rufous-browed Conebill by Adam Riley

Chingaza National Park. Beginning this morning with a predawn departure from our hotel, we will ascend into the temperate forests around Chingaza National Park. Here the sheer variety of flowers and orchids in an endless mosaic of moss-laden elfin stunted forest is nothing short of amazing!

We start birding the subtropical forest before gradually working our way to above 11,500 feet. The trill of the endemic Rufous-browed Conebill may start off the morning, the skulky Pale-bellied Tapaculo could make an appearance, and we will attempt to lure the endemic Silvery-throated Spinetail into view. The white-faced form of Golden-fronted Whitestart is an especially smart addition to the avifauna at this elevation, while flowers are likely to attract a variety of hummingbirds such as the near-endemic Coppery-bellied and Glowing Pufflegs, Purple-backed Thornbill, the Longuemare's Sunangel, and with luck, we might even find the near-endemic Blue-throated Starfrontlet. The rare and endemic Flame-winged Parakeet makes an occasional appearance, flying in noisy flocks over remnant forest patches, as does the Black-billed Mountain Toucan in densely vegetated canopy.

Making our way to higher elevation, we will continue searching for Tyrian Metaltail, Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Glowing Puffleg, Masked and Glossy Flowerpiercers, the brilliant, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Black-capped Hemispingus, Pale-naped and Slaty Brushfinches, White-chinned Thistletail, Streak-throated Bush Tyrant, Black-capped Tyrannulet and Black-crested Warbler. The skulking Muisca Antpitta (formerly part of the 'Rufous' complex), can usually be seen with persistence, and we will be scanning carefully for the localised Bronze-tailed Thornbill.

Observatorio de Colibries. Time permitting, we'll drop into this site which has several hummingbird feeders, where up to 14 different hummingbird species visit through the day (seasonally). We can expect to find Green-tailed and Black-tailed Trainbearers, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Great Sapphirewing, White-bellied Woodstar, Lesser and Sparkling Violetears and Longuemare's Sunangel amongst others.



Indigo-capped Hummingbird by Stephan Lorenz

Laguna Pedro Palo. This is an excellent site to acclimatise ourselves to the Andean altitudes at about 6,500 feet. Located on a saddle in the sub-Andean Forest belt on the western slope of the Eastern Cordilleras, Laguna Pedro Palo offers excellent cloud



Black Inca by Clayton Burne

forest birding with a chance to find several localised endemics. Top on our list will be the endemic Black Inca that feeds on flowering bromeliads, and the rare Turquoise Dacnis that often associates with mixed tanager flocks.

Along the muddy edge of the lake lurk White-throated Crakes, while activity in the surrounding forest edge might produce Ash-browed and Stripe-breasted Spinetails, the tiny Olivaceous Piculet, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Mountain and Yellow-bellied Elaenias, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, and a profusion of colourful tanagers such as Golden, Metallic-green, and Blue-necked.

Grey-breasted Wood-wren can often be located by its explosive song, and we will try to lure the scarce Moustached Puffbird into view. While walking along a dirt track, we will also keep our eyes peeled for fruiting trees likely to attract White-throated Toucanet, with a supporting cast including Fawn-breasted Tanager, the extravagant Red-headed Barbet and Blue-naped Chlorophonia. In the undergrowth, subtle movement might reveal Three-striped Warblers scouring through a thicket or the active Moustached Brushfinch. Although never common throughout its patchy distribution, we will also watch for White-rumped Hawk soaring overhead.

Parque La Florida. This famous site right next to Bogota's international airport may turn up Bogota Rail and Spot-flanked Gallinule! Other species of waterfowl, waders, Neotropical migrants and the beautiful *bogotensis* subspecies of Yellow-hooded Blackbird will keep us busy and having fun.

Hacienda El Bosque. This cattle ranch has two tricky *Grallaridae* to find, in the form of Equatorial and Crescent-faced Antpittas. As we head into the forest, we'll also be keeping our eyes open for other desirable species such as Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Barred Fruiteater, Grey-browed Brushfinch, Yellow-bellied Chat Tyrant, Black-thighed Puffleg and Sword-billed Hummingbird.



Crescent-faced Antpitta by Forrest Rowland

Termales del Ruiz road. Time permitting, we may spend a few hours birding the lower sections of the Termales del Ruiz road. Here we will search for usually difficult species such as Golden-breasted and Black-thighed Pufflegs, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill and Viridian Metaltail, as well as commoner species such as Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet and Shining Sunbeam. If lucky, we might run into a flock of the endemic Rufous-fronted Parakeet.

