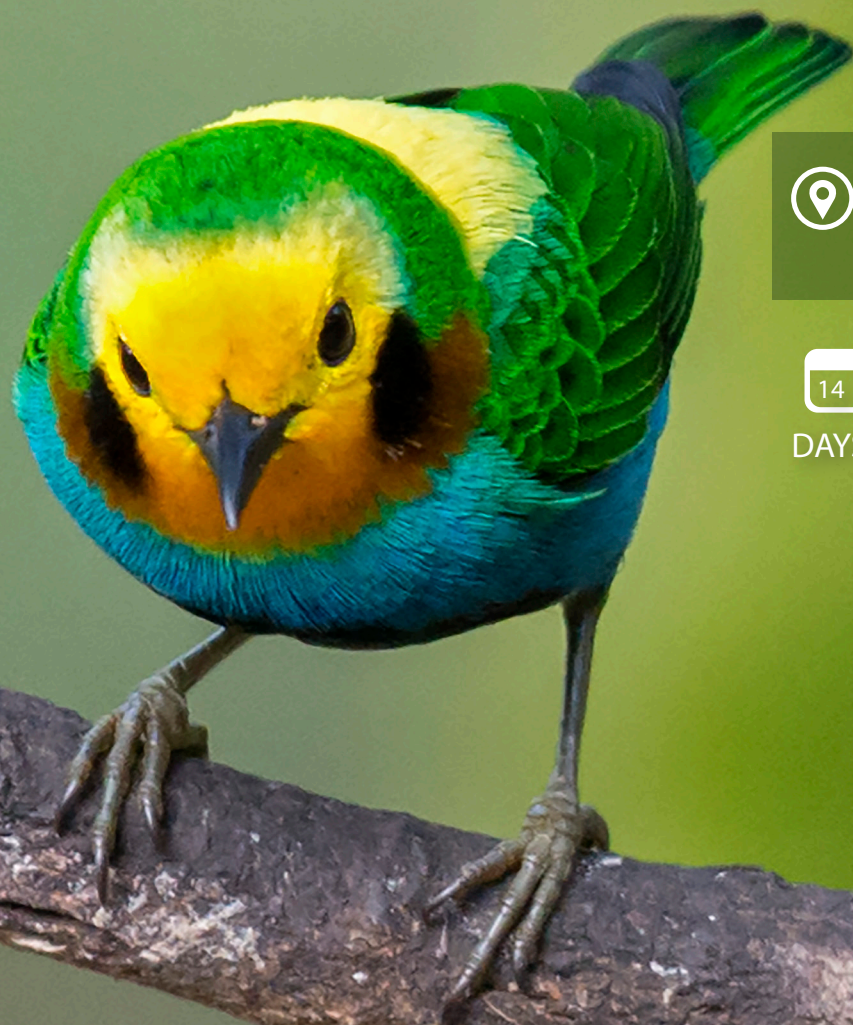




COLOMBIA IS MAGICAL REALISM

ARAUCANA LODGE GRAND OPENING TOUR

WESTERN AND CENTRAL ANDEAN SPECIALTIES



Sonso Lagoon - Rio Blanco Reserve - Los Nevados National Park - Otun Quimbaya - KM 18 - Upper and Lower Anchicaya Valley - Andean Cock-of-the-rock Lek - San Cipriano



DAYS

CHOOSE YOUR
PREFERRED DATES OF
TRAVEL

2 pax: \$5,600 USD Per Person
3 - 4 pax: \$4,600 USD Per Person
5 - 6 pax: \$3,900 USD Per Person
7 - 8 pax: \$3,700 USD Per Person

Double Occupancy
Single Supplement: \$600 USD

TRIP STARTS AND ENDS IN



Anchicaya

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. Lots of different habitats ensure an abundance of bird species. To be exact, 1,930 species (almost 20% of the world's total in 1% of the landmass), with new species still being discovered, and new records being announced often.

This tour celebrates the grand opening of Colombia's newest birding lodge, allowing one to bird in very comfortable accommodations in some of the best birding sites in Colombia, without having to spend much time in a vehicle. The Araucana Lodge is a brand new lodge (opening date is January 2019) designed specifically for birders and nature lovers, with spacious rooms and all the comforts to ensure a good night's rest.

