ANDEAN ENDEMICs

An outstanding excursion to the best birding sites holding endemics and specialties in the Eastern Andes, Magdalena Valley and Central Andes of Colombia.

Visit paramo ecosystems, cloud forests, lush tropical forests and Andean marshes. Enjoy Antpittas, Tapaculos, Hummingbirds, Tanagers, Mountain Toucans, Antbirds and many more.

This is a 15-day excursion to the Eastern & Central Andes of Colombia, visiting the most renowned sites for Andean endemics, near-endemics and specialties. It starts with a high-quality birding stretch in the Bogota highlands and continues with a close search for Magdalena Valley endemics. Before moving into the Central Andes with huge number of endemics and specialties, the excursion samples the highly specialized avifauna of the Western Andes above the colonial town of Jardín where the threatened Yellow-eared Parrot can be seen.

THE ITINERARY AT A QUICK GLANCE:

Day 1: Arrival in Bogotá.
Day 2: Birding Chingaza National Park and Siecha gravel pits for endemics.
Day 3: La Florida wetland & Enchanted Gardens of San Francisco.
Day 4: Victoria Forest & lowlands of the Magdalena Valley.
Day 5 & 6: Magdalena Valley endemics at Cañón de Río Claro.
Day 7: La Romera Ecopark in Medellín & Cock-of-the-Rock lek in Jardín.
Day 8: Ventanas road & Yellow-eared Parrot reserve in the Western Andes.
Day 10 & 11: Río Blanco nature reserve.
Day 12: Los Nevados National Park & hummingbirds at Recinto del Pensamiento nearby Manizales.
Day 13: Cameguadua marsh.
Day 14 & 15: Otún-Quimbaya Wildlife Sanctuary (& flight back to Bogotá for connections back home - or flight to Santa Marta if taking the Santa Marta Mountains & La Guajira extension).

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DETAILED ITINERARY:

Day 1: Arrival in Bogotá.

We will pick you up at the El Dorado airport in Bogotá and drive to the hotel for a welcoming dinner and an overview of the sites, birds & logistics.

Day 2: Birding Chingaza National Park and Guasca gravel pits for endemics.

Early morning departure for Chingaza National Park driving through the town of La Calera. We will bird along the gravel road that crosses the park, stopping at different altitudes in search of the many endemics & specialties of this wonderful park.

This is an excellent opportunity for high-altitude hummingbirds such as the near-endemics Blue-throated Starfrontlet (Coeligena helianthea), Coppery-bellied Puffleg (Eriocnemis cupreovenetris), Golden-breasted Puffleg (Eriocnemis mosquera), Bronze-tailed Thornbill (Chalcostigma heteropogon) and gorgeous Bearded Helmetcrest (Oxypogon guerini). Also, for the beautiful Glowing Puffleg (Eriocnemis vestitus), Black-tailed Trainbearer (Lesbia victoriae), Great Saphirewing (Pterophanes cyanopterus) and Tyrian Metaltail (Metallura tyrianthina), among others.

Golden-breasted Puffleg (Eriocnemis mosquera), a high-altitude hummingbird that can be seen in Chingaza & Los Nevados National Park in this tour.

We will stop at an abandoned mine where there is good opportunity to see the near-endemic Rufous-browed Conebill (Conirostrum rufum) and the rather uncommon Black-headed Hemispingus (Hemispingus verticalis) as members of mixed flocks that can also hold the gorgeous Plushcap (Catamblyrhynchus diadema), Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager (Dusius taeniatus), Hooded Mountain-Tanager (Buthraupis montana), Black-crested Warbler (Basileuterus nigrocristatus), Pale-naped Brush-Finch (Atlapetes pallidimucha), Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager.
(Anisognathus igniventris), Glossy & Masked Flowerpiercer (Diglossa lafresnayii, D. cyanea), among many others.

High in our target list for today will be the endemic Matorral Tapulo (also known as Pale-bellied or Rufous-bellied Tapaculo (Scytalopus griseicollis) and the endemic Silver-throated Spinetail (Synallaxis subpudica). We will pay close attention for the endemic & endangered Brown-breasted Parakeet (also known as Flame-winged Parakeet, (Pyrrhura calliptera) and the rare Black-chested Mountain Tanager (Buthraupis eximia).

After lunch we will head back into the paved road that will take us to the well-known Siecha (Guasca) gravel pits in search of the endemic Bogotá Rail (Rallus semiplumbeus), the rare Noble Snipe (Gallinago nobilita) and the rather local Spot-flanked Gallinule (Gallinula melanops). There is a good chance of encountering a number of waterfowl including the Merida (Andean) Teal (Anas andium altipetens) restricted to the Eastern Andes of Colombia and highlands of north-western Venezuela, Ruddy Duck (Oxyura jamaicensis) and Masked Duck (Oxyura dominica).
Noble Snipe (*Gallinago nobilis*) can be seen at the Siecha gravel pits. This is a shy bird, more easily seen when flushed by walking along the wetlands.

