

Itinerary

Day 1 (Sunday, Mar 9) Arrival in Quito

We'll arrive in Quito on international flight and transfer to our comfortable hotel near the airport.

Night in San Jose de Puembo

Day 2 (Monday, Mar 10) Quito to San Isidro

After breakfast we will start our hummingbird tour by driving east and crossing Papallacta Pass at 4200m. We had a Spectacled Bear in this area on our last hummer trip. We may make a couple of roadside stops before having coffee at the very nice Guango Lodge at around 2700m which maintains a beautiful garden with many flowers and feeders for Hummingbirds. Up to 12 species can be seen in one day and this must one of the best places in the world to see Sword-billed Hummingbird. Other special hummers here include Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Tourmaline Sunangel, and Long-tailed Sylph. A walk along the river can produce Torrent Duck and the woodlands along the river are home to some good flocks. Larger birds can include Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Pearled Treerunner, Hooded Mountain-Tanager and Mountain Cacique. The shy Fasciated Tiger-Heron can be found in the rocky rapids along the river. We will then continue onto San Isidro Lodge with a couple of hummingbird stops in the Cosanga Valley where we will look for Greenish Puffleg, Bronzy Inca and Gorgeted Woodstar.

Night at San Isidro

Day 3 (Tuesday, Mar 11) San Isidro to WildSumaco

After spending the morning birding around San Isidro where a whole suite of Foothills specialties will keep us busy. The hummers will mostly be similar to the last stop, but we may add Collared Inca and Fawn-breasted Brilliant. Other birds could include Andean Potoo, Glossy-black Thrush, Cinnamon Flycatcher and the gorgeous Inca race of the Green Jay. If we missed them the day before, we will again look for Torrent Duck, Torrent Tyrannulet and White-capped Dipper along the fast-flowing rivers and then make a stop along the steep road cuts where Cliff Flycatchers can be seen sallying for insects. A new hummingbird spot is near the Cascada Hollin. The most obvious species at the feeders is the uncommon Green-backed Hillstar and Andean Cock-of-the-Rocks sometime nest in the area. It's a short drive to get to the wonderful WildSumaco Lodge, which is even lower and comes with its own suite of hummingbirds. *Night at Wildsumaco Lodge*

Day 4 (Wednesday, Mar 12) Wildsumaco Lodge

Wildsumaco Lodge, located at 1500m is nestled at the base of Sumaco volcano which rises above the Amazon basin. Here in the eastern foothills we find one of the highest diversities of bird species in the world. Some of the species we might see today include Collared Trogon and Lafresnaye's Piculet. Regional specialties we will seek include the near endemic Coppery-chested Jacamar (the Wildsumaco logo), Striolated Puffbird, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Black-billed Treehunter, Lined Antshrike, Blackish Antbird, Short-tailed Antthrush and several species of flycatchers, for example Black-and-white Tody-Tyrant and Yellow-cheeked Becard. Three beautiful Cotingas are possible, namely Scarlet-breasted and Fiery-throated Fruiteater as well as the ever-popular Amazonian Umbrellabird. Other alluring species include Blue-rumped Manakin, Musician Wren, Golden-eyed Flowerpiercer and several flashy tanagers including the spectacular Paradise as well as Orange-eared. Hummingbird feeders usually yield Green Hermit, Many-spotted & Violet-headed Hummingbirds, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Golden-tailed Sapphire,

Napo Sabrewing, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, as well as Lesser Violetear. *Night at Wildsumaco Lodge*

Day 5 (Thursday, Mar 13)

Wildsumaco Lodge to Papallacta

In the morning we will start to head west where we will spend the night just before we cross Papallacta Pass. Depending on what hummingbirds have been seen in the area, we will make several stops on our way to the hotel. In the past we have added the gorgeous Spangled Coquette along the way at verbena blossoms. Our hotel is at the famous Papallacta hot springs so we will get the chance to soothe our bones with a dip in the waters (remember to bring your swimming gear). The grounds are beautifully landscaped and you can even watch hummingbirds from the hot springs!

Night at Termas de Papallacta

Day 6 (Friday, Mar 14)

Papallacta to Tambo Condor

We will spend the morning road-birding the road to Cayambe-Coca National Park. Our target bird this morning will be the high-elevation Viridian Metaltail, but we will also look for any high-elevation flocks. These could include Masked and Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanagers, Black Flowerpiercer and the cute White-chinned Thistletail. We will then continue onto Tambo Condo, which is perched on the cliffs in front of an active Andean Condor roost. It's super impressive when these huge birds soar over our heads at the lodging before continuing onto their cliffs for the night. Giant Hummingbirds and Sparkling Violetears come to the feeders, along with the tiny Tyrian Metaltail. Tonight is our highest night of the tour so we will take it slowly, but the fresh trout for dinner makes it all worthwhile.