This tour starts at a prolific wetland area in the Cauca Valley in search of an assortment of dry forest species as well as shorebirds and aquatic birds. The Sonso Lagoon is one of Colombia's largest wetland reserves and home to Little and Dwarf Cuckoos, Jet Antbird, Blackish Rail and even the elusive Horned Screamer. With luck one may encounter endemics such as Bar-crested Antshrike, and the endemics Apical Flycatcher and Grayish Piculet.

At the world-renown Rio Blanco Reserve near Manizales, there are excellent chances for some of the antpittas, plus many other cloud forest and montane birds. After more ascending, one can soak in hot springs overlooking the scenic Central Andes, and look for species adapted to high elevations in Los Nevados National Park with the beautiful Nevado del Ruiz as a backdrop. The route then descends to the Otun-Quimbaya Sanctuary in search of the endemic Cauca Guan and for the best views in the world of Red-ruffed Fruitcrow.

We then return to Cali to enjoy the KM 18 and San Antonio Cloud Forest, which provides an excellent history of ornithology in the Colombian Andes. More than 100 years ago, Frank Chapman, of the American Museum of Natural History, spent some time researching the bird diversity of this forest, which concluded in the first detailed bird survey for Colombia. The birding in the area is amazing, with mixed-species flocks of Multicolored, Purplish-mantled, Scrub and Golden-naped Tanagers foraging along side Scaled Fruiteater, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonias and Golden-headed and Crested Quetzal.

Apart from a visit to an active Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek, this tour dips into the humid forests of the Pacific lowlands in the San Cipriano Reserve, where the habitat and the species differ dramatically from those in the Andean Cloud forests.

The next stop is the Anchicaya Valley, in one of the most biodiverse national parks in the planet: Farallones NP. Found along The Old Buenaventura Road, which descends from the western Andes to the Pacific Ocean, the area is one of Colombia's newest destinations to open up to birding, and is AMAZING. The road provides a mind-boggling diversity of birds, and is such that it inspired Steve Hilty to start work on Field Guide to the Birds of Colombia. This was the first ornithological field guide for South America, and inspired a myriad of ornithologists in the continent.

TRIP INCLUDES

- Professional Bilingual Bird Guide
- All Lodging (Double Occupancy)
- Bottled Water Throughout the Trip
- All Meals From Breakfast on Day 1 to Breakfast on Day 15
- Snacks Throughout the Trip
- Entrances to Parks and Reserves
- Local Guides
- Internal Terrestrial Transport From Airport Pickup to Airport Drop-off

DOES NOT INCLUDE

- Tips
- Alcoholic Beverages
- Insurance
- Airfare to Colombia
- Laundry
- Items of Personal Nature

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging will consist of the beautifully preserved colonial hotel Guadajara de Buga, the lovely Arauca Lodge boutique hotel in near KM 18 that is owned and operated by Colombia Birdwatch, a basic lodge in Otun Quimbaya Sanctuary, a comfy new lodge at the Rio BLanco Lodge, and a mountain resort in Los Nevados NP. Our hotel in Los Nevados has natural hot springs, but be advised it is situated at 11,000 feet in elevation. We expect relative comfort, hot showers, and excellent local food and provide a nice variety of snacks and purified or bottled drinking water available throughout the trip.

Jet Antbird
Juan Jose Arango





Sunrise at Sonso Lagoon
Christopher Calonje



Spectacled Parrotlet
Christopher Calonje



Grayish Piculet
Juan Jose Arango

DAY 1

Flights to Cali. Transfer to Buga

A representative will meet you at the airport for your transfer to the hotel (40 minutes)

Lodging: Hotel Guadalajara de Buga

DAY 2

Sonso Lagoon and Drive to Rio Blanco Lodge

We will start early to take a 10-minute drive to this wetland gem. It is one of the only remaining wetlands in the Cauca Valley and is teeming with birds, making it one of Colombia's best wetland birding locations. Here we will search the marshes and lagoons that line the Cauca River for Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling-ducks, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Anhinga, Little Blue, Cocoli, and Striated herons, Snowy Egret, Black-necked Stilt and Snail Kite. We are likely to find Wattled Jacana, which have a polyandry mating system, where females mate with many males within a breeding season. Polyandry is a fascinating adaptation that occurs in less than 1% of birds, and is most common in shorebirds.