**Day 3: La Florida wetland & Enchanted Gardens of San Francisco.**

Early morning departure for La Florida wetland not far away from El Dorado Airport. A conservation effort by the Bogotá District is underway, aimed at the protection of what is considered by some the most important wetland within the city. Trails and observation decks have been established for birders, and we will take advantage of these new facilities in order to see and enjoy the endemic Apolinar’s Marsh-Wren (*Cistothorus apolinari*), having a second chance for the endemic Bogotá Rail and endemic Silver-throated Spinetail, the near-endemic Rufous-browed Conebill and the local Spot-flanked Gallinule, and a first chance for the rare Subtropical Doradito (*Pseudocolopteryx acutipennis*), a small flycatcher attached to the reedbeds of Andean wetlands. Yellow-hooded Blackbirds (*Chrysomus ictericeps*) and Andean Siskins (*Carduelis spinicaudus*) can be seen along the marsh reeds and forest edges.
Apolinar's Marsh-Wren (*Cistothorus apolinari*), an endemic species restricted to wetlands in the high plateau of the Eastern Andes of Colombia.

After enjoying the waterfowl and riparian species of La Florida wetland, we will head west dropping into the Magdalena Valley. Our second birding site of the day will be the famous Enchanted Gardens, a small but very dynamic hummingbird feeding station at the outskirts of the little town of San Francisco. More than 20 species of hummingbirds have been recorded here, among them the endemic Indigo-capped Hummingbird (*Amazilia cyanifrons*), the rare Gorgeted Woodstar (*Chaetocercus heliodor*) and Lazuline Sabrewing (*Campylopterus falcatus*). This is a perfect place to see well the Black-throated Mango (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*), White-vented Plumeleteer (*Chalybura buffoni*), Sparkling Violetear (*Colibri coruscans*), Green Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*), the rare Brown Violetear (*Colibri delphinae*), Violet-crowned Woodnymph (*Thalurania colombica*), White bellied Woodstar (*Chaetocercus mulsant*), Green Hermit (*Phaethornis guy*), Steely-vented Hummingbird (*Amazilia saucerrottei*) and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*), among others. Hummingbirds are somewhat seasonal and erratic in their movements along altitudinal gradients in the Andes and there is always room for surprises!

After lunch we will head further west, crossing the Magdalena River at the town of Honda and heading northwest into the small town of Victoria.
Endemic **Indigo-capped Hummingbird** (*Amazilia cyanifrons*), photographed at the Enchanted Gardens of San Francisco.

**Day 4: Victoria Forest & lowlands of the Magdalena Valley.**

The entire morning will be devoted to the small but incredibly bird-rich forest of Victoria in the foothills of the Eastern slope of the Central Andes looking into the Magdalena Valley. Among the many species that have found shelter in this watershed protected by the municipality are the endemics Sooty-Ant Tanager (*Habia gutturalis*), White-mantled Barbet (*Capito hypoleucus* - VU), Beautiful Woodpecker (*Melanerpes pulcher*), Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant (*Phylloscartes lanyoni*) and Velvet-fronted Euphonia (*Euphonia conciana*).

The endemic & vulnerable Colombian Chachalaca (*Ortalis colombiana*) and the near-endemic Bar-crested Antshrike (*Thamnophilus multistriatus*) are also possible in Victoria, along with a nice and rich set of manakins, including the Striped (*Machaeropterus regulus*), White-bibbed (*Corapipo leucorrhoa*), White-bearded (*Manacus manacus*) and Golden-headed Manakin (*Pipra erythrocephala*).

We will surely look for the special Tody Motmot (*Hylomanes momotula*), the Dull-mantled Antbird (*Myrmeciza laemosticta*) and a plural number of species that thrive in the tropical humid forests of the Magdalena Valley such as the Collared Aracari (*Pteroglossus torquatus*), Swallow Tanager (*Tersina viridis*) and the strikingly beautiful Black-faced Dacnis (*Dacnis lineata egregia*, also known as Yellow-tufted Dacnis), among many others.

In the afternoon we will head further north through the Magdalena Valley into the Cañón de Río Claro area. Time-dependent, we will drive into rice fields and swamp areas where the Northern Screamer (*Chauna chavarria* – NE & NT) might be found.
Left: Endemic White-mantled Barbet (*Capito hypoleucus* - VU) at La Victoria forest.

Right: Northern Screamer (*Chauna chavarria* – NE & NT) at lowlands of the Magdalena Valley.

Endemic Sooty-Ant Tanager (*Habia guturalis*), restricted to the Magdalena Valley. Can be seen in Victoria forest and Río Claro on this tour.
Day 5 & 6: Magdalena Valley endemics at Cañón de Río Claro.

These two days will see us birding gallery forests and small fragments at the Cañón de Río Claro, a gorgeous private nature reserve opened to visitors.

