



COLOMBIA IS MAGICAL REALISM

12
DAYS

FOLLOWING THE PATH OF
THE BIRDERS DOCUMENTARY
THE NORTHERN COLOMBIA BIRDING TRAIL
THE SANTA MARTA MOUNTAINS, CARIBBEAN
COAST AND PERIJA MOUNTAINS



Isla Salamanca NP - Minca - El Dorado Lodge - Tayrona NP -
Los Flamencos NP - Perija Mountain Range

January 21 - February 1, 2021
January 21 - February 1, 2022
January 21 - February 1, 2023

Cost: \$3,680 USD Per Person
Minimum of 5 Birders
Maximum of 8 Birders
Double Occupancy
Single Supplement: \$895 USD

TRIP STARTS IN BARRANQUILLA
AND ENDS BOGOTA

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PROCOLOMBIA
EXPORTACIONES TURISMO INVERSIÓN



Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta
Christopher Calonje

Colombia is the birdiest country on earth, with more than 1,950 species (almost 20% of the world's total). There are more species of birds in this country than on any other. It is easy to see why. Colombia is tropical, yet it also has ample elevation changes due to the Andes, furthermore it has both the Pacific and Caribbean coasts. The Andes become complex in Colombia, splitting into three ranges, which increases habitat diversity, as well as rain shadow valleys between the mountains. Colombia also comprises a vast portion of the amazon and the Orinoquia region. Lots of different habitats ensure an abundance of bird species.

The tour begins and ends in the city of Barranquilla, on Colombia's Caribbean coast. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is the highest coastal mountain in the world and one of the most important endemism centers in the world, with 22 species of birds restricted to it. Join us on a search for many of these endemics including Santa Marta Screech-owl, Antpitta, Mountain-tanager, Tapaculo, Foliage-gleaner, Brush-finch, Parakeet, Sabrewing, Bush-tyrant, Seedeater, Warbler, and a plethora more!

This trip will also take us to Isla Salamanca, Tayrona and Los Flamencos National Parks, where birding through mangroves and coastal wetlands, along the ocean and in dry scrub forest should yield species such as the near endemic Buffy Hummingbird, the endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca, Russet-throated Puffbird, the near endemic Chestnut Piculet, Bicolored Conebill, Tocuyo Sparrow, and

Panama Flycatcher among many others.

The last stop on the tour is the Sierra de Perijá, the Holy Grail for birders interested in Colombia's birds. This isolated offshoot of the Eastern Andes forms the border with Venezuela and is one of the least explored areas in Colombia.



White-tailed Trogon
Juan Jose Arango

NUMBER OF DAYS

12 days total, including estimated travel time.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging will consist of a mix of 3-4 star hotels in cities and a top-notch birding lodge in El Doado, and the beach front eco lodge Barlovento, that is touted as one of the best spots to stay in Colombia by the Lonely Planet. There is a river near the lodge at Barlovento, and a pool at the hotel in Barranquilla, so pack your swim wear! The lodge at Perija is more basic but still comfortable. We expect relative comfort, hot showers (except at Barlovento), and excellent local food and provide a nice variety of snacks and purified or bottled drinking water available throughout the trip.



Rufous Antpitta

Juan Jose Arango

White-lored Warbler

Juan Jose Arango





Black-crested Antshrike
Juan Jose Arango

DAY 1

Arrive in Barranquilla

Depending on your arrival time to Barranquilla, an afternoon of birding in search for the endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca is possible near town. This is one of the most attractive Chachalacas in Colombia and possibly all of South America. The dry forests in the outskirts of town will also provide opportunities for species such as the very photogenic Russet-throated Puffbird and the common Brown-throated Parakeet.

Lodging: Hotel Movich

Black-fronted Wood-quail
Juan Jose Arango



DAY 2

Isla Salamanca National Park, Km 4 Wetlands and Drive to Minca

We will rise early and spend the morning birding at Isla Salamanca National Park, 50 minutes from Barranquilla, where we will bird the newly rebuilt walkways through the mangroves in search of Sapphire-throated Hummingbird, Bicolored Cnrebill, the common Brown-throated Parakeet, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher, and Yellow-chinned Spinetail among many others. We will also have time to bird some wetlands in the area in search of Northern Screamer and other specialties. After a morning of birding we will embark on a 2-hour drive to Minca, a quaint little town with nice lodging along the river. Located in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, Minca is a great location to bird for lower elevation species. We will arrive in town and visit some hummingbird feeders for lunch where Rufous-breasted Hermit, Black-throated Mango, Long-billed Starthroat, the near endemic Red-billed Emerald and Violet-crowned Woodnymph can be found. We will also have time to explore the surroundings in search of birds such as Black-backed Antshrike, Scaled Piculet, Swallow Tanager, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Keel-billed Toucan, Masked Tityra, and Whooping Motmot.