Other interesting species we might spot include the endemics Apical Flycatcher and Grayish Piculet, Jet Antbird, Blackish Rail, Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, and Horned Screamer. Along riparian areas we may find Greater Ani, Ringed Kingfisher, Crested and Yellow-headed Caracara, Red-crowned and Spot-breasted Woodpeckers, and Cocoa Woodcreeper. Greater Anis are fascinating because two to four unrelated pairs form a nesting group that build a single nest in which all the females lay their eggs and raise the young communally.



Golden-fronted Whitestart

Juan Jose Arango

Lunch is at the hotel with time to prepare for a 4-hour drive to the the Rio Blanco Lodge near the city of Manizales.

Lodging: Rio Blanco Lodge

DAY 3

Rio Blanco

The Rio Blanco Reserve is owned by Aguas de Manizales, the local water company, and is situated along an altitudinal gradient, therefore including a wide variety of ecosystems. We could possibly observe five antpitta species at feeders located within a short hike from the lodge, including the endemic and endangered Brown-banded, and the elusive Bicolored, Chestnut-crowned, Chestnut-naped, and Slate crowned antpittas. Other feeder visitors seldom seen include Slaty-backed Nightingale Thrush and Stripe-headed Brush-Finch. Additional species observed in Rio Blanco include the uncommon and endangered Rufous-fronted and Golden-plumed Parakeet sand the very rare and sought-after Masked Saltator.

The reserve get boasts many that we may encounter here include Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Golden-fronted Whitestart, Dusky Piha, Lachrymose and Buff-breasted mountain-tanagers, showy Grass-green and White-capped tanagers, Powerful Woodpecker, and the hard to see Ocellated, Blackish, and Spillman's tapaculos. Other less common species that are possible are Long-tailed Black-billed Peppershrike, the handsome Plushcap, Red-hooded Tanager, Mountain Cacique, and the endangered Golden-plumed Parakeet.

Lodging: Rio Blanco Lodge

DAY 4

Rio Blanco and Drive to Los Nevados NP

Today a chance to visit the reserve's several well-maintained hummingbird feeders that attract a great variety of hummingbirds. We hope to see Tourmaline Sunangel, Buff-tailed Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, Bronzy and Collared Incas, Mountain Velvetbreast, the tiny, slow-flying White-bellied Woodstar, and the showy Long-tailed Sylph. In the afternoon we will drive up the mountain to spend two nights at Hotel Termales del Ruiz, at 11,000 feet, where we can relax in its mineral-rich, medicinal hot springs and enjoy scenic views of the central Andes.