This will be our second chance for the elusive Antioquia Bristle Tyrant (E), White-mantled Barbet (E) and Sooty Ant-Tanager (E). The endemic Beautiful Woodpecker is also possible here, as well as the uncommon Saffron-headed Parrot (Pyrilia pyrilia – NE & NT). On the afternoon of our first day here we will hike to the “Cueva de los Guácharos” to enjoy an amazing colony of Oilbirds (Steatornis caripensis).

Many specialties can be seen in the Río Claro trails, including the beautiful Channel-billed Toucan (Ramphastus vitellinus citreolaemus, also known as the Citron-throated Toucan), the rather uncommon Blue Cotinga (Cotinga nattereri), the rare Brownish Twistwing (Cnipodectes subbrunneus), Long-tailed Woodcreeper (Deconychura longicauda) and the uncommon Olivaceous Flatbill (Rhynchocyclus olivaceus).

Broad-billed Motmot (Electron platyrhynchum) and Rufous Motmot (Barryphengus morrisi) are present, as well as the nice Cinnamon Woodpecker (Celeus loricatus), Blue-chested Hummingbird (Amazilia amabilis), Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher (Todirostrum nigricaps), Dusky-faced Tanager (Mitrospingus cassinii) and Lemon-rumped Tanager (Ramphocelus flammigerus icteronotus).

Forests here are good for Antbirds, among them the Chestnut-backed (Myrmeciza exsul), Dull-mantled (Myrmeciza laemosticta) and Bicolored Antbird (Gymnopithys bicolor).

The place is also good for spotting a King Vulture (Sarcoramphus papa) hovering above our heads and the nice Fasciated Tiger-Heron (Tigrisoma fasciatum) standing on a river boulder. Also, the Fasciated Antshrike (Cymbilaimus lineatus), Orange-billed Sparrow (Arremon aurantirostris) and Chestnut-headed Oropendola (Psarocolius wagleri), among many other species.

On the afternoon of day 6 we will drive to Medellín, birding one or two spots along the road.

Day 7: La Romera Ecopark in Medellín & Cock-of-the-Rock lek in Jardín.

After early breakfast at our hotel in Medellín, we will drive shortly to La Romera Ecopark in the municipality of Sabaneta. This park protects native forests in the hills of suburban Medellín, with nice specialties.

This will be our best chance for the astonishing Red-bellied Grackle (Hypopyrrhus pyrohypogaster – E & EN), one of Colombia’s most glorious endemics. Also, for the endemic Stiles’s Tapaculo (Scytalopus stilesi) and the rare & difficult to see Yellow-headed Manakin (Xenopipo flavicapilla – NE & VU).
The endemic & endangered Red-bellied Grackle (*Hypopyrrhus pyrohypogaster*) can be seen in La Romera Ecopark and lower altitudes at Jardín during this tour.

The forest here is also good for more common and nice species such as the Red-headed Barbet (*Eubucco bourcierii*), Rufous-naped Greenlet (*Hylophilus semibrunneus*), Western Emerald (*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchum*), Sickle-winged Guan (*Chamaepetes goudoti*) and the endemic Colombian Chachalaca (*Ortalis colombiana*), among many others.

After birding La Romera we will head towards the colonial town of Jardín in the Western Andes, crossing the Cauca river and taking a good lunch in a typical restaurant along the road. This afternoon we will visit a lek of Andean Cock-of-the-Rock (*Rupicola peruviana*) a few blocks away from town.
Day 8: Road to Ventanas & Yellow-eared Parrot reserve in the Western Andes.

Full-day birding the cloud forests along the road to Ventanas pass in the ridge of the Western Andes where ProAves has set the reserve for the protection of the critically endangered Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis* – E & CR), a near-endemic species that used to have populations in northern Ecuador, sadly now extinct in that country. We will drive our 4x4s early in the morning and up the mountain into the pass, since this high site is the best place to see the parrots commuting from their roosting sites to their feeding territories.

Many good birds are possible along the Ventanas road. Among them, the rare Munchique Woodwren (*Henicorrhina neglectii* – E & CR) that occurs locally on spots with landslides. Recently, the Dusky Starfrontlet (*Coeligena orina* – E & CR) has been spotted along the pass, and we will certainly pay good attention for a chance to see this very rare and local hummingbird.

Walking along the road we will have our chances to see and enjoy the astonishing Tanager Finch (*Oreothraupis arenosopus* – NE), the gorgeous Purplish-mantled Tanager (*Iridosornis porphyrocephalus* – NE & NT) and the beautiful Golden-crowned Tanager (*Iridosornis rufivertex*). Also, the elusive Ocelated Tapaculo (*Acropternis orthonyx*) and the uncommon Chestnut-crested Cotinga (*Ampelion rufaxilla*).

