

Northwest Nevada Bird Alliance



NORTHERN ECUADOR BIRDING TOUR

"AVIAN WONDERS OF THE ANDES"

OCTOBER 1 - 13, 2026

Ecuador is a premier birding destination, thanks to its incredible habitat diversity, ranging from lush cloud forests and tropical rainforests to high-altitude paramo and coastal mangroves. This small but richly biodiverse country offers breathtaking landscapes, including towering Andes mountains, active volcanoes, and serene rivers. Ecuador's vibrant culture and warm, welcoming people add to the experience, providing an enriching journey through their traditions and way of life. With over 1,700 bird species, Ecuador promises unparalleled birdwatching opportunities, making it a must-visit for any nature enthusiast.

NORTHWEST NEVADA BIRD ALLIANCE

welcomes you to our exclusive birding adventure in Ecuador!

This detailed description outlines a custom-designed birding trip crafted to offer unparalleled opportunities for wildlife observation, breathtaking landscapes, and immersive cultural experiences. Ecuador, with its rich biodiversity and stunning natural beauty, is an ideal destination for birding enthusiasts and nature lovers alike.



RUFIOUS-THROATED TANAGER



GRAY-BREASTED MOUNTAIN-TOUCAN

Throughout this journey, we'll visit various regions, each boasting unique habitats, climate, and elevation changes. From the cloud forests of Mindo to the high-altitude reserves of the Andes. Besides the incredible wildlife, you will have the chance to learn about the diverse culture and history of the country, gaining a deeper appreciation for the intricate connections between nature and human life.

Our itinerary includes visits to some of Ecuador's most renowned birding hotspots, such as Zuro-Loma Reserve, Angel Paz Refuge, and Antisana Reserve. These sites are not only celebrated for their avian diversity but also for their conservation efforts and dedication to preserving these precious ecosystems. You will have the opportunity to observe a wide array of bird species, including iconic species like the Andean Cock of the Rock, Antpittas, Andean Condor, and many more.

NNBA NORTHERN ECUADOR BIRDING TOUR

Day 1: Thursday. Oct. 1st / Quito

Arrive at the international airport and transfer to our lodge, which is conveniently located approximately 20 minutes away from Mariscal Sucre International Airport. At an elevation of 7,800 feet, Zaysant Lodge offers an ideal start to our trip.

The gardens themselves are home to a variety of bird species such as the Black-tailed Trainbearer, Sparkling Violetear, and others like Scrub Tanager and Blue-and-yellow Tanager. As we begin our adventure, you will have the chance to explore the gardens and get acquainted with the local avifauna. The lodge offers comfortable accommodations, combining rustic charm with modern amenities to ensure a pleasant stay. Dinner will be served at the lodge, allowing us to gather and discuss the exciting journey ahead. The relaxed and welcoming environment of our lodge sets the tone for the rest of our expedition.

Overnight at Zaysant Lodge - (D)



Days 2-3-4-5: Fri-Mon., Oct. 2-3-4-5 / Mindo

Over the next four days, we'll explore the Mindo area, located on the western slope of the Andes. Mindo is renowned for its rich biodiversity and vibrant birdlife, making it a premier destination for birdwatching. We'll stay at Sachatamia Lodge, situated at an elevation of 5,600 feet, which offers excellent birding opportunities within its own grounds. Some of the main birding locations we'll visit include the following:

Zuroloma Reserve: This high-altitude reserve is known for its extensive cloud forests. It's a perfect spot for observing species like the Sword-billed Hummingbird and White-throated Screech-Owl. The reserve plays a crucial role in conserving the cloud forest ecosystem.

Angel Paz Refuge: Famous for its dedication to bird conservation, this family-run reserve offers the chance to see rare species such as the Andean Cock of the Rock and Antpittas. Angel Paz Refuge is a model of community-based conservation efforts.

Río Silanche: A lowland site known for its tropical bird species, providing a contrast to the highland birding sites. It's part of the Choco bioregion, which is recognized for its high level of endemism.

Mashpi-Amagusa Reserve: This reserve offers a mix of habitats and is home to many endemic and rare bird species, including the Toucan Barbet. The area represents the influence of the Choco biodiversity hotspot.

After each day's excursions, we return to Sachatamia Lodge.

