Colombia

Southern Andean Endemics



Multicolored Tanager by Forrest Rowland

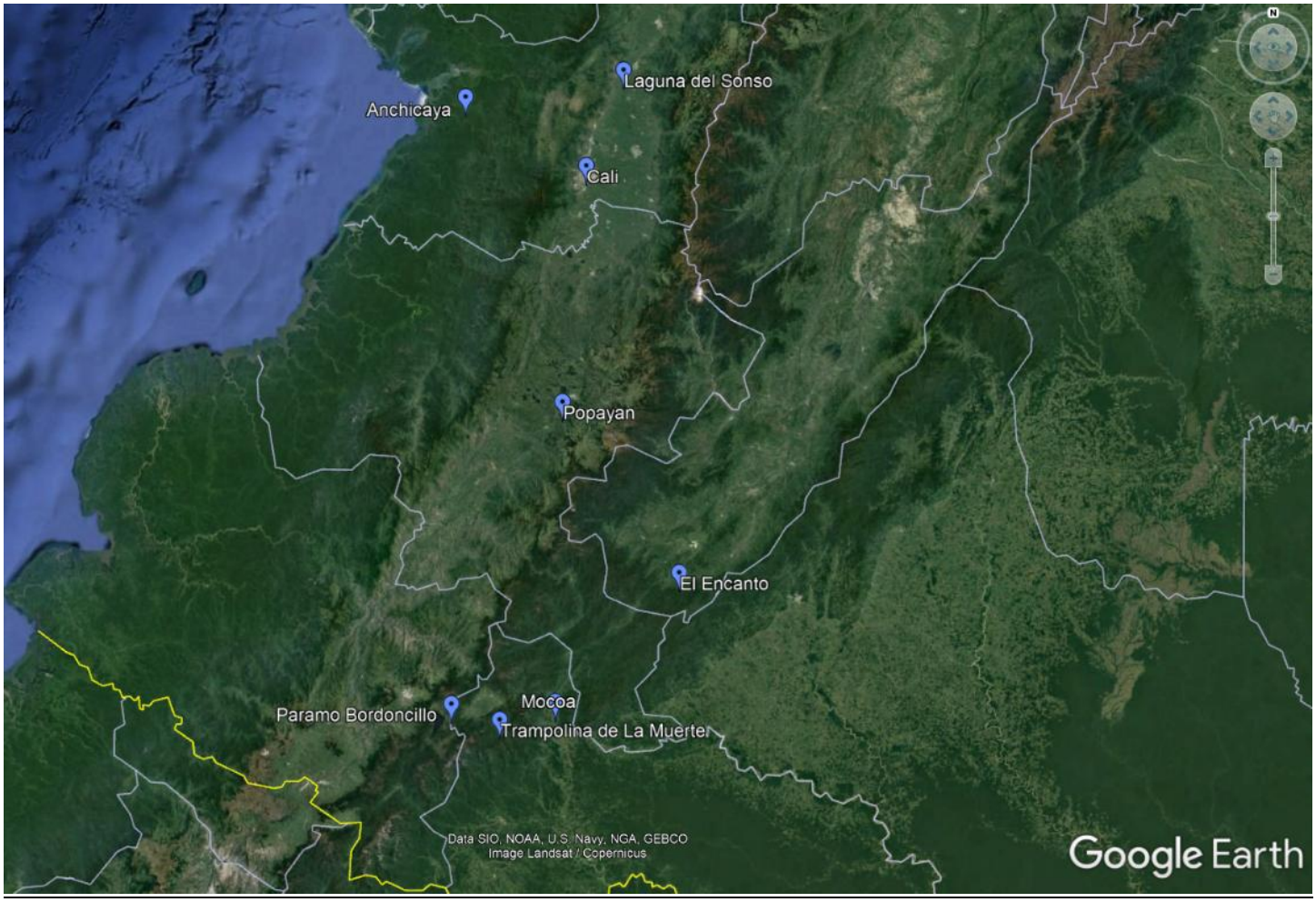
Colombia has more species of birds than any other country – nearly 2000 species are to be found within the confines of this incredible nation's borders; of which, at least 89 are endemic. This huge diversity of species results from the equally diverse range of habitats: three Andean Cordilleras (Western, Central and Eastern Andes), two inter-Andean valleys (the Cauca and Magdalena Valleys), the lowland forests of the Amazon and Orinoco regions, the isolated snow-capped Santa Marta Mountains, the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, deserts and lakes, and the rich wet forests of the Chocó all help to make it one of the most exciting countries to bird on earth!