We will have our chances on very nice birds such as the Black-billed Mountain Toucan (*Andigena nigrirostris*), Citrine Warbler (*Basileuterus luteoviridis richardsonii*), Rufous-headed Pigmy-Tyrant (*Pseudotriccus ruficeps*), Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant (*Ochthoeca diadema*) and Golden-fronted Whitestart (*Myioborus ornatus* – NE). On the lower sections of the road we will have a second chance for the amazing Red-bellied Grackle (*Hypopyrrhus pyrohypogaster* – E & EN).

Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis* – E & CR) feeding on fruits of Drago (*Croton magdalensis*, Euphorbiaceae) along the road to Ventanas in Jardin.
Beautiful Purple-mantled Tanager (*Iridosornis porphyrocephalus*), a near-endemic and near-threatened species photographed on the road to Ventanas in Jardín.

**Day 9: Morro Amarillo in Jardín & Los Alcázares Ecopark in Manizales.**

Before moving to Manizales in the western slope of the Central Andes, we will visit the birdy Morro Amarillo, a small mountain that oversees the town of Jardín. Here, we will look for species such as the endemic Parker’s Antbird (*Cercomacra parkeri*), Moustached Puffbird (*Malacoptila mystacalis*), Whiskered Wren (*Thryothorus mystacalis*), Slate-colored Seedeater (*Sporophila schistacea*) and the endemic Colombian Chachalaca. The local road amidst coffee farms and plantations facilitates birding, and we will surely encounter a wide array of birds such as the Scarlet-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga wagleri*), Red-headed Barbet (*Eubucco bourcierii*), White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*), Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*), Olivaceous Picket (*Picumnus olivaceus*), Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Colaptes rubiginosus*), Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*), Red-faced Spinetail (*Cranioleuca erythropus*), Slaty-capped Flycatcher (*Leptopogon superciliaris*) and White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*).

Among the tanagers we may enjoy the beautiful Blue-necked Tanager (*Tangara cyanicollis*), Black-capped Tanager (*Tangara heinei*), Saffron-crowned Tanager (*Tangara xanthocephala*), Flame-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus flammigerus flammigerus*) and White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus rufus*). There are good chances for species such as Black-winged Saltator (*Saltator atricapillus*), Orange-bellied Euphonia (*Euphonia xanthogaster*), Yellow-bellied Siskin (*Spinus xanthogaster*), Yellow-backed Oriole (*Icterus chrysater*), White-naped Brush-Finch – also known as Yellow-throated Brush-Finch (*Atlapetes albinucha gutturalis*) and Russet-backed Oropendolas (*Psarocolius angustifrons*).
The splendorous male **Flame-rumped Tanager** (*Ramphocelus flammigerus flammigerus*) will be seen and enjoyed in several localities along the tour.

Late morning we will head towards the mountain city of Manizales in the Central Andes, stopping for lunch on a good road restaurant. We will plan to arrive at Manizales on midafternoon, with enough light to bird Los Alcázares Ecopark in the outskirts of the city, where we will aim for the endemic Greyish Piculet (*Picumnus granadensis*), near-endemic Bar-crested Antshrike (*Thamnophilus multistriatus*) and Flame-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus flammigerus flammigerus*). Moustached Puffbird (*Malacoptila mystacalis*) is also possible here, albeit more difficult.

After birding Los Alcázares Eco-park, we will head towards Rio Blanco nature reserve, arriving there late afternoon or early night for a good dinner and rest.

The endemic **Greyish Piculet** (*Picumnus granadensis*) is a real jewel for its minute size.

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Day 10 & 11: Río Blanco nature reserve.

We will have two-full days to bird Río Blanco nature reserve, an extremely bird-rich area protected by the city’s water supply company and Fundegar, a local environmental NGO.

After an early breakfast we will visit several Antpitta feeding stations, where earthworms are being offered to these graceful and seldom seen birds. The main figures here are the endemic and endangered Brown-banded Antpitta (*Grallaria milleri*) and the near-endemic and vulnerable Bicolored Antpitta (*Grallaria rufocinerea*). We will also enjoy close and calm views of the beautiful Chestnut-crowned Antpitta (*Grallaria rufocinerea*), Stripe-headed Brush-Finch (*Arremon torquatus*) and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Arremon bruneinucha*), graceful birds that have learned to take advantage of the Brown-banded Antpitta popularity. More rarely, we may get a glimpse at the very shy Slate-crowned Antpitta (*Grallaricula nana*) or the Chestnut-naped Antpitta (*Grallaria mucialis*).

We will then stroll around the local road and trails, looking for a close encounter with rich mixed flocks, having a pretty good chance to enjoy beautiful and special birds such as the Crimson-mantled (*Colaptes rivolii*), Yellow-vented (*Veniliornis dignus*) and Bar-bellied (*Veniliornis nigriceps*) Woodpeckers, Black-banded (*Dendrocolaptes picumnus*), Tyrannine (*Dendrocincla tyrannina*) and Montane (*Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*) Woodcreepers.