Lodging: Hotel Termales del Ruiz

Violet-crowned Woodnymph

Christopher Calonje



Bicolored Antpitta
Christopher Calonje



Bearded Helmetcrest
Christopher Calonje



Brown-banded Antpitta
Juan Jose Arango



Black-backed Bush-tanager
Juan Jose Arango



Rainbow-bearded Thornbill
Juan Jose Arango



Buff-breasted Mountain-tanager
Juan Jose Arango

Many-striped Canstero
Juan Jose Arango



Purple-thorated Woodstar
Juan Jose Arango

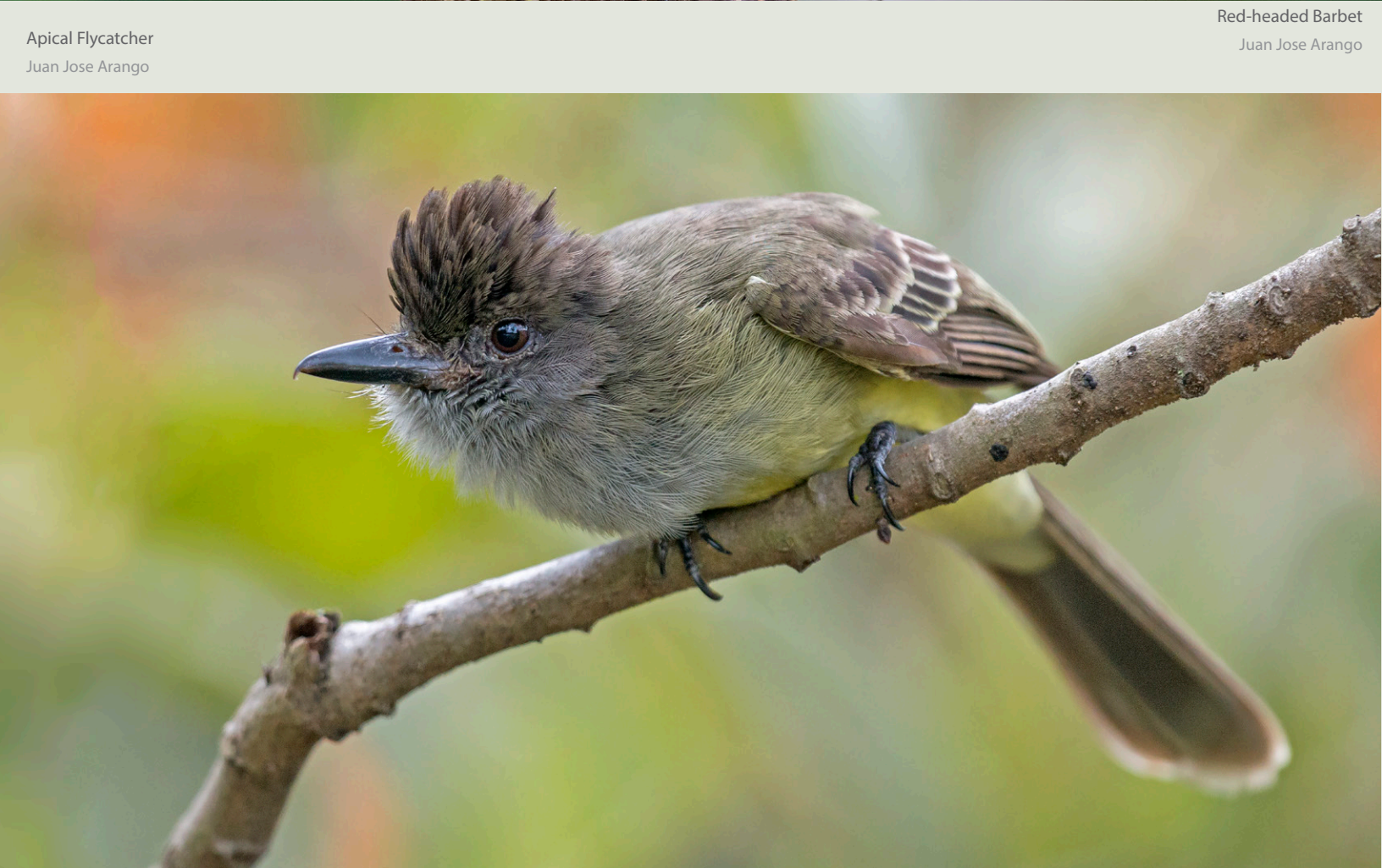


Slaty-backed Chat-tyrant
Juan Jose Arango





Red-headed Barbet
Juan Jose Arango



Apical Flycatcher
Juan Jose Arango



Chestnut-crowned Antpitta
Christopher Calonje



Golden-plumed Parakeet
Christopher Calonje

DAY 5

Los Nevados National Park

We will explore Los Nevados National Park, located on the highest part of the Colombian central Andes. We will wind through patches of forest that open up to Paramo, an ecosystem of tropical grasslands above the treeline, toward the picturesque 5,300-meter (17,400-foot) volcano Nevado del Ruiz. The scenery in Paramo is magical and surreal, with velvety Frailejon plants adding to this effect. Frailejon plants belong to the Espeletia genus and are endemic to Colombia, Venezuela, and Ecuador.