Lodging: Hotel Minca



Chestnut-winged Chachalaca

Juan David Ramirez



Northern Screamer

Christopher Calonje

Russet-Throated Puffbird

Juan Jose Arango





White-whiskered Spinetail

Juan Jose Arango

Blue-naped Cholophonia

Juan Jose Arango



DAY 3

Minca to El Dorado Lodge

This day will have us birding through a vast altitudinal gradient, birding different elevations along the road to El Dorado Lodge. Birding up the mountain will surely yield a large number of species, including Golden-winged Sparrow, Rosy Thrush-tanager, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, the recently described Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Santa Marta Tapaculo, Black-backed Antshrike, the magnificently colored Blue-naped Chlorophonia, and the attractive Rufous-capped Warbler.

Lodging: El Dorado Lodge

DAY 4

El Dorado Lodge to Cerro Kennedy

We will rise early and head up to higher elevations towards Cerro Kennedy, in search of these endemics: Santa Marta Parakeet, Santa Marta Warbler, Santa Marta Mountain-tanager, Santa Marta Bush-tyrant and Brown-rumped Tapaculo, among many others. We will have a picnic at high elevation with great views of the Sierra Nevada, and bird along the road on our way down, hoping to run into awe inspiring species such as Swallow Tanager, Grove-billed and Santa Marta Toucanet, Black-chested Jay, the endemic White-lored Warbler, Golden-breasted Fruiteater and the near endemic White-tipped quetzal. After dinner we will certainly scout for the endemic and recently described Santa Marta Screech-owl.

Lodging: El Dorado Lodge

El Dorado Lodge

Kike Calvo





White-tailed Starfrontlet

Juan Jose Arango

DAY 5

Birding in the vicinity of El Dorado

After breakfast we will have time to enjoy the well-maintained feeders at the lodge. Hummingbirds that visit the feeders include the endemic White-tailed Starfrontlet, White-vented Plumeteer, and Long-tailed Hermit. The bananas attract the endemic Santa Marta Brush-finch and also the endemic Colombian brush-finch, and the many flowers in the garden attract White-sided and Black Flowerpiercer. We will spend some time trying to see Santa Marta Antpitta, a skulker that will definitely take some work. A day of birding near the lodge will have its rewards, a special treat being the near endemic Black-fronted Woodquail that visit the lodges compost pile in the afternoon.

Lodging: El Dorado Lodge

Santa Marta Warbler

Juan Jose Arango





Santa Marta Brush-finch
Juan Jose Arango

Santa Marta Antpitta
Juan Jose Arango



DAY 6

El Dorado Lodge to Maloka Barlovento near Tayrona National Park

We will spend the day birding the road en route to our beach-side hotel to enjoy the beautiful beaches. We will make stops to catch any birds we missed on the way up. We will spend one night at Maloka Barlovento, an exquisite lodge right on the beach that is touted as one of the best places to stay in Colombia.

Lodging: Barlovento

DAY 7

Tayrona National Park and Tayronaka Nature Reserve

We will have a morning visit to the park, and if all things align for us, the Blue-billed Curassow could show up for us. Otherwise, this is a great place to see some species which we are not as likely to see elsewhere on the trip. One abundant bird that is easiest to see here than anywhere is the stunning Lance-tailed Manakin. Sometimes it can be found with its relative, the White-bearded Manakin. The birds here are varied, from Crane Hawk and Boat-billed Heron to Greater Ani, White-necked Puffbird and Rufous-tailed Jacamars. Blue-headed Parrot is common, and Lineated Woodpeckers are impressive to see as they forage on the large trees.