Tanagers accompanying mixed flocks will likely include the Blue-capped (*Thraupis cyanocephala*), Beryl-spangled (*Tangara nigroviridis*), Golden (*Tangara arthus*), Black-capped (*Tangara heinei*), Blue-and-Black (*Tangara vassorii*), Beryl-spangled (*Tangara nigroviridis*) and Grass-green Tanagers (*Chlorornis riefferii*). Mixed flocks will also hold a wide array of Hemispingus species, including the Black-capped (*Hemispingus atropileus*), Superciliaried (*H. superciliaris*), Oleaginous (*H. frontalis*) and Black-eared Hemispingus (*H. melanotis*). Furthermore, we may spot an assembly of beautiful Mountain-Tanagers, including the elegant Buff-breasted

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(Dubusia taeniata), Hooded (Buthraupis montana), Blue-winged (Anisognathus somptuosus) and Lachrymose (Anisognathus lacrymosus) Mountain-Tanagers.

The Plushcap (Catamblyrinchus diadema), a jewel of nature, may also be seen following mixed flocks.

Nice flycatchers that can be seen include the Black-capped Tyrannulet (Phyllomyias nigrocapillus), White-throated Tyrannulet (Mecocerculus leucophrys), Streak-necked Flycatcher (Mionectes striaticollis), Rufous-breasted Flycatcher (Leptopogon rufipectus), Cinnamon Flycatcher (Pyrrhomyias cinnamoncea), Pale-edged Flycatcher (Myiarchus cephalotes) and the very elegant Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant (Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris), among many others.

Among the Cotingas we may see the Green-and-black Fruiteater (Pipreola riefferii) and Dusky Piha (Lipaugus fuscocinereus), and we will hear - or luckily see - a handful of Tapaculo species confined to dense thickets, mainly the Blackish (Scytalopus latrans), Spellman’s (Scytalopus spillmanni) and Ash-coloured (Myiornis senilis) Tapaculos.

Surely, we will invest special efforts for obtaining a good view of the astonishing Ocellated Tapaculo (Acropternis orthonyx) and much appreciated skulkers – the most amazing Flammulated Treehunter (Thripadectes flammulatus), the graceful Long-tailed Antbird (Drymophila caudata) and the always beautiful Rufous Spinetail (Synallaxis unirufa). More abundant skulkers include the Sepia-Brown (Sharpe’s) Wren (Cinnycerthia olivascens) and the Rufous Wren (Cinnycerthia unirufa). And we will look for the very graceful Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher (Poecilotriccus ruficeps) among bamboo tangles, in close proximity perhaps with the Slaty Brush-Finch (Atlapetes schistaceus), Montane Foliage-Gleaner (Anabacerthia striaticollis), Mountain Wren (Troglodytes solstitialis) and Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (Henicorhina leucophrys).

Left: The furtive Ocellated Tapaculo (Acropternis orthonyx). Right: Flammulated Treehunter (Thripadectes flammulatus), one of the many skulkers attached to bamboo stands in Río Blanco (Manizales).
Lunch will be at the “hummingbird house”, where more than 23 species of hummingbirds have been reported visiting the feeders. We will most probably see at least 12 of these species, among which are the Tourmaline Sunangel (Heliangels exortis) and Buff-tailed Coronet (Boissonneaua flavescens) - the two most abundant species - White-bellied Woodstar (Chaetocercus mulsant), Fawn-breasted Brilliant (Heliodax rubinoides), Collared and Bronzy Incas (Coeligena torquata, C. coeligena), Long-tailed Sylph (Aglaicercus kingi), Speckled Hummingbird (Adelomyia melanogenys) and the Green and Sparkling Violetear (Colibri thalassinus, C. coruscans). In the garden we will most probably pick up the White-sided Flowerpiercer (Diglossa albifrons) and the gorgeous Masked Flowerpiercer (Diglossa cyanea).

In the afternoon we will search for big Rio Blanco specialties. Our targets include the rare Masked Saltator (Saltator cinctus), Rusty-faced Parrot (Hapalopsittaca amazonina), Golden-plumed Parakeet (Leptosittaca branicki), Black-billed Mountain Toucan (Andigena nigrirostris), Red-hooded Tanager (Piranga rubriceps), White-capped Tanager (Sericossypha albocristata), Black-Collared Jay (Cyanolyca armillata), Slaty Finch (Haplogrisea rustica) and the Andean Guan (Penelope montagnii). With some luck we may be able to see and enjoy the Golden-headed Quetzal (Pharomachrus auriceps).

The amazing White-capped Tanager (Sericossypha albocristata): possible at Jardín, Rio Blanco and Otún-Quimbaya Wildlife Sanctuary, but never too easy to see!

After dinner we will go owling for White-throated Screech-Owl (Megascops albogularis), Rufous-banded Owl (Ciccaba albitarsis) and Andean Pigmy-Owl (Glaucidium jardini). Also possible are the Common Potoo (Nyctibius griseus) and the Band-winged Nightjar (Caprimulgus longirostris).