Night at Tambo Condor

Day 7 (Saturday, Mar 15)

Tambo Condor to Septimo Paraiso

We will start the morning with a visit to Antisana National Park, with its breathtaking scenery and sweeping vistas. There are several birds we can get more easily here than anywhere else, including Andean Condor, Black-faced (Andean) Ibis, Carunculated Caracara, Andean Lapwing, Black-winged Ground-Dove, Stout-billed and Chestnut-winged Cinclodes, Streak-backed Canastero, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Paramo and Spot-billed Ground-Tyrants, and Paramo Pipit. We'll be able to watch Black-tailed Trainbearers and Giant Hummingbirds at feeders while enjoying a delicious lunch at the Antisana restaurant. A nearby high elevation lake hold Andean Coot, Andean (Ruddy) Duck and Silvery Grebe. After lunch we continue down the west slope maybe stopping at a couple of stops along the way for our first west slope hummingbirds. These could include Violet-tailed Sylph, Purple-throated Woodstar, Andean Emerald and many more. *Night at Septimo Paraiso*

Day 8 (Sunday, Mar 16)

Paz de las Aves

We start at one of the "hottest" new birding sites, Paz de las Aves, which has been written up in ABA's Birding, Neotropical Birding, and many other publications. Here a local farmer and entrepreneur, Angel Paz, has habituated Giant, Yellow-breasted and Moustached Antpittas, as well as Dark-backed Wood-Quails, to come to feed on chopped up earthworms. This has justifiably been the one moment enabling the vast majority of birders visiting South America to see and enjoy these very hard-to-see birds. In addition we'll visit a very active Cock-of-the-Rock lek with up to a dozen extravagant males raucously displaying. Angel Paz's family serves delicious snacks after this birding extravaganza. While eating our snacks we should get to search for Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Toucan Barbet and Velvet-purple Coronet among a dazzling array of many other tanagers and hummingbirds that visit their feeders.

In the afternoon we will plan to go to Milpe. Owned and operated by the Milpe Cloudforest Foundation, this small reserve is fairly reliable for Long-wattled Umbrellabird. Collared Aracari and Choco Toucan are easier to see and with luck and careful observation we can watch and enjoy the bizarre display of the Club-winged Manakin. The hummingbird feeders are always very active with Green-crowned Brilliant, White-necked Jacobin and Crowned Woodnymph being the most common, but many other species occur as well. *Night at Septimo Paraiso*

Day 9 (Monday, Mar 17)

Reserva Amagusa and area hummer feeders

Today we will drive the Masphi Road in search of the elusive Choco Vireo, Indigo Flowerpiercer, and Pacific Tuftedcheek; with a chance of seeing Star-chested Treerunner and Purplish-mantled Tanager. We will also spend time at the tanager and hummingbird feeders at Reserva Amagusa where we can expect Brown Inca, Violet-tailed Sylph, and Purple-bibbed Whitetip, as well as Orange-breasted Fruiteater and Glistening-green Tanager. This new reserve is rapidly becoming one of the best birding sites in the area and, like Angel Paz's Antpitta Reserve, is a classic example of eco-tourism at its finest. *Night at Septimo Paraiso*

Day 10 (Tuesday, Mar 18)

Alambi, San Tadeo and Silanche

Once we get to the west slope we will make stops at the Alambi lodge to look at their tanager and hummingbird feeders for woodstars, Andean Emerald, Booted Racket-tail and search along the river for Torrent Duck. The San Tadeo feeders which can be a riot of hummingbirds and tanagers. The lodge is set in rich forest which can be alive with birds. The hummingbird feeders are alive with Green Thorntails and other east slope hummingbirds. We will spend the late afternoon exploring Silanche Reserve lower down in elevation. Set in a desert of oil-palms, this reserve is very important for mid-elevation species, such as Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Blue-whiskered Tanager and the rare Scarlet-breasted Dacnis. *Night at Septimo Paraiso*

Day 11 (Wednesday, Mar 19)

Yanacocha to Quito

It's an early start this morning for the Yanacocha Reserve (3400m) owned and operated by the non-profit Jocotoco Foundation. This high elevation temperate forest holds many specialties; including the endemic and critically endangered Black-breasted Puffleg, which is extremely rare. We'll spend the morning here looking for birds of these elevations, as well as Andean Guan, several Mountain-Tanagers and brush-finches. Hummingbirds include Great Sapphirewing, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted Puffleg, Mountain Velvetbreast, and Tyrian Metaltail.

We then return to Quito for our late evening flights back to the US or to spend the night to continue our Ecuador adventure.

The day-to-day itinerary may change but we will still do all of our regular scheduled birding stops