Overnight Guaycapi Lodge & Sachatamia Lodge - (BLD)



NNBA NORTHERN ECUADOR BIRDING TOUR



SWORD-BILLED HUMMINGBIRD

Day 6: Tuesday, Oct. 6th. / Guango

After an early breakfast, we'll head east towards Guango Lodge. Along the way, we'll stop at Cayambe-Coca National Park, located at 14,400 feet along the Papallacta Pass. This high-altitude site offers dramatic Andean landscapes and opportunities to see high-elevation bird species such as Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill. With some extra luck and the help of our extraordinary local guide, we might be able to find the unique Spectacled (Andean) Bear, a rather rare and usually secretive inhabitant of the high Andes. Continue to Guango Lodge, located at an elevation of 9,200 feet, surrounded by lush temperate forest and clear rivers. The lodge is famous for its hummingbird feeders, which attract numerous species such as Sword-billed Hummingbird and in nearby river we have fair chances to spot the Torrent Duck.

Our dinner will be served at the lodge.

Overnight at Guango Lodge. (BLD)

Days 7-8: Wed. - Thu., Oct. 7-8 / Cosanga

Enjoy the beautiful grounds and trails around Guango Lodge, including the crystal-clear Papallacta River, where the rushing waters create a serene and picturesque setting. After lunch, we'll drive to the Cosanga area, arriving at San Isidro Lodge in the late afternoon. Situated at an elevation of 6,200 feet on the eastern side of the Andes, this lodge is renowned for its conservation efforts and sightings of the enigmatic San Isidro Owl, a mysterious owl species that is a hybrid between the Black-banded Owl and Black-and-white Owl. The surrounding forests are also a habitat for the elusive Mountain Tapir, adding to the allure of this unique location. We will spend the next two days birding around the lodge's grounds and vicinity, exploring the lush, biodiverse environments. Among the many bird species in the area, we could highlight the striking White-capped Tanager and the colorful Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager. We will enjoy our meals at the lodge, taking in the tranquil ambiance of the dining hall, and also appreciating the lush and quiet gardens surrounding our cabins, providing a perfect retreat after a day of birding adventures.

Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)

Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*), also known as the Andean Bear, is the only bear species native to South America. Found in the Andes mountains, these bears are known for the distinctive white "spectacle" markings around their eyes.

Papallacta Pass, located northeast of Quito, is one of the prime locations to spot these elusive creatures in their natural habitat. The paramo ecosystem at Papallacta provides a rich food source for these mostly herbivorous bears, including grasses, bushes, and the unique Puya plant.

Conservation efforts are crucial to protect these bears and their habitat, as they play a vital role in seed dispersal and maintaining the health of Andean forests



SPECTACLED BEAR

NNBA NORTHERN ECUADOR BIRDING TOUR

Days 9-10: Fri. - Sat., Oct. 9 - 10 / Sumaco

Depart for Wildsumaco Lodge, making strategic stops for birding along Guacamayos Ridge and Loreto Road. Guacamayos Ridge is renowned for its lush cloud forests and panoramic views, offering sightings of species like the Green-and-black Fruiteater and Black-billed Mountain-Toucan. The ridge forms a critical part of the Andean cloud forest ecosystem and is home to a diverse array of flora and fauna. Along the way, we will learn about the Kichwa indigenous people, who have lived in harmony with these lands for centuries and contribute significantly to the preservation of its rich biodiversity.

Wildsumaco Lodge, nestled at an elevation of 4,900 feet, is within a private reserve dedicated to conservation, aimed at protecting the surrounding forests from deforestation. The lodge provides spectacular birding opportunities with unique species such as the Coppery-chested Jacamar and Wire-crested Thorntail. The private reserve is a beacon of hope in the fight against habitat loss, showcasing effective conservation practices.



COPPERY-CHESTED JACAMAR

Nearby, Sumaco National Park is a biodiversity hotspot, located at the intersection of the Amazonian and Andean ecosystems. The park is dominated by the imposing Sumaco Volcano, an active stratovolcano that rises majestically from the dense rainforest.

The lodge's location in the Amazon-Andes transition zone provides a unique opportunity to experience the incredible variety of life in this region, from the towering Andean peaks to the lush Amazonian lowlands. These diverse habitats support a myriad of species, making it an ideal destination for nature enthusiasts and conservationists.

Overnight at Wildsumaco Lodge. (BLD)

Day 11-12: Sun. - Mon., Oct. 11 - 12 / Puembo

This day we return to Puembo in the Quito area and we'll start the day with a morning walk around the lodges soaking in the diverse birdlife one last time. We will then depart back to Zaysant Lodge, an approximately 4-hour journey. Along the way, we will make several stops to bird and stretch our legs, giving us the chance to spot various species and enjoy the landscapes. Once we arrive at the lodge, we'll settle in and relax, enjoying the serene gardens and preparing for the next day's adventure.

The following day, we will go on a field trip to Antisana Reserve, located at a high elevation of 13,000 feet. This reserve is renowned for its stunning views of the Antisana volcano and its vital role in the conservation of the Andean Condor, one of the largest flying birds in the world, is an iconic symbol of the Andes and plays a crucial role in the ecosystem as a scavenger.