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Day 11: Río Blanco nature reserve.

This day we will bird Río Blanco again, paying tribute to the outstanding birding that this reserve has to offer.

We expect to become well acquainted with the rich mixed flocks that the tropics has to offer birdwatchers of all tastes, including the Pearled Treerunner (*Margarornis squamiger*), Streaked Tuftedcheek (*Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii*), Barred and White-winged Becards (*Pachyramphus versicolor, P. polychopterus*), Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*), Black-billed Peppershrike (*Cyclarhis nigrirostris*), Montane Woodcreeper (*Leptidocalaptes lacrymiger*), Capped Conebill (*Conirostrum albifrons*), Ashy-throated and Gray-hooded Bush-Tanagers (*Chlorospingus canigularis, Cnemoscopus rubrirostris*), Black-crested and Russet-crowned Warblers (*Basileuterus nigrocristatus, B. coronatus*) and the graceful Golden-fronted Whitestart (*Myioborus ornatus -NE*).

Surely we will not leave Rio Blanco without enjoying special and very beautiful birds such as the Masked Trogon (*Trogon personatus*), Emerald Toucanet (*Aulacorhynchus prasinus*), Mountain Cacique (*Cacicus chrysonotus*), Yellow-billed Cacique (*Amblycercus holosericeus*), Powerful Woodpecker (*Campephilus pollens*), Sickle-winged Guan (*Chamaepetes goudotii*) and the more ubiquitous but always astonishing Highland Motmot (*Momotus aequatorialis*).

Between the months of October and April, Rio Blanco hosts a large number of migrants, including the near-threatened Golden-winged Warbler (*Vermivora chrysoptera*), Blackburnian Warbler (*Dendroica fusca*), American Redstart (*Setophaga ruticilla*), Black-and-white Warbler (*Mniotilta varia*) and the very nice Canada Warbler (*Wilsonia canadensis*). These migrants are often joined by the resident Citrine Warbler (*Basileuterus luteoviridis*) and the Slate-throated Whitestart (*Myioborus miniatus*). After dinner we will have a second chance for owling this amazing cloud-forest.

Beautiful *Pearled Treerunner* (*Margarornis squamiger*): a regular member of the very rich mixed flocks of birds in Río Blanco & Los Nevados National Park.

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Day 12: Los Nevados National Park & hummingbirds at Recinto del Pensamiento nearby Manizales.

Early breakfast in Río Blanco, driving aprox. 1.5 hours up the mountain in the Central Andes, into the páramo ecosystems and elfin forests of Los Nevados National Park. Birding all morning at key points along the road (3,960 meters – equivalent to 12,970 feet - will be our highest reaching point). Lunch will be on the road.

With proper attire for the low temperatures that are characteristic of páramo ecosystems, we will slowly stroll along internal roads hoping to find big specialties such as the endemic Rufous-fronted Parakeet (*Podborhynchus ferrugineifrons*), the very special Black-backed Bush-Tanager (*Urothraupis stolzmanni*), astonishing Golden-crowned Tanager (*Iridosornis rufivertex*) or even soaring Andean Condors (*Vultur gryphus*).

We will be very attentive for special hummingbirds such as the marvelous & near-endemic Bearded Helmetcrest (*Oxypogon guerinii*), the nice Rainbow-bearded Thornbill (*Chalcostigma herrani*), the amazing Purple-backed Thornbill (*Ramphomicron microrhynchum*) and the very rare Black-thighed Puffleg (*Eriocnemis derbyi*) or NE & NT). Other good possibilities are Golden-breasted Puffleg (*Eriocnemis mosquera*), Great Sapphirewing (*Pterophanes cyanopterus*), Shining Sunbean (*Aglaeactis cupripennis*), Tyrian Metaltail (*Metallura tyrianthina*) and Viridian Metaltail (*Metallura williami*).

![Image](https://www.birdingtourscolombia.com)

The very nice **Red-hooded Tanager** (*Piranga rubriceps*), a specialty bird of Andean cloud forests.

At Laguna Negra we will make a short but productive stop for the Andean Teal (*Anas andium*) and Ruddy (Andean) Duck (*Oxyura jamaicensis*). Looking into the sky we may see a Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*). More sporadically, the Noble Snipe (*Gallinago nobilis*), Andean Lapwing (*Vanellus resplendens*) and the Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant (*Muscisaxicola alpina*) are also possible.

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More likely, we will enjoy the Tawny Antpitta (*Grallaria quitensis*) hopping around and the characteristic calls of the Rufous Antpitta (*Grallaria rufula*) which is difficult to see but certainly possible with some patience. The persistent calls of the Paramo Tapaculo (*Scytalopus opacus*) and Glossy Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa lefresnayi*) will surely be noticeable.