Our tour focuses on the rarely visited southern Andes. Starting in the beautiful city of Santiago de Cali, we move up and out of the Valle de Cauca through the Farellones de Cali towards Anchicaya. Having so far taken in a fascinating traverse of the southwestern Andes, we shall turn around and bird another traverse taking us further north of Cali to Buga and Laguna del Sonso for a final few endemics.

Very few birders have been much further south of Cali. Indeed, even as recently as 2014 – insurgents made it impossible to deviate off Ruta 25 en route to Ecuador. Nowadays, we can freely explore the incredible Andean ridges from montane cloud forests all the way to the foothills along seemingly impossible road traverses including the sure to be famous Trampolina de la Muerte / de las Aves.

Itinerary & Map

Day 1	**Arrival into Cali**
Day 2	**KM 18 & Upper Anchicaya**
Day 3	**Middle Anchicaya**
Day 4	**Dona Dora & Upper Anchicaya**
Day 5	**San Cipriano to Buga**
Day 6	**Bosque Yotoco & Laguna del Sonso to Cali**
Day 7	**Cali to Popayán**
Day 8	**Popayán to El Encanto Reserva Ecoturistica via Volcan Purace**
Day 9	**El Encanto and PNN Cueva de Guacharos**
Day 10	**El Encanto Reserva Ecoturistica to Mocoa**
Days 11 & 12	**Mocoa area**
Day 13	**Birding Trampolina de La Muerte**
Day 14	**Paramo Bordoncillo area to Popayán & final departure**



Birding sites in detail

Species in Italics = Endemic **Species in Bold = Near Endemic**

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



Purplish-mantled Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

We will start the tour off with some time at the famed Finca Alejandria. This is, without doubt, the single best feeding station and setup in the country, and as impressive as any place, anywhere, on Earth. With just a couple hours' time at the hummingbird feeders we are likely to see Green and Tawny-bellied Hermits, the stunning Long-tailed Sylph, Greenish Puffleg, Bronzy Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, adorable White-booted Racket-tail, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Purple-throated Woodstar, **Western** and Andean **Emerald**s, Crowned Woodnymph, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and the scarce stunner **Blue-headed Sapphire**. That's just the hummingbirds! Several species feed on the fruit laid out on trays, and even more come through regularly in massive mixed flocks! Of particular interest we might get views of Golden-headed Quetzal, Andean Motmot, Red-headed Barbet, White-throated and Crimson-rumped Toucanets, Uniform Antshrike, Plain Antvireo, Slaty Antwren, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Streaked Xenops, Rusty-winged Barbtail, Lineated Foliage-Gleaner, Streak-capped Treehunter, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant, Barred Becard, Andean Solitaire, Ashy-throated Chlorospingus, White-naped Brushfinch, Flame-rumped Tanager, Blue-capped, Golden-naped, Black-capped, Scrub, Beryl-spangled, Metallic-green, Saffron-crowned, and Golden Tanagers all. An amazing opportunity this morning to enjoy some productive, easy birding netting some wonderful species.



Greyish Piculet by Adam Riley

There are several nooks and crannies en route to Anchicaya, and we will make a few stops gleaning some species less likely encountered at the lower elevations of Anchicaya. These include **Pacific Tuftedcheek**, **Narino** and Choco **Tapaculo**s, Olivaceous Piha, Black-billed Peppershrike, and both **Glistening-green** and ***Crested Ant Tanagers***, all of which are species endemic to the Choco bioregion!

Aside from the fabulous birding (including the occasionally mind-numbing mixed flock that defies reason), the scenery here is

stunning, and the privilege of birding such an ornithologically famous area is undeniable. Due to a recent invasion of wealthy landowners from Cali constructing their mansions in the vicinity of KM 18, after we turn onto the Old Buenaventura Road and continue some 40kms, we will enter some of the best birding in the region.