The tour reaches elevations up to 3,950 meters (13,000 feet), so it will be cold. Here the goal is to find species adapted to high elevations like the endemic Buffy Helmetcrest and the near endemic Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, both of which sometimes forage on the ground. Also possible are Viridian Metaltail, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, the beautiful Golden-crowned Tanager, near endemic Black-backed Bush-Tanager, and Glossy Flowerpiercer. We may also find a variety of seedeaters in the Paramo, including Plumbeous Sierra-Finch plus Paramo and Plain-colored seedeaters.

Lodging: Hotel Terales del Ruiz

DAY 6

Los Nevados NP and drive to Otun Quimbaya Lodge

The morning is spent searching for any targets that may have been missed and enjoying the hummingbird feeders at the hotel. There is also a chance to look for the very rare and endangered endemic Rufous-fronted Parakeet along a two-kilometer stretch of road that passes through elfin forest, an ecosystem of dwarfed plants. We also hope to spot the very tame Tawny Antpitta, a common companion in this area.

On the drive down to the Pereira airport the road passes by some interesting spots, including a glacial lake, Laguna Negra, where one may find goodies such as Many-striped Canastero, White-tailed Hawk, the rare Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Andean Tit-Spintail, White-chinned Thistletail, Andean or Ruddy Duck, Andean Teal, Grass or Sedge Wren, and Pale-naped Brush-Finch. After lunch we will head towards the Otun-Quimbaya Reserve, a 2-hour drive. We will drive through the city of Pereira, and wind along the Otun River, finally arriving at the locally run and rustic lodge. The afternoon drive along the Otun River will be devoted to finding the infamous Torrent Duck.

Lodging: Yarumo Blanco Cabins

DAY 7

Otun-Quimbaya Flora and Fauna Sanctuary and drive to Araucana Lodge

We will rise predawn to look for Choco endemic Colombian Screech-Owl, and then continue birding at the Otun-Quimbaya Reserve right at the doorsteps of our hotel. The Otun-Quimbaya Reserve is a flora and fauna sanctuary located on the west slope of the Central Cordillera, and is home to the Wax Palm, the tallest palm in the world and the national tree of Colombia. These palms, unlike most other species of palm, thrive at high altitudes and cool climates found here. We will also be received by the sounds of Howler Monkeys and the endangered, endemic Cauca Guan, once believed to be extinct until rediscovery of a population in 1990.

Otun-Quimbaya is also one of the best places in the world to observe Red-ruffed Fruitcrow. We will search for endemics – Chestnut Wood-Quail, recently described Stiles's Tapaculo – and near endemics, like Moustached Antpitta, the handsome Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, and bright-colored Golden-fronted Whitestart. Other impressive birds we hope to find include Three-striped, Russet-crowned, and Canada Warblers, Masked Trogon, Green Jay, Andean Motmot, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, and Orange-bellied Euphonia. We will also look for Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Chestnut-breasted Wren, Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet, Marble-faced and Variegated bristle-tyrants, and Glossy and Masked Flowerpiercers.

Lodging: Yarumo Blanco Cabins



Hooded Antpitta

Juan Jose Arango



Red-ruffed Fruitcrow

Christopher Calonje



Torrent Duck

Christopher Calonje



Crested Quetzal
Christopher Calonje



Multicolored Tanager
Juan Jose Arango

DAY 8

Otun Quimbaya to Araucana Lodge

The morning is spent looking for any targets we may have missed. After lunch, we head to the exquisite Araucana Lodge, arriving in time to enjoy the feeders and/or trails at the lodge.

Lodging: Hotel La Araucana

DAY 9

KM 18

Today we spend the morning around the famous El 18, located on an 1800-meter (5,900-foot) pass 18 kilometers (11 miles) northwest of Cali along the road that connects Cali with the port city of Buenaventura. Birding can be very productive here, and we will look for four endemics – Chestnut Wood-Quail, Colombian Chachalaca, Grayish Piculet and the spectacular Multicolored Tanager. This area is a tanager paradise, where we have a good chance to see Purplish-mantled, Summer, Beryl-spangles, Flame-rumped, Golden, Metallic-green, Saffron-crowned, and Golden-naped tanagers as well as Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager and Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager.