Within mixed flocks we will search attentively for the gorgeous Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager (*Anisognathus igniventris*), Red-crested Cotinga (*Ampelion rubrocristatus*), Blue-backed Conebill (*Conirostrum sticcicolor*), Black and Masked Flowerpiercers (*Diglossa humeralis, D. cyanea*) and Pale-naped Brush-Finch (*Atlapetes pallidimucha*).

High altitude Flycatchers at this transect include the Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant (*Ochthoeca fumicolor*), Crowned Chat-Tyrant (*Ochthoeca frontalis*), the White-throated Tyrannulet (*Mecocerculus leucophrys*) and the much less common White-banded Tyrannulet (*Mecocerculus stictopterus*).

Along the road we will search for the Stout-billed Cinclodes (*Cinclodes excelsior*) and Brown-bellied Swallows (*Orochelidon murina*) nesting on cliffs. The Plumbeous Sierra-Finch (*Phrygilus unicolor*), Plain-coloured Seedeater (*Catamenia inornata*) and Andean Siskin (*Carduelis spiniscens*) can usually be seen along road fences and high pastures.

Typical species of páramo ecosystems are the Andean Tit-Spinetail (*Leptasthenura andicola*), Many-striped Canastero (*Asthenes flammulata*), White-chinned Thistletail (*Schizoeaca fuliginosa*) and Sedge (Grass) Wren (*Cistothorus platensis*).

After enjoying the birds and sights of the beautiful mountain, we will drive back to Manizales for a short but productive visit to the hummingbird feeders at El Recinto del Pensamiento. Here, over 16 species of hummingbirds can be enjoyed at very close range, including Andean Emerald (*Amazilia franciae*), Fawn-breasted Brilliant (*Heliodoxa rubinoides*), Collared and Bronzy Incas (*Coeligena torquata, C. coeligena*), Long-tailed Sylph (*Aglaiocercus kingi*), Speckled Hummingbird (*Adelomyia melanogenys*), Steely-vented Hummingbird (*Amazilia saucerrottii*), Blue-tailed (Red-billed) Emerald (*Chlorostilbon mellisugus gibsoni*) and the Green and Sparkling Violetears (*Colibri thalassinus, C. coruscans*), among others.

Late afternoon we will head back to Rio Blanco for a good night sleep, or alternatively will drive to a bed & breakfast coffee farm nearby the town of Chinchiná.

**Day 13: Cameguadua marsh.**

On our way to Otún-Quimbaya Wildlife Sanctuary, we will bird *en-route* the Cameguada marsh, a small but very productive wetland.

Most desired birds at Cameguadua include the endemic Greyish Piculet (*Picumnus granadensis*), Blackish Rail (*Pardirallus nigricans*), the introduced Tricoloured Munia (*Lonchura malaca*), the regionally rare Olive-crowned Yellowthroat (*Geothlypis semilavata*), the awesome Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*), Slate-coloured Seedeater (*Sporophila schistacea*), the near-endemic Bar-crested Antshrike (*Thamnophilus multisstriatus*) and the beautiful Spectacled Parrotlet (*Forpus conspicillatus*).
Male Bar-crested Antshrike (*Thamnophilus multistriatus* - NE): an amazing skulker at semi-open areas, favoring coffee plantations and life-fences in the region.

Other aquatic birds here include the Least Grebe (*Tachybaptus dominicus*), Pied-billed Grebe (*Podilymbus podiceps*), Neotropical Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*), Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*), Striated Heron (*Butorides striata*), Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*), Little Blue Heron (*Egretta caerulea*) and the very abundant Bare-faced (Whispering) Ibis (*Phimosus infuscatus*). The Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*) and the Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*) are also possible, as well as the Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*).

This is a good place for enjoying the beauty of the Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*), Pied Water-Tyrant (*Fluvicola pica*), American Coot (*Fulica americana*), Wattled Jacana (*Jacana jacana*) and Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata*).
The **Blackish Rail** (*Pardirallus nigricans*) is possible at Cameguadua marsh.

**Day 14 & 15: Otún-Quimbaya Wildlife Sanctuary (& flight back to Bogotá for connection to Santa Marta).**

We will have a fool day plus one morning to bird this very special wild-life sanctuary with lush pre-montane forest on smooth terrain.

Among the locally protected species is the endemic Cauca Guan (*Penelope perspicax*) thought to be extinct but rediscovered in 1994. Gladly, the place harbors healthy populations of Red-ruffed Fruterow (*Pyroderus scutatus*) and endemic Chestnut Wood-Quail (*Odontophorus hypsyrhynus*). With some luck we may encounter a mixed group with the endemic Multicolored Tanager (*Chlorochrysa nitidissima*). We will also look for the very rare and hard to see endemic Yellow-headed Manakin (*Xenopipo flavicapilla*), as well as the near-endemic and very special Moustached Antpitta (*Grallaria alleni*).