Crested Ant Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

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

Baudo Guan, Semicollared Hawk, Dusky Pigeon, **Pallid Dove**, **Purple Quail-Dove**, Violet-bellied, **Purple-chested** and Tooth-billed **Hummingbird**s, Lanceolated Monklet, **Rose-faced Parrot**, Spot-crowned Barbet, **White-whiskered Hermit**, **Choco Woodpecker** (rare), **Choco Trogon** (rare), Zeledon's and **Esmeraldas Antbirds**, Choco Tapaculo, **Spot-crowned Barbet**, **Long-wattled Umbrellabird**, Green, **Club-winged**, and **Golden-collared Manakins**, **White-headed** and **Sooty-headed Wrens**, Rufous-brown Solitaire, **Choco Warbler**, **Black-chinned Mountain Tanager**, **Golden-chested**, **Scarlet-and-white**, **Blue-whiskered**, Scarlet-browed, Grey-and-gold, and Dusky-faced Tanagers, ***Crested Ant Tanager*** and **Yellow-green Tanager** (Yellow-green Chlorospingus) are all regularly recorded in this insanely bird-rich area. Night birding might turn up Rufescent Screech Owl or **Cloud Forest Pygmy Owl**, as well as some fancy reptiles and amphibians, in which a proportionate level of endemism is displayed!

Dona Dora & Upper Anchicaya. We will bird the upper elevations of the Anchicaya Valley, including a trip to Dona Dora's. Some of the species at these elevations include Choco Tapaculo, **Black-headed Brushfinch**, **Black-chinned Mountain Tanager**, **Toucan** and Red-headed Barbets, and many more!



Glistening-green Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

San Cipriano. Access to the rich forests of the escalarete area can only be reached by the amusing "brujas". These small, hand-powered, platform train cars take visitors up to the forest trails via the local rail system. Novel, and unique to this site in Colombia! The most-wanted species here is, perhaps, **Five-colored Barbet**. This is one of only three reliable sites for this beautiful Choco endemic. The monotypic Sapayoa, most closely related to African broadbills, is a very close second! Black-and-white Hawk Eagle, Bronzy Hermit, Band-tailed Barbthroat, Blue-tailed Trogon, Black-

breasted Puffbird, **Stub-tailed Antbird**, Thicket Antpitta, Black-striped Woodcreeper, **Pacific Flatbill**, Black-tipped Cotinga, and Slate-throated Gnatcatcher are amongst the 250+ species that inhabit the area.

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



Choco Woodpecker by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Laguna del Sonso. This is a well-known hangout of Horned Screamer, though due to recent changes in water level maintenance, viewing this bizarre creature has become more difficult. Nevertheless, with dozens of hovering Snail Kite, roosting Common Potoo, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow Oriole, **Dwarf Cuckoo** and several other great species are possible at this interesting site.

Volcan Purace. Nearly the entire drive between Popayán and San Agustin is forested, with a great diversity of species possible. Some of the special birds we will look for on this exciting first day include Torrent Duck, Andean Guan, Mountain Avocetbill, Rainbow-bearded and Purple-backed Thornbills Golden-breasted Puffleg, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Mountain Velvetbreast, and the iconic Andean Condor. Grey-breasted and Black-billed Mountain Toucans, Carunculated Caracara, and Golden-plumed Parakeet are a few of the other non-passerines found in higher elevations on our route today. As is always the case with neotropic montane birding, mixed flocks will likely be encountered. Some of the flocks species in the Central Andes include Pearled Treerunner, White-throated Tyrannulet, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Black-capped Tyrannulet, Slaty and Pale-naped Brushfinches, Citrine and Black-crested Warblers, Golden-fronted Redstart, Black-capped and Black-headed Hemispingus, Hooded, Lacrimose, and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers, and the truly stunning Golden-crowned Tanager.