We hope to be dazzled by an impressive show of hummingbirds at a private house along the same road, including the beautifully ornate Long-tailed Sylph, Booted Rackettail, Blue-headed Sapphire, Green Violetear, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Speckled Hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin. Brown Violetear and Tawny-bellied Hermit. Birding the forest can also produce many near-endemics such as Scrub Tanager, Purple-throated Woodstar, Nariño Tapaculo, Purplish-mantled Tanager and Yellow-headed Manakin.

Here we will may see striking birds such as Green-and-black Fruiteater, Chestnut-breasted and Blue-naped Chlorophonia, the inconspicuous Golden-headed Quetzal, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted and Rusty-winged Barbtails, Streaked Xenops, and the noisy, inquisitive Crimson-rumped Toucanet. We will also listen and search for species with interesting calls and songs, like the hawk-like whistle of the Scaled Fruiteater, warbling song of Black-billed Peppershrike, and beautiful flute-like song of Andean Solitaire. Other species we may find are Chestnut-breasted Wren, Greenish Puffleg, Montane Woodcreeper, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, and the hyperactive Cinnamon Flycatcher.

Lodging: Hotel La Araucana





Saffron-crowned Tanager
Juan Jose Arango

Slaty-capped Shrike-vireo
Juan Jose Arango





DAY 10

San Antonio Forest and Andean Cock-of-the-rock Lek

We will spend the morning birding in the pristine cloud forest of the San Antonio Forest. Here we will may see striking birds such as Green-and-black Fruiteater, Chestnut-breasted and Blue-naped Chlorophonia, the inconspicuous Golden-headed Quetzal, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, Red-faced Spinetail, Spotted and Rusty-winged Barbtails, Streaked Xenops, and the noisy, inquisitive Crimson-rumped Toucanet. We will also listen and search for species with interesting calls and songs, like the hawk-like whistle of the Scaled Fruiteater, warbling song of Black-billed Peppershrike, and beautiful flute-like song of Andean Solitaire. Other species we may find are Chestnut-breasted Wren, Greenish Puffleg, Montane Woodcreeper, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, and the hyperactive Cinnamon Flycatcher.

At 2 pm we will visit an active Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek for some close-up views of this magnificent bird's display. This 25-minute hike will take us down a steep trail to their lek near the river. After the lek we will make our way back to the lodge.

Lodging: Araucana Lodge



Green and Black Fruiteater
Christopher Calonje

Blue-naped Chlorophonia
Christopher Calonje



Crimson-rumped Toucanet
Christopher Calonje



DAY 11

Brujitas in San Cipriano
Christopher Calonje

San Cipriano

After a two drive to Zaragoza and a pleasant 20 minute ride on “brujitas” (motorcycle-powered wooden carts on rails), one arrives in the town of San Cipriano. The area is a protected reserve and is the source of drinking water for the nearby port city of Buenaventura. Located in the Choco Bioregion, it is known for being one of the wettest places on the planet. Some of the birds that are possible include Choco Toucan, Stripe-billed Aracari, Black-tipped Cotinga (NE), Rose-faced (NE) and Blue-headed Parrots, Spot-crowned and Five-colored Barbet (NE), Broad-billed Motmot, Black-chested Puffbird and Purple-throated Fruitcrow. The area is teeming with Antbirds, with chances to see Ocellated, Jet, Stub-tailed and Bicolored Antbirds. We will leave after lunch and drive 2 hours back to the hotel.

Lodging: Araucana Lodge





Toucan Barbet
Juan Jose Arango



Glistening-green Tanager
Juan Jose Arango



Black-chinned Mountain-tanager
Juan Jose Arango

DAY 12

El Descanso Feeders and Anchicaya Watershed

Perhaps Colombia's most famous birding location, the Anchicaya watershed is located along the edge of the Farallones National Park, one of the most diverse parks on the planet. The birding begins just 40 minutes from the hotel via a paved road that can offer many of the Choco endemics that this mega diverse locality has to offer. Our day on the Anchicaya road will allow time to enjoy the upper portion of the road and some very well-maintained feeders at our breakfast spot where Rufous-throated, Glistening-green and Silver-throated Tanagers are known to occur. The road will surely yield many highly prized species Golden-collared Honeycreeper, White-whiskered Puffbird, Uniform Treehunter, Sooty-headed Wren, Green Thorntail and White-tailed Hillstar..