Nice birds to be looked for include the Golden-headed Quetzal (*Pharomachrus auriceps*), Andean Cock-of-the-rock (*Rupicola peruviana*), Moustached Puffbird (*Malacoptila mystacalis*), White-capped Tanager (*Sericositta albocristata*), endemic Stile’s Tapaculo (*Scutalopus stilesii*), Golden-plumed Parakeet (*Leptosittaca braniickii*), Scarlet-fronted Parakeet (*Aratinga wagleri*) and Scaly-naped Parrot (*Amazona mercenaria*). And among the hummingbirds, the Booted Rackettail (*Ocreatus underwoodii*), Bronzy Inca (*Coeligena coeligena*), Green Hermit (*Phaeothorax guttata*), Tawny-bellied Hermit (*Phaeothorax syrmatophorus*) and Wedge-billed Hummingbird (*Schistes geoffroyi*).
Red-ruffed Fruitcrow (*Pyroderus scutatus*) seen on the road to Otún-Quimbaya Wildlife Sanctuary above Pereira. Here, a healthy population of this very rare species shares the nice forests with the endemic and once thought to be extinct Cauca Guan (*Penelope perspicax*).

More difficult birds to see but possible are the near-threatened Wattled Guan (*Aburria aburri*), the endemic Crested Ant-Tanager (*Habia cristata*) along the ravines, and the rare Rufous-bellied Nighthawk (*Lurocalis rufiventris*) flying on early mornings around the lodge.

We may bump into mixed flocks of birds skulking through the low shrubs and vine tangles, with a variety of Spinetails and Woodcreepers such as the Montane Foliage-gleaner (*Anabacerthia striaticollis*), Streak-capped Treehunter (*Thripadectes virgaticeps*), Strong-billed, Black-banded and Montane Woodcreepers (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirrhynchus, Dendrocolaptes pictunus, Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*).


Our eyes will screen the forest edges for the beautiful Green Jay (*Cyanocorax yncas*), Collared Trogon (*Trogon collaris*) or the Red-headed Barbet (*Eubucco bourcierii*), and ears will be tuned for hearing the distinctive calls of the White-winged Becard (*Pachyramphus polychropterus*) and the much heard but seldom seen Andean Solitaire (*Myadestes ralloides*). More melodious calls will surely come from the Chestnut-breasted Wren (*Cyphorhinus thoracicus*), Chestnut-crowned Antpitta (*Grallaria ruficapilla*), Whiskered Wren (*Thryothorus mystacalis*) and Gray-breasted Wren (*Hemicircus leucophrys*).
Among the aquatic and riparian birds, we will look for the graceful Torrent Duck (*Merganetta armata*), Black-capped Dipper (*Cinclus leucocephalus*), Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquata*), Torrent Tyrannulet (*Serpophaga cinerea*) and Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*).

After lunch (day 15) we will drive to Pereira’s airport in time to take the domestic flight back to Bogotá with connections back home (or the domestic flight to the city of Santa Marta if taking the Santa Marta Mountains & La Guajira extension).

**TOUR SIZE:** Limited to 8 participants.

**TOUR LEADER:** Daniel Uribe or Diana Balcázar (main tour).

**PRICE:**

US $4,950 per person for a group of 2 participants.

US $3,950 per person for a group of 3-4 participants.

US $3,675 per person for a group of 5-8 participants.

Price includes the domestic flight Pereira – Bogotá.

Single supplement costs US $350 per person (covering 8 of the 14 nights; other nights are at lodges with double occupancy).

Price includes ground transportation, lodging, all meals from dinner on day 1 to lunch on final day of the tour, entrance fees to all parks & reserves, daily water intake, guidance and domestic flights.

Price does not include international flights, alcoholic drinks or beverages in addition to those served in meals, laundry and personal expenses.

Price will be sustained for its value in Colombian pesos but not for the US dollars equivalent, due to current instability of the exchange rate.

**BOOKING:** To book a tour, we require a 50% deposit with 60 days in advance. The other 50% should be paid 30 days prior to the first day of the tour.

**PAYMENT:** Payment must be done by wiring money to our bank in Colombia (Bancolombia). An instruction sheet will be emailed with the indications for wiring money. This is an easy and fast procedure.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** If cancellation is made 45 days or more before the tour departure date, we will refund your money minus a cancellation fee of US$500 per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 45 days before tour departure, no refund will be available. Please have in mind that refunding might be affected by changes in foreign currency exchange rates. The client will be solely responsible for any refunding costs or surcharges imposed by banks or money exchange procedures.
PLEASE NOTE: All efforts will be done to comply with the specified itinerary, sites and attractions. However, Birding Tours Colombia reserves the right to introduce variations in the itinerary, services (lodges, restaurants, guides) and sites at short notice, if need arises due to unpredictable events. In all cases, we will preserve attractions and activities as much as possible and special efforts will be done to maintain the same quality and characteristics that have been offered.

Abbreviations used:

E = Endemic
NE = Near Endemic
NT = Near Threatened
VU = Vulnerable
EN = Endangered
CR = Critically Endangered

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