Cauca Guan by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Finca Meremberg area. Time permitting, we'll make a visit to this property, and the surrounding forested lands, which hold numerous Magdalena Valley endemic species, as well as many typical of lower subtropical, cloud forests. Amongst the

250+ species logged at Meremberg, a few of the more exciting birds we'll look for will be ***Colombian Chachalaca***, Sickle-winged Guan, Ruddy Pigeon, Gorgeted Woodstar, Golden-headed Quetzal, ***Magdalena Tapaculo***, **Yellow-headed Manakin**, Whiskered Wren and Rufous-crested Tanager, amongst many other more widespread, common, species.



Tolima Blossomcrown by Rob Williams

El Encanto Reserva Ecoturistica, Los Altos del Oso, El Encanto & PNN Cueva de Guacharos. We'll devote time to birding the best areas around El Encanto Reserve, working our way up high into the eastern Andes towards the PNN Cueva de Guacharos, which translates to Oilbird Cave National Park. While the Oilbirds themselves are indeed present in the National Park, there is much to see and do here!

While our strategy might find us high in the Andes at dawn, or simply enjoying the wonderful birding around El Encanto itself, we will make sure to maximize our exposure to the endemics, as well as considering the 300+ other species possible. The habitats here are relatively varied, ranging from the drier, hotter climes around El Encanto, up over 2000m elevation into high elevation cloud forest. Hence the impressive diversity here, with more being discovered every year, in this under-birded region of the World's most biodiverse country.

El Encanto is a gem and is the best place to find the rare endemic ***Tolima Dove***, as well as one of the most range-restricted species on Earth, ***Dusky-headed Brushfinch***. But that's not all! ***Colombian Chachalaca***, Gorgeted Woodstar, ***Tolima Blossomcrown***, ***Indigo-capped Hummingbird***, **Shining-green Hummingbird**, Spectacled Parrotlet, **Bar-crested Antshrike**, Golden-winged Manakin, Whiskered Wren, ***Velvet-fronted Euphonia***, Golden-eared Tanager, and Slate-colored Seedeater are some of the more interesting highlight species of this small property.



Bar-crested Antshrike by Dušan Brinkhuizen

We can travel higher up into the eastern Andes, out of the hotter Magdalena River Valley, as the day warms to beat the heat and broaden the possibility of species today. With some spectacular scenery, today's drive will be a fun one! Most of the birding can be accomplished from good two-tracks. Some of the reward for our exploits might include ***Chestnut Wood Quail***, Wattled Guan, Oilbird, Green-fronted Lancebill, Greenish Puffleg, Booted Racket-tail, Crested and Golden-headed Quetzals, Andean Motmot, Uniform Antshrike, ***East Andean Antbird***, White-backed Fire-eye, White-bellied Antpitta, **Schwartz's Antthrush**, Long-tailed Tapaculo, Spectacled Prickletail, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Black-chested Fruiteater, and an absurd number of

Tanagers, honeycreepers, and flowerpiercers. Owling could be possible, searching Common Potoo, Rufous-banded Owl, Mottled Owl, Tropical Screech-Owl, and more.



Indigo-capped Hummingbird by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Mocoa area. We will focus our efforts for the next few days on the lower subtropical and foothill forests of the East Andean slope, near Mocoa. A huge Amazonian influence will be felt here, mixing with the cloud forest ecosystems, creating the richest avian biodiversity on Earth. With more than 600 species in the area, we will have plenty to look for!

Most of the site names here, like la Finca el Escondite (Hideaway Ranch), Fin del Mundo (End of the World), and Isla Escondida (Hidden Island) follow a theme evoking thoughts of solitude, mystery, and sense of adventure. Indeed, birding here is a new frontier with many revelations to come soon. Just in the past decade years some dozen species have been found here as new to Colombia. Part of the allure to the area is just how lush it is, relatively underdeveloped with much forest intact in the area. We will focus our birding efforts on elevations from about 600 to 1100masl, spending most of our time exploring foothill habitats.