Rio Blanco. This beautiful reserve is situated above the city of Manizales. Here there are over a dozen active hummingbird feeders along a wooden balcony that is lined with flowers, and these glitter with hummingbirds that include gems such as Long-tailed Sylph, Buff-tailed



Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan by Bobby Wilcox

Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, the boldly patterned Collared Inca and Tourmaline Sunangel. Finding an Andean Guan or even the oversized monotypic White-capped Tanager that can sometimes be seen from the balcony of the lodge would be a typical way to start the morning in Rio Blanco.

Our main quest for the day, however – and certainly one of the highlights of the entire trip – will be the rarely-seen antpittas, which have been patiently habituated to come to earthworm feeding stations that are active very early in the morning. The reserve features several of these 'antpitta feeders' where worms are placed out every day to attract these secretive birds, and here we have a chance to marvel at these fascinating but normally extremely difficult understory dwellers – sometimes only at an arms-length away! Ornately patterned Chestnut-crowned Antpitta and the endemic Brown-banded Antpitta are usually present, but we might also have a visit from the tiny vine-loving Slaty-crowned Antpitta, Chestnut-naped Antpitta, and occasionally even the vocal but sneaky near-endemic Bicolored Antpitta. As these special birds are accustomed to a human presence at these sites, we often obtain exceptional studies (and photographs!) not just of the antpittas themselves, but also of their interesting behaviour as they stuff their bills with worms to feed hungry chicks or sometimes even hop across our feet! Other species that regularly visit the antpitta feeders include Grey-browed Brushfinch, the beautiful Green-and-black Fruiteater and Great Thrush.

The wide pathways within the reserve offer excellent access to the pristine cloud forest, where we will watch for the secretive Tawny-breasted Tinamou crossing the track, Golden-headed Quetzal perched motionlessly on a fern-covered branch, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker (arguably the world's most beautiful woodpecker!), and peer into the undergrowth for skulking Blackish, Spillmann's and Ash-colored Tapaculos.

We might also locate a fruiting tree where several species of parrots could be in attendance, including the scarce Golden-plumed Parakeet, Scaly-naped Amazon and the endangered Rusty-faced Parrot (this being its type location where it was first discovered). Mixed flocks here are sometimes composed of fifty plus species all swarming together in excited movements with intense sound at all levels of the mossy forest and have the potential to leave us dizzy! Just a few of the possibilities include Buff-breasted and Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers, Yellow-billed Cacique, Pearled Treerunner, Black-eared Hemispingus, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Dusky Piha, Smoke-colored Pewee,



Brown-banded Antpitta by Clayton Burne



Golden-plumed Parakeet by Dušan Brinkhuizen

the bright Plushcap that prefers dense bamboo, Grey-hooded Bush Tanager, Smoky Bush Tyrant, White-banded and White-tailed Tyrannulets, the white capped form of Capped Conebill, bright Blue-and-black Tanager, Sepia-browed Wren creeping through the vines, Streaked Xenops, Slaty-backed and Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrants, and a wide range of other warblers, tyrants, spinetails, and tanagers.

Continued birding inside this fantastic reserve throughout the day could produce specialities such as the tiny but colourful Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Mountain Wren, Powerful Woodpecker (giving its distinctive double tap), and colourful Masked Trogon. Although we will need considerable luck on our side, we also have possibilities for rarities such as Masked Saltator.

Los Nevados National Park. The snow-covered Ruiz Volcano and Los Nevados National Park give us access to pristine, stunted elfin forest and flowering Paramo scrub situated well above 13 000 feet. Whilst being spoilt by the spectacular scenery, we will seek our primary target at this high elevation, the unique range-restricted Buffy Helmetcrest (split from Bearded). This spectacular hummingbird 'trap lines', which means that it visits the same flowers at regular intervals on its circuit, and we will carefully watch the known areas of its territory. Tawny Antpittas can sometimes be ridiculously tame here, while other specialities we will be searching for include Paramo Tapaculo, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Grass Wren, Plain-colored Seedeater and Many-striped Canastero.

Jardin. The town of Jardin has one of the most accessible Andean Cock-of-the-rock lekking sites on earth. This can be an overwhelming frenzy of more than twenty eye-searing males in full raspy song and ostentatious display, while we marvel from only a few feet away! If lucky, the endemic Red-bellied Grackle might also show up. In the river below, we will scan for White-capped Dipper feeding along the rocks, plus several possible tanagers including the boldly pattered Saffron-crowned, and near-endemic Flame-rumped.