One of the main targets main targets is Toucan Barbet, sporting 5 different colors elegantly while still having a tough demeanor. We will search the skies for Barred Hawk, Ornate Hawk-eagle and Swallow-tailed Kites, whilst keeping an eye out for the attractive Ornate Flycatcher feeding on low branches. Another mega target is the recently described Pisones Tapaculo. The road can be extremely productive as it rarely disappoints.



White-tailed Hillstar
Christopher Calonje



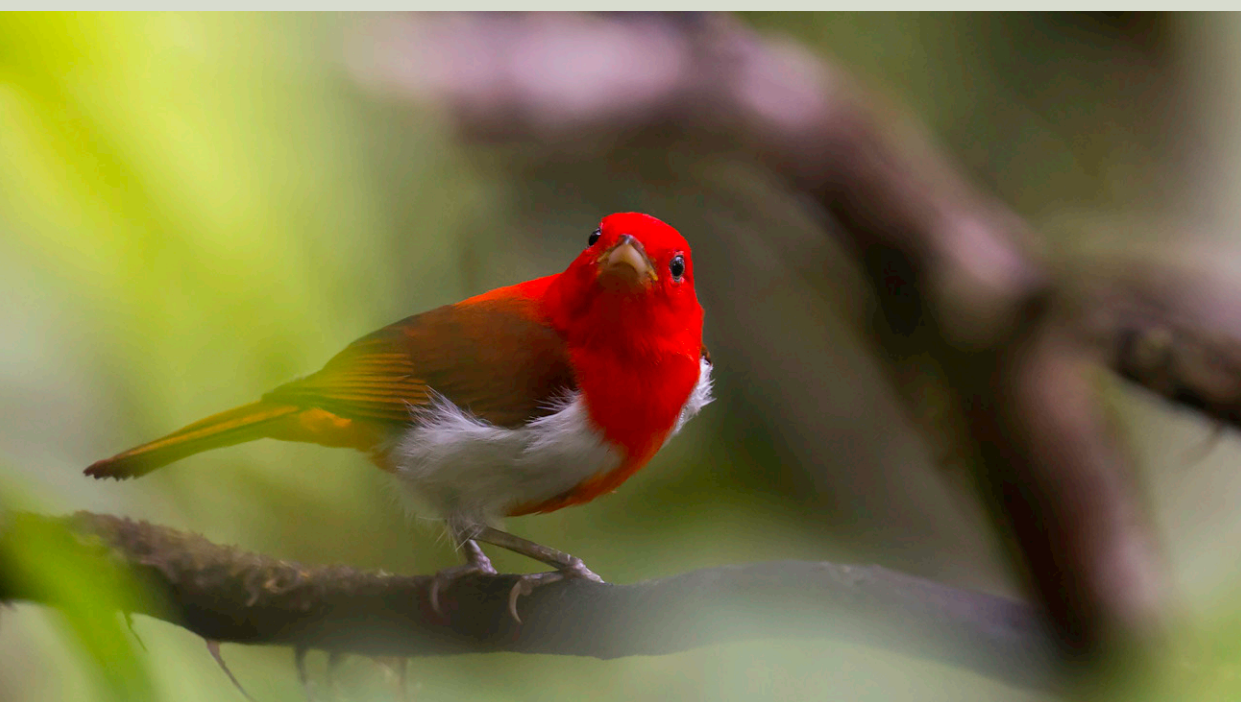
Golden-collared Honeycreeper
Juan Jose Arango