Among the birds we will seek out are Highland and Black Tinamous, White-bearded, Great-billed and Grey-chinned Hermits, Blue-fronted Lancebill, Wire-crested Thorntail, **Ecuadorian Piedtail, Rufous-gaped Hillstar,** Rufous-vented Whitetip, Violet-fronted Brilliant, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Foothill Screech Owl, Band-bellied Owl, White-chinned and **Coppery-chested Jacamar**s, Gilded, Red-headed and Lemon-throated Barbets, Green-backed, Blue-crowned, Black-throated and Collared Trogons, Western Striolated and Black-streaked Puffbird, Lettered, Chestnut-eared and Many-banded Aracaris, Golden-collared Toucanet, Lafresnaye's and **Scaled Piculets**, Red- necked, Cream-colored, Chestnut and White-throated Woodpeckers, Foothill, Ornate, Napo Stipple-throated, Moustached and Yellow-breasted Antwrens, White-streaked Antvireo, Lined Antshrike, Slate-colored, Spot-winged, Common Scale-backed, and White-plumed Antbirds, Scaled and Plain-backed Antpittas, Short-tailed Antthrush, Rufous-rumped, Rufous-tailed, and Montane Foliage-Gleaners, Black-billed Treehunter, Dusky Spinetail, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Tawny-breasted Flycatcher, Black-and-White Becard, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Striolated, Blue-rumped and White-crowned Manakins, Grey-mantled, Scaly-breasted and Musician Wrens, ***Red-bellied Grackle***, Golden-rumped, Golden-bellied, White-vented, Bronze-green and Rufous-bellied Euphonias, Magpie, White-



Red-bellied Grackle by Clayton Burne

winged, Vermilion, Flame-crested, Fulvous-crested, Orange-eared, Speckled, Yellow-bellied, Spotted, Blue-browed, Paradise, Opal-rumped, Opal-crowned, Golden-eared, Golden, Flame-faced and Green-and-Gold Tanagers, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer and many more!



Rufous-gaped Hillstar by Dušan Brinkhuizen

El Escondite. If we have time, we might even venture a bit lower into the true Amazonian lowlands at El Escondite. With a more varzea, swampy, true Amazonian feel this small site is the upper elevation limit of a great many species more widespread through the Amazon Basin, but nonetheless interest to see, should we wish to squeeze in a visit. Horned Screamer, Grey-fronted Dove, Great Potoo, Hoatzin, Amazonian Trogon, White-eared Jacamar, Scarlet-crowned Barbet, Rufous-headed Woodpecker, Silvered, Peruvian Warbling, Spot-backed and White-shouldered Antbirds, Cinnamon-throated and Long-billed Woodcreepers, Orange-fronted Plushcrown, Orange-eyed Flatbill, Cinnamon Attila, Plum-throated Cotinga, Bare-necked Fruitcrow, Chestnut-crowned Becard, and Orange-backed Troupial, are some of the species that we won't likely run into elsewhere on the tour.

Trampolina de La Muerte. The winding road up from Mocoa to the mountain town of Pasto is locally known as La Trampolina de la Muerte. To birders, it's been redubbed Trampolina de las Aves for the sheer diversity and number of species possible on the montane transect. Starting near Mocoa at the foothills, we will travel up through the subtropics and temperate forest to Sibundoy, birding the whole way. This quaint mountain town is one of the most picturesque in the country, and lies at the headwaters of the iconic Putumayo River, which is oft referred to in native lore throughout amazonian Colombia and Ecuador. Like Manu Road in Peru, or the Coroico Road in Bolivia, this route up the mountain deserves international recognition among birders.

The lower and mid elevations forests we'll be birding this morning will hold several species similar to the areas we've been birding thus far, but with an increased chance for some middle-subtropic species including Sickle-winged Guan, Long-tailed Sylph, Greenish Puffleg, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Masked Trogon, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, **Bicolored**, White-bellied and Chestnut-naped Antpittas, White-crowned and Spillman's Tapaculos, Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant, Lemon-browed Flycatcher, Black-collared Jay, Andean Solitaire, Chestnut-bellied Thrush, Chestnut-breasted Euphonia, Yellow-whiskered Bush Tanager, **White-rimmed Brushfinch**, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, and Yellow-throated Tanager.