Buffy Helmetcrest by David Hoddinott

Loro Orejiamarillo. Setting out this morning with 4x4 jeeps along a dirt road, we will enter the highland reserve of Loro Orejiamarillo above Jardin, also known as Las Ventanas. This ProAves owned reserve is frequented by nearly 600 Yellow-eared Parrots, a vulnerable species that use the higher montane forest with tall wax palms for roosting, feeding, and



Andean Cock-of-the-rock by Bobby Wilcox

nesting. Obtaining views of this diagnostically green and yellow patterned parrot will be our primary target early this morning before we continue birding along the little-travelled road through the reserve.

Here Black-billed Mountain Toucan, the near-endemic monotypic Tanager Finch and bands of Black-collared Jay are all possible, along with a superb selection of montane specialities that include White-browed Spinetail, Rufous-headed Pygmy Tyrant, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Yellow-vented Woodpecker, the radiant Tourmaline Sunangel and Strong-billed Woodcreeper. Although rare throughout its range, this forest also supports a small population of the arboreal Chestnut-crested Cotinga and we will keep an eye peeled for this highly sought-after species. At Mirador El Roble we have possibilities to visit a feeding station for both Chestnut-naped and Chami Antpitta.

Las Tangaras. In this biodiverse Chocoan region, some 2,000m elevation on the Pacific Slope of the Andes, it seems that nature has decided to throw an additional splash of wild colour onto the palette, with the birds being as bright and colourful as the orchids, bromeliads, ferns and hanging epiphytes that cover every visible foot of branch, trunk, or root. Even the ground is a riot of blooming plants and moss.

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



Black-and-gold Tanager by Clayton Burne

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

Tantalising species we will search for along the car tracks and trails include Cloud Forest Pygmy Owl, Pacific Tuftedcheek, Golden-headed Quetzal, Toucan Barbet, Yellow-vented, Crimson-mantled and Powerful Woodpeckers, Uniform Treehunter, Star-



Gold-ringed Tanager by David Hoddinott

chested Treerunner, Bicolored Antvireo, Yellow-breasted Antpitta, Rufous-breasted Antthrush, Tatama and Narino Tapaculos, Handsome Flycatcher, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Olivaceous Piha, Choco Vireo, Beautiful Jay, Chestnut-breasted and White-headed Wren, Black Solitaire, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Purplish-mantled, Glistening-green, Rufous-throated and Flame-faced Tanagers, Indigo Flowerpiercer, and both Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-collared Chlorophonias – to name just some of the potential highlights!

We'll also spend some time birding at the upper hummingbird feeders. Some of the dazzling and bright species that visit the feeders include Violet-tailed Sylph, the eye-searing Velvet-purple Coronet, scarce Empress Brilliant, Greenish Puffleg and Purple-bibbed Whitetip. The banana feeders at the lodge attract stunners like Flame-rumped and Silver-throated Tanagers whilst the hummingbird feeders attract a different set of gems including Steely-vented Hummingbird and Andean Emerald.

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

Bosques de Quebrada Sinifaná. We will make a stop in a dry forest patch for some of Colombia's most range-restricted species including Greyish Piculet and the recently described (2012) Antioquia Wren. We also have chances for Golden-collared Manakin.

La Romera Park. The narrow watershed of La Romera Municipal Park protects an island of forest surrounded by farms and semi-rural homes. Birding from the road, we will watch for Andean Motmot, which can often be quite confiding compared to the undergrowth skulkers we will be searching for. Specifically, we will be targeting the endemic Stiles's Tapaculo that is found in the same dense undergrowth where Chestnut-capped Brushfinch also lurks. The shy Yellow-headed Manikin is also high up on our list of endemic targets, La Romera is perhaps the best-known site for it in Colombia. Bird flocks can



Velvet-purple Coronet by Bobby Wilcox



Greyish Piculet by Adam Riley

be quite a spectacle in this area with a pleasant assortment of migrant warblers including Golden-winged, Tennessee, Canada, Black-and-white, Blackburnian and the increasingly scarce Cerulean Warbler all possible. The gorgeous but elusive endemic, Red-bellied Grackle moves around in small flocks, uttering extraordinary shrieks as they search for fruits and invertebrates.