White-bellied Antbirds belt out their song from the understory, if one is lucky they will even show themselves. The

complex songs of Buff-breasted and Bicolored wrens are heard in the forest, along with the repetitive songs of Scrub Greenlets, nasal sounds of Barred Antshrikes or loud calls of Boat-billed and Streaked flycatchers. It is an active area, full of birds! Crimson-backed Tanagers and the gorgeous Red-legged Honeycreepers give a lot of color to the local flocks. While birding here it is common to see the Cottontop Tamarin, a gorgeous little monkey dwarfed by the less common White-fronted Capuchin.

After lunch, the afternoon is spent at nearby Tayronaka Reserve, searching for any targets we may have missed in the morning and enjoying the pristine waters of the Don Diego River.

Lodging: Barlovento

DAY 8

Los Flamencos National Park and drive to Valledupar

The morning will be spent driving towards Los Flamencos NP, with a stop at a known spot where Double-striped Thick-knee are often seen. Camarones is a town at the west edge of the Guajira desert, where dry forest becomes shorter and sparser and bare dry earth separates the trees from each other. But before you have a mistaken idea of a parched world, Los Flamencos is on the coast and it has shallow waterbodies that fill as the rains come, and evaporate during the dry season. These evaporating ponds concentrate salt, and then brine shrimp bloom which brings in

American Flamingo
Juan Jose Arango



Phoenicopterus ruber - Amer

Lance-tailed Manakin

Juan Jose Arango



White-bearded Manakin

Juan Jose Arango





Buffy Hummingbird

Juan Jose Arango

Barlovento Beach

Christopher Calonje







the namesake bird of the park – American Flamingos! Their numbers vary depending on water levels, but they can be here in the hundreds on a good day. If you have not had enough pink, how about the even brighter Scarlet Ibis? They concentrate here as well, with their very close relatives White Ibis. They are so close in fact that every once in a while a hybrid “Pink Ibis” is seen here. Gulls, terns, and many migratory shorebirds are to be found at Los Flamencos.

Retreating to the forest though, one is quite surprised that a series of very attractive regional specialties are found here. The sole South American offshoot of what is really a North American group, the Vermilion Cardinal can be seen here. Nothing prepares you, even if you have backyard Northern Cardinals, for the striking red of this species, the overdone crest and the very different look to its close relatives from the north. On the ground, a member of a group that is usually very drab and brown, may elicit “wows!” from the crowd – the White-whiskered Spinetail is one heck of a good looking Spinetail.

Pecking in the branches and trilling away is a tiny and colorful woodpecker, the Chestnut Piculet. Sure there are specialties that are more somber in tone, such as the Slender-billed Inezia (Tyrannulet), and White-tipped Inezia. A crowd favorite is the Russet-throated Puffbird (the Bobo or fool bird as the locals call it) who will just sit there, staring back at you as hard as you stare at it. In a crowd of what tend to be relatively greenish or grayish and nondescript birds, the saltators, the uncommon Orinoco Saltator is quite a good looking bird. Don't ask why there are so many good looking birds in this drab desert habitat, just enjoy these wonderful dry forest birds. After lunch we will spend the afternoon headed to the city of Valledupar.

Lodging: Hotel Hampton by Hilton

Vermilion Cardinal
Juan Jose Arango





Green-rumped Parrotlet
Christopher Calonje



Orinoco Saltator
Christopher Calonje



White-fringed Antwren
Christopher Calonje

DAY 9

Valledupar to Perija Reserve

The Sierra de Perijá is like the Holy Grail for birders interested in Colombia's birds. This isolated offshoot of the Eastern Andes forms the border with Venezuela and is one of the least explored areas in Colombia. Much of Colombia suffered from the internal strife that lingered here for decades, and Perijá was a final stronghold. Yet since 2009, the area has been clear of any political problems, and only now are birders beginning to venture to this amazing set of endemic rich mountains. A new birding lodge, ProAves's Chamizero del Perijá Reserve started receiving tourists in May of 2015. It is a small, comfortable lodge surrounded by amazing montane forest.

Currently the Sierra de Perijá is considered to have four endemic species, the Perijá Metaltail, Perijá Thistle-tail, Perijá Sierra-finch and the newly described Perijá Tapaculo. Yet, this is where things get interesting! This area has been out of reach for birders and scientists for decades until now, and even a cursory visit to the area finds that many common species, such as the Rufous Spinetail and the local version of Yellow-breasted Brushfinch are in fact certainly endemic species! And these are the common ones, many

new discoveries await as birders and biologists increase their visits to Perijá. There is a spinetail here that could be a new species, it is little known, and so far a resolution of what it is has not been reached. Talk about exciting. It may not eventually rival Santa Marta in the number of endemics, but it will come close once taxonomy is updated for these birds. This is a unique area, still being discovered, and not only that but it is gorgeous and wonderful to be in.