Bicolored Antpitta by Clayton Burne

We will also have some time to bird higher elevation temperate forests in the Sibundoy vicinity before the evening. While there is more disturbance along the road at this elevation, there is still plenty of forest to enjoy! And the species change quickly once we get up higher, including many

spectacular flock birds. With some luck, we might hit a flock or two containing Mountain Cacique, Powerful Woodpecker, Grey-breasted and Black-billed Mountain Toucans, Hooded, Lacrimose, Buff-breasted and Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers, Slaty and Pale-naped Brushfinches, and more.



Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer by Adam Riley

Paramo Bordoncillo. We will venture back down the road towards Sibundoy, but divert up, very high, into the elfin forests near the Paramo Bordoncillo. Given recent effects of global climate change, this habitat is swiftly disappearing, as temperate forests continue to ascend to higher elevations without quarter given from the scouring winds and blistering cold of the mountaintops. It is a privilege to be able to visit this unique habitat, found only in remnant pockets of the very high Andes.

Bordoncillo is the farthest northern remnant of this habitat, and therefore the northern limit of several species' distribution. It is also one of but three places on Earth to see the critically endangered **Chestnut-bellied Cotinga**! These stunning forests are also home to a good many interesting species such as Andean Guan, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Rufous and Tawny Antpittas, Ocellated, Ash-colored, and Paramo Tapaculos, White-chinned Thistletail, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Crowned and Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Citrine and Black-crested Warblers, Hooded, Masked, Lacrimose, and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers, Golden-crowned Tanager, and the rare Black-backed Bush Tanager, among others. We will have a full morning to enjoy the environment up here, before heading back down to Pasto, for our flights to Bogota.

Endemics Potential: **13 species**
Near Endemics Potential: **46 species**

Tour Grading & Key

Overall Ease		Moderate to difficult. Endemic and target focussed trip. Not suitable for dedicated photographers; inexperienced birders; or anyone with mobility or health challenges. Tour pace is fast.
Birding Ease		Challenging. Several skulkers and low-density targets that require repeated efforts.
Accommodation		Comfortable, some lodgings are simple/basic.
Walking / Trails		Moderate walking, mostly on flat ground with variable substrate. High altitude walking is mostly downhill or kept to short distances.
Vehicles / Roads		Several drives, some long or impacted by heavy city traffic. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas. Mountain passes & eroded dirt roads can be bumpy. Risk of landslides & road closures.
Photography		Reasonable to good. Typical forest lighting difficulties. Several feeders.
Annoyances		Occasional landslide interruptions, small biting insects. Temperatures vary from hot & humid, to cold at altitude. Rain is to be expected.

Financial Arrangements and Important Notes

This tour is made available through our Tailor-made tours department. To explore this offering further for pricing, precise day to day itinerary, inclusions & exclusions, or to tailor the tour to your personal requirements, please contact our Tailor-made team on tailormade@rockjumper.com

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.

- **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.**

- This tour involves some moderate to arduous walking. We will be at high altitude on some days and many days we will be on our feet for most of the day. You should, therefore, be in good health and of reasonable fitness to

undertake this tour. If you have any physical limitations or medical conditions of any sort, please let the Rockjumper office know in advance of the tour.

- We will be birding in some remote areas well away from modern medical facilities.
- The hotels are of comfortable yet sometimes basic standard throughout.
- Transport is by small coach or minibus and the roads are mostly in good condition. However, due to the nature of the topography, there is the possibility of landslides interfering with our trip, though we have minimised this risk by undertaking the tour during the drier season.
- We expect the weather to be mostly dry and often sunny; it can be hot and occasionally humid in the lowlands. At higher elevations, however, it can be quite cold, especially at night. There is likely to be some rain, which can be heavy.
- Our guides are very experienced Neotropical birders who have led many tours to Colombia previously and are fluent Spanish speakers.

Arrival and Departure Details

The tour will begin in Cali on day 1 and, as this is an arrival day you are welcome to arrive at any time. The tour will conclude at Popayán airport in the early evening of day 14.

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. Guillermo León Valencia Airport, Popayán (IATA: PPN) has regular flights to Bogota.

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.