Rio Claro Canyon The warmer climate will be evident here since we are only at about 2,000 feet in this lower region of the Andes, but this allows us to search for a great diversity of bird species that share affinities with the Colombian lowlands. Birding along the open forest tracks and trails, we can dive into the antbirds with possibilities of Black-crowned Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird and a variety of antwrens including the tiny Pacific, White-flanked, Dot-winged and Checker-throated. The musical Southern Nightingale Wren is a constant companion while other birds we are likely to encounter include Cinnamon and Crimson-crested Woodpeckers, Band-backed and Bay Wrens, Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaner gleaning for insects, Velvety and White-bearded Manakins, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Russet-winged Schiffornis, loose bands of Black-chested Jay, brightly coloured Yellow-tufted Dacnis, Cinnamon and One-colored Becards, and Fulvous-vented Euphonia. Rare endemics that we'll be seeking for include the Antioquia Bristle-tyrant, White-mantled Barbet and Sooty Ant Tanager. Here we should also watch for troops of boldly marked White-footed Tamarins scurrying through the sub-canopy.

The forest along La Mulata creek also supports a great selection of tyrannids including Yellow-crowned and Brown-capped Tyrannulets, Forest Elaenia, Sepia-capped Flycatcher, the minuscule Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Western Olivaceous Flatbill and Long-tailed Tyrant. White-whiskered Puffbird and Grey-cheeked Nunlet are more inconspicuous denizens of this forest, as are a variety of tanagers including Crimson-backed, Yellow-backed, Dusky-faced and bands of Tawny-crested. A nearby patch of preserved forest may turn up Bare-crowned Antbird, White-mantled Barbet and Beautiful Woodpecker.

Rio Claro Oil Bird Cave. We will begin the walk to the Oilbird cave in the afternoon, searching for skulking understory and secretive sub-canopy species including Barred Puffbird, Great Antshrike, Dusky Antbird, Band-backed Wren, and, with a lot of luck, Bare-crowned or Magdalena Antbirds! We will then wait until dusk for the Oilbirds to fly out of the cave, a noisy and truly mind-blowing spectacle!

Jardin Encantado. Near the town of San Francisco, we will visit the aptly named Enchanted Gardens, a private home where our hostess tirelessly tends to over 30 hummingbird feeders that swarm with activity. Here we can expect to be dazzled by dozens of busy hummers including the endemic



Munchique Wren by Bobby Wilcox

Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Green and Sparkling Violetears, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Green Hermit, minuscule White-bellied and Gorgeted Woodstars (seasonal), White-necked Jacobin, Crowned Woodnymph and a chance for the elusive Ruby-topaz Hummingbird (seasonal) - all at point blank range!



Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

PNN Isla Salamanca. We will begin our tour by searching for perhaps the most range-restricted hummingbird species of the week: Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird! The mangroves and scrub of the Isla Salamanca National Park harbour some very special birds as well, with Panamanian Flycatcher, Golden-green Woodpecker, Stripe-backed Wren, Black-collared Hawk, American Pygmy and Green-and-rufous Kingfishers, Bicolored Conebill, some 9 species of migrant Wood Warblers from North America, Bronze-brown Cowbird and the extremely localised, Chestnut-winged Chachalaca, being just some of the avian possibilities! We even have a chance of finding the recently described Turquoise-winged Parrotlet. Combine that with a huge array of herons, terns, gulls and shorebirds frequenting the many estuaries and mudflats we will traverse, and we are sure to have one whopping morning to start our tour off with a bang!

Santa Marta. The isolated Santa Marta Mountain range supports a phenomenal array of biodiversity, including numerous endemics and localised bird specialities, although it is a relatively small range of accessible forest since much of the territory has sadly been deforested for agriculture.

Winding our way up through the foothills, we can begin sifting through mega flocks that often swarm with activity, typically including an abundance of migrant warblers, tanagers, vireos, grosbeaks and flycatchers, plus resident species such as the scarce Coppery Emerald, White-bearded Manakin, Sooty-capped Hermit, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Crested Oropendola, Rufous-breasted Wren, Black-striped Sparrow, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, and the smart-looking Golden-winged Sparrow that prefers areas of denser undergrowth.



Santa Marta Screech Owl by Rob Williams

The lodge hummingbird feeders buzz with activity, with the likes of White-tailed Starfrontlet and tiny Santa Marta Woodstar, the endemic race of Tyrian Metaltail, and sometimes a surprise such as Lazuline Sabrewing. We will also have a look for Santa Marta Antpitta, which sometimes visits a nearby feeding station, and enjoy at least one evening walk through the forest nearby to search for

Mottled Owl and the recently described Santa Marta Screech Owl.