Lodging: Perija Lodge

DAY 10

Perija

We have an entire day to bird the surrounds of the lodge in search of our targets. The morning views across the valley to the Sierra Nevada are breathtaking. Birds we will seek out include Crested and Golden-headed Quetzal, Barred Fruiteater, Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Plushcap, Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager. A unique looking form of Lachrymose Mountain-Tanager is common in the higher areas, as well as another unique endemic that may one day be a full species, the local form of the Golden-bellied Starfrontlet. Hook-billed Kites are relatively easy to see here, and with luck White-rumped Hawk or

Rufous Spinetail

Christopher Calonje





even Black-and-chestnut Eagle may fly through. The road that reaches the reserve continues into Páramo habitats, where Rufous-breasted Chat-tyrants abound, and Páramo Seedeater may be found as well as many Tyrian Metaltail and fewer of the stunningly purple-tailed, endemic Perijá Metaltail. The ability to move from Montane Forest to Páramo, and then down to foothill subtropical areas will give us more than enough to look at. This area is right on the cusp of discovery, and now is the time to go. Who knows you may be in on a new species! You never know.

Lodging: Perija Reserve Lodge

DAY 11

Perija Reserve to Valledupar and flights to Bogota

We will spend the morning birding down the road towards Valledupar to catch an early afternoon flight to Bogota to prepare for flights home the following day.

Lodging: Hotel Habitel

DAY 12

Depart Bogota

Barred Fruiteater

Juan Jose Arango

TRIP INCLUDES

Bottled Water Throughout the Trip

Snacks Throughout the Trip

Meals From Breakfast on Day 2 to Lunch on Day 11

All Lodging (Double Occupancy)

Internal Flight (Valledupar-Bogota)

Entrances to Parks and Reserves

Full-time professional, bilingual bird guide

Internal Terrestrial Transport From Airport Pickup to

DOES NOT INCLUDE

Tips

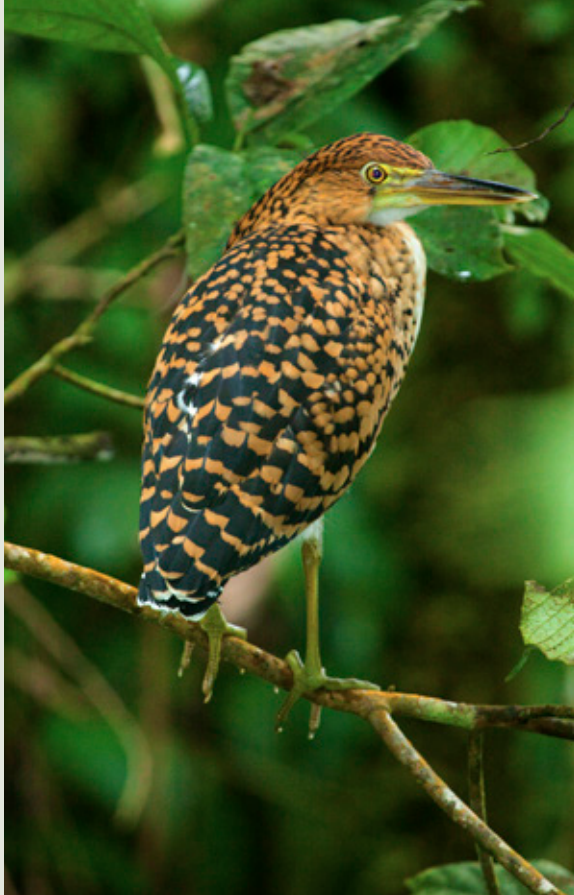
Alcoholic Beverages

Insurance

Airfare to Colombia

Laundry

Whooping Motmot
Christopher Calonje



Fasciated Tiger-heron
Christopher Calonje



Pied Puffbird
Christopher Calonje



White-Tipped Quetzal
Christopher Calonje



Black-crowned Antshrike
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Double Striped Thick-knee
Christopher Calonje



Buff-breasted Mountain-tanager
Juan Jose Arango