The paramo habitat of Antisana Reserve, characterized by its unique high-altitude grasslands, supports a variety of specialized flora and fauna. The reserve's conservation efforts are essential in protecting this delicate ecosystem and its inhabitants. We will have lunch at Tambo Condor, a community-based project focused on conservation and sustainable tourism. In the evening, we will return to the lodge, where we will conclude our tour with a farewell dinner. This final gathering will allow us to reflect on the incredible journey we have shared, celebrating the many bird species observed and the beautiful landscapes explored.

Overnight at Zaysant Lodge. (BLD)

NNBA NORTHERN ECUADOR BIRDING TOUR

Day 13: Tue. Oct. 13.

Departure transfer to the international airport for returning flights.

ANDEAN CONDOR



PRICE PER PERSON

DOUBLE: \$4700
(10 BIRDERS)

\$5040 (8 BIRDERS)

SINGLE: \$300

DATES: OCTOBER 1 - 13
2026

Included in the program:

- Professional Naturalist & Birding Guide services throughout the program.
- Coach transportation throughout the program
- All meals indicated with B (Breakfast), L (lunch) and D (Dinner)
- All lodging in standard double occupancy (single supplement available at extra cost).
- All entrance fees and excursions.
- Updated Ecuador bird check-list.
- Purified Water.

Not included in the program:

- Airline ticket
- Travel insurance
- Alcoholic beverages
- Personal expenses

This program is rated moderate. Birding follows a slow, steady pace with hilly terrain involved and extended periods of standing, especially at feeder stations. High-elevation field trips reach above 13,500 ft but involve only short walks and are limited to half-day visits. One overnight stay is at 9,000 ft, while the rest of the stays are at elevations below 7,000 ft. On some days, early starts will be necessary (4:30 - 5 am). Travel between locations involves bus rides of 1.5 to 4.5 hours on winding mountain gravel roads, with bathroom stops available; in remote areas, a "nature break" may be necessary. Several field packed lunches are included during the program.

VIOLET-TAILED SYLPH



NNBA NORTHERN ECUADOR BIRDING TOUR



NNBA ECUADOR 2026

-  Zaysant Lodge
-  Guaycapi Birding Lodge
-  Sachatamia Lodge
-  Guango Lodge
-  WildSumaco Lodge
-  San Isidro Lodge

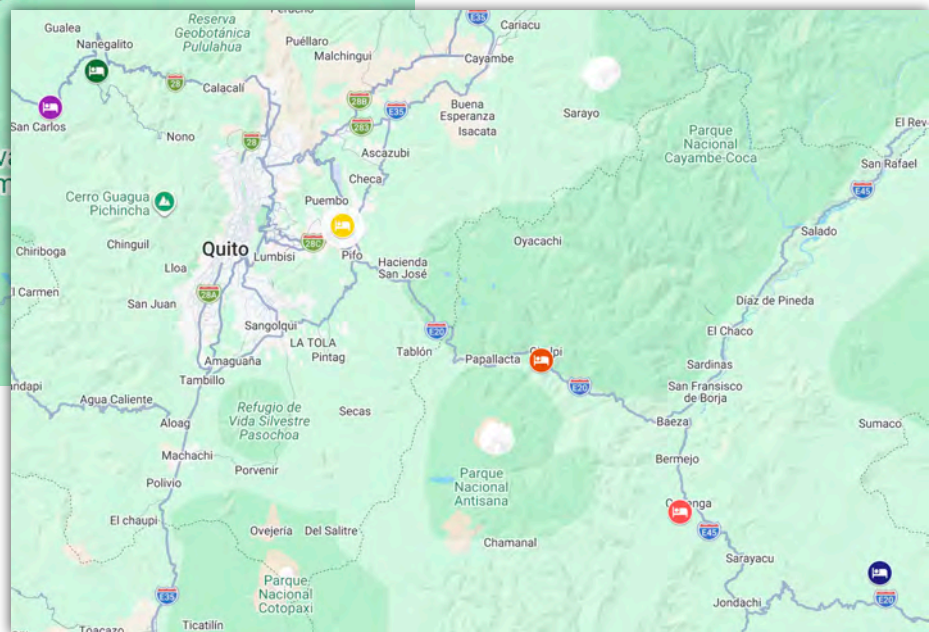


PLATE-BILLED MOUNTAIN-TOUCAN

Northwest
Nevada
Bird Alliance




FLYWAY
BIRDING TOURS
EXPLORE • LEARN • CONNECT

**FOR INFO PLEASE CONTACT
LAUREN WHITENACK**

lauren.whitenack@nevadaaudubon.org