Santa Marta Antpitta by Adam Riley

El Dorado. Time permitting, we may stop in at El Dorado to check the compost heap for the scarce Black-fronted Wood Quail, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, Black-hooded Thrush, gaudy Blue-naped Chlorophonia and Sierra Nevada Brushfinch.

Santa Marta – San Lorenzo Ridge. Higher up on the mountain, after ascending to almost 3 000m (10 000ft) in elevation, we have the chance to continue collecting our suite of highland endemics. Although notoriously flighty, we can watch for noisy flocks of Santa Marta Parakeet, the more cooperative Rusty-headed Spinetail and furtive Brown-rumped Tapaculo. The lively Yellow-crowned Whitestart is normally in regular attendance with mixed flocks, which also contain the colourful Santa Marta Mountain Tanager and sometimes a few Santa Marta Warblers showing off their complex facial patterns. White-tipped Quetzal can often be located by its barking call, as we continue locating species such as White-throated (Santa Marta) Toucanet, Rufous-and-white Wren, the brightly coloured Golden-breasted Fruiteater, Yellow-legged Thrush, Hermit Wood Wren, Barred Forest Falcon, shy Lined Quail-Dove, and Grey-throated Leaftosser. At these higher elevations, we can try our luck coaxing into view the tricky Sierra Nevada Antpitta (formerly part of the 'Rufous' complex). Two especially difficult endemics that are also present but only in excruciatingly small numbers are the tiny Black-backed Thornbill, which prefers smaller flowers at the highest elevations, and the scarce Santa Marta Bush Tyrant that occasionally joins mixed bird flocks.

Minca & surrounds. Attracting national tourists, foreign hikers, bikers and birders alike, Minca's charm is undeniable. It is very conveniently located in the foothills of the Santa Marta Mountains. While few of the birds in and around Minca are true endemics, many are rare and range-restricted, or just plain beautiful!

As we descend towards Minca, we'll again pass innumerable waterfalls cascading along the mountain slope where we shall try to tease out the sneaky Santa Marta Tapaculo before turning our attention to other endemics, including the recently split Santa Marta Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Brushfinch, the arboreal Streak-capped Spinetail, Santa Marta Antbird, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, Spectacled Tyrannulet, often secretive Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, and White-lored Warbler.



Santa Marta Blossomcrown by Dušan Brinkhuizen



Santa Marta Bush Tyrant by Forrest Rowland

We'll try to catch up with any special birds we may still be searching for, including Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Groove-billed Toucanet, Rufous-and-white Wren, or Coopmans's Tyrannulet.

Around the village itself, we will be looking for Coppery Emerald, Rufous Nightjar, Keel-billed Toucan, Black-backed Antshrike, Pale-eyed Pygmy Tyrant, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, the striking Lance-tailed Manakin, Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and-white Wrens, and the boldly coloured Golden-winged Sparrow.

Hummingbird feeders around our lodge typically hold Steely-vented Hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird.

Minca to the Guajira Peninsula. We'll change gears and begin heading eastward into the increasingly arid Guajira Peninsula. Along our route, we might make a few opportunistic stops at sites for the localised Rufous-vented Chachalaca, Double-striped Thick-knee, or a chance for Lance-tailed Manakin in the dense vine tangles.

Guajira Peninsula. The cactus-studded scrub and xerophytic vegetation support several Colombian near endemics that share only a minuscule corner, barely accessible, in north-western Venezuela. We'll begin birding this unique habitat for specialities including the surprisingly attractive White-whiskered Spinetail, Grey Pileated Finch, noisy Caribbean (Pale-legged) Hornero and the sometimes ridiculously tame Russet-throated Puffbird. Ferruginous Pygmy Owl is quite common in this habitat, and while imitating its calls we are likely to attract mobbing species such as the endemic sub-species of Black-crested Antshrike, Red-billed Emerald, Slender-billed Inezia, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, and Yellow Oriole amongst others.