Tooth-billed Hummingbird
Juan Jose Arango



Juan Jose Arango
Orange-breasted Fruiteater



Scarlet-and-white Tanager
Juan Jose Arango

DAY 13

Lower Anchicaya

On this day we bird the same lightly traveled road as the day before, but this time having the opportunity to explore the lower portion of the road after a 2 hour drive from the hotel. The "El Danubio" area is host to many interesting species, including the near endemics Rose-faced Parrot and Black-tipped Cot-tinga, Choco Trogon, Lita Woodpecker and Baudo Guan. The tanagers can be quite a treat, with chances for Scarlet-and-white, Golden-chested, Gray-and-gold, and Scarlet-browed Tanagers among many others. Lunch on the road will provide for a long day of birding, as we seek out other goodies such as Long-tailed Tyrant, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Lanceolated Monklet, Bay Wren, Cinnamon Woodpecker, Collared Aracari and colonies of Russet-backed Oropendolas.

Tawny-crested Tanager
Juan Jose Arango

The area is teeming with many of our friends with the word "ant" in their name, and if we are lucky enough to encounter an ant swarm the action can bring bird such as Stub-tailed, Immaculate, Ocellated, and Bicolored Antbirds as well as Streaked and Pacific Antwren, amongst many others. This last day of birding is sure to provide a lot of specialties which is the perfect way to end a fabulous tour.

Lodging: Araucana Lodge

DAY 14

Depart Cali

Guest will be taken in private transport to airport. For those who wish, we can arrange more birding for you in other regions of Colombia.





Lita Woodpecker
Juan Jose Arango



Golden-chested Tanager
Juan Jose Arango



Scaled Fruiteater
Juan Jose Arango



Swallow-tailed Kite

Juan Jose Arango

Immaculate Antbird

Juan Jose Arango



Gray-and-gold Tanager
Juan Jose Arango



Slaty-capped Shrike-vireo
Juan Jose Arango



Purplish-mantled Tanager
Juan Jose Arango



Rufous-throated Tanager

Juan Jose Arango

About the Trip and Physical Requirements & Pace

Colombia has an incredible amount of diversity in a small space. In this compact itinerary we will visit two different mountain ranges, a low-lying valley and the high altitude paramo ecosystem.

Please note that we will be sleeping at 11,000 feet for 2 nights during our visit to the paramo ecosystem. We will mostly be birding on dirt roads or wide trails with the vehicle nearby in case participants want to take a rest. Please note that roads may be steep and slippery and we may occasionally venture off into small trails that spur off the roads. We suggest that you generally practice carrying your equipment for the amount of time and distances that you may encounter during this trip so you are well prepared!

We will have purified or bottled drinking water available throughout the trip. One should be prepared for early morning birding, as it is important to be out before it becomes too hot. Whenever possible we shall have an early afternoon break, before continuing out in the late afternoon. Also for those interested in mammals and night birds there will be some opportunities for owling and maybe spotlighting for a mammal or two. Most of our meals will be sit-down meals, although field lunches or even a field dinner is likely somewhere along the trip. If you have specific food allergies, please communicate these to us on signing up. Note that the tour starts in Cali and ends in Cali, and requires no internal flights.



White-chinned Thistletail
Christopher Calonje



Manizales

Rio Blanco

Los Nevados NP

Otun - Quimbaya

Pereira

Buga

Sonso Lagoon

Cali

San Cipriano

Anchicaya

km 18

San Antonio Forest

Cock-of-the-rock Lek

Pacific Ocean



Slate-crowned Antpitta
Christopher Calonje



Broad-billed Motmot
Juan Jose Arango

Blue-backed Conebill
Juan Jose Arango



Sword-billed Hummingbird
Juan Jose Arango

Plushcap
Juan Jose Arango



Pale-naped brush finch
Christopher Calonje



Great Sapphirewing
Christopher Calonje





Rainbow-beraded Thornbill

Juan Jose Arango



Chestnut-breasted Wren

Juan Jose Arango



Ruby-topaz Hummingbird

Juan Jose Arango



Bar-crested Antshrike
Juan Jose Arango

Golden-crowned Tanager
Juan Jose Arango





Buff-winged Starfrontlet
Juan Jose Arango



White-capped Tanager
Juan Jose Arango