Los Flamencos National Park. It doesn't take long for the temperature to warm up in these desert conditions, so we plan to be inside Los Flamencos National Park at daybreak to hear the dawn chorus and take advantage of the cooler conditions. One of our primary targets will be the outrageous Vermilion Cardinal that is often first heard singing before seen with its flashy elongated crest. Striped Cuckoo can often be heard singing from a great distance, and we should watch for small flocks of Green-rumped Parrotlet flying past, along with the more common Bare-eyed Pigeon. Ferruginous Pygmy Owl imitations should continue to produce activity as things begin to warm up, with possibilities including Trinidad Euphonia, Slender-billed and Pale-tipped Inezia, Glaucous Tanager, Dwarf Cuckoo, Brown-crested



Chestnut Piculet by Rob Williams



Vermilion Cardinal by Clayton Burne

Flycatcher, migrant Prothonotary Warbler, Grey Kingbird, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, and Northern Scrub Flycatcher. Four more localised specialities we'll be targeting this morning include the sharply patterned Orinoco Saltator, localised Buffy Hummingbird, Chestnut Piculet and the difficult Tocuyo Sparrow.

Looking out over the Caribbean Sea, the myriad of coastal lagoons and coastal mudflats can produce a wide variety of terns, gulls, migrant waders, pelicans, stilts, frigatebirds, and egrets. Scanning over these marshlands, we may be able to pick out three particularly attractive species, namely the stately American Flamingo, Roseate Spoonbill, and the incandescent Scarlet Ibis. From the beach, we should also find Carib Grackles and maybe a few migrant Purple Martins mixed in with the resident Brown-chested Martins. Other birds here include Reddish Egrets dancing across the shallows, American White Ibis, Semipalmated and Grey Plovers, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers, and Wood Stork.

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease	■ ■ ■	This is a moderately difficult tour. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; or anyone with mobility / health challenges. Some very early mornings / long days.
Birding Ease	■ ■ ■	Moderate to demanding. Bird density is low in some areas, several difficult target species that require patience, persistence & repeat attempts (ie: Antpittas & Tapaculos).
Accommodation	■ ■ ■	Comfortable to good.
Walking / Trails	■ ■ ■	Some trails can be very muddy after rains, with at least one trail considered steep to very steep. Some long days on our feet. A few hours at very high altitude (4 000m/13 000ft).
Vehicles / Roads	■ ■ ■	Mostly sealed roads. Some days with heavy traffic. A few bumpy drives on unsealed roads.
Photography	■ ■ ■	Reasonable, typical forest conditions of variable light & frequent cloud / drizzle.
Annoyances	■ ■ ■	Occasional landslide interruptions, small biting insects. Temperatures vary from hot & humid, to cold at altitude. Rain is to be expected. Very hot on the Guajira Peninsula.

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 lunch on day 12;
- All meals from dinner on day 1 to breakfast on day 6 of the Santa Marta tour;
- Bottled drinking water;
- All lodgings;
- All ground transportation during the tour;
- All reserve entrance fees;
- All guiding services;
- Tips for local guides, drivers 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 20kg (44lb) for check in luggage and 5kg (+-18lb) for hand luggage.
- This tour involves the occasional long hike. We will be at fairly high altitude on some occasions and on most days we will be on our feet for a good part of the day. You should, therefore, be in good health and of sound fitness to undertake this tour.
- We will be birding in some remote areas well away from modern medical facilities.
- The hotels are of comfortable standard throughout. We no longer regularly use El Dorado Lodge on Santa Marta due to a marked deviation of their birding focus.

- Transport is by small coach or minibus and the roads are mostly in good condition. However, due to the nature of the topography, there is the possibility of landslides interfering with our trip, though we have minimised this risk by undertaking the tour during the drier season.
- There will be times where we switch to smaller 4x4 vehicles where necessary.
- Traffic in and around the larger cities of Bogota and Medellin is often heavy, which impacts our time in vehicles.
- We expect the weather to be mostly dry and often sunny; it can be hot and very humid in the lowlands, such as at Rio Claro. At higher elevations, however, it can be quite cool to very cold (Los Nevados National Park), especially at night. There is likely to be some rain, which can be heavy.

Arrival and Departure Details

The Highlights tour will depart from El Dorado International Airport (IATA: BOG), Bogotá on Day 1 and, as it is an arrival day, you are welcome to arrive any time before 17:00. The tour will conclude in the early evening on day 12 at El Dorado International Airport (IATA: BOG), Bogotá.

The Santa Marta tour will depart from Barranquilla International Airport on day 1 and, as this is an arrival day you are welcome to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude after a mid-morning flight from Riohacha to Bogota.

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.

El Dorado International Airport, Bogotá (IATA: BOG) is the main port of entry for international flights into Colombia and is well serviced by most of the world's major airlines.

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.