



Black-tailed Trainbearer by Lip Kee Yap

ECUADOR

Birding at the Chocó-Andes Region
with Audubon Society of Western Pennsylvania

March 15 - 23, 2019



Per square mile, Ecuador has the highest biodiversity in the world, including some 1,640 species of birds, many of which are rare and endemic. Discover the amazing contrasts of cloud forest, the Amazon, and Andean landscapes on this 10-day birding adventure. With assistance from an expert guide, encounter a variety of birds, plants, and other wildlife while traversing a selection of Ecuador's 50 different ecosystems. The program begins with a journey to Mindo Loma Private Reserve and its 17 acres of primary and secondary recovering cloud forest. Also experience the Milpe Bird Sanctuary in the Chocó Andean foothills, considered one of the finest sites in all of Ecuador. Along the way, meet a famous Ecuadorian ornithologist, view the snow-capped Antisana Volcano, and straddle the equator at the Middle of the World Monument.

PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS

- Explore diverse habitats at varying elevations at national and private reserves, including Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve, the subtropical rainforest at Milpe Bird Sanctuary, páramo ecosystem at Antisana Ecological Reserve, and more.
- Seek out some of Ecuador's approximately 130 hummingbird species, including the Giant Hummingbird, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, and Glowing Puffleg.
- Identify other target species like the Andean Condor, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Chocó Tanager, and dozens of tanagers.



ANTISANA VOLCANO BY MARCIO RAMALHO

ITINERARY

BLD = BREAKFAST, LUNCH, DINNER

MARCH 15 - QUITO

Upon arrival in Quito, you'll be met by your guide and transferred to the hotel. Check-in time is at 2:00 pm.
Overnight at Rincón de Pueblo.

MARCH 16 - MINDO

Breakfast then program orientation. Afterwards transfer to the Cumbayá Valley to visit the house of the famous Ecuadorian ornithologist Juan Manuel Carrion. Juan Manuel is also a nature artist, actively involved in conservation as executor of communication and environmental education projects. He is a pioneer in publishing illustrated books on birds of Ecuador and has been recognized as "the painter of the birds of Ecuador." Enjoy a mid-morning snack while visiting his gardens and workshop to see local birds and admire his wonderful artwork. Continue your adventure toward Mindo by La Mitad del Mundo Road. Enjoy lunch on-site and visit the Middle of the World Monument. Then continue to Mindo with a stop at Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve. Alambi Cloud Forest Reserve sits over two major valleys and covers a large range of altitudes (4,750 to 7,210 ft) with several different habitats. Alambi has a recorded list of 250 species of birds and 32 hummingbirds seen either at the feeders or in the reserve. Later continue your trip through the Nono-Mindo Eco Road. Located in the Tandayapa Valley, this cloud forest is part of the Chocó Endemic Bird Area of Northwest Ecuador, with lovely panoramic views and lots of birds including the Andean Cock-of-the-rock. Arrive in Mindo in the late afternoon. *Overnight at Sachatamia Lodge. (BLD)*

MARCH 17 - MINDO

Depart from the hotel toward Pacha Quindi, a refuge dedicated to the preservation and protection of existing areas of original cloud forest habitat and wildlife, where you will be able to experience the natural beauty and wonder of this

very unique and biologically diverse environment. Continue to Bellavista for lunch and enjoy afternoon birding in the area of the Tandayapa Valley. *Overnight at Sachatamia Lodge. (BLD)*

MARCH 18 - MINDO

This morning visit Milpe Bird Sanctuary, located in the subtropical rainforest. Milpe Bird Sanctuary covers 49 acres with an altitudinal range of 3,350 to 3,770 feet. Located in the Chocó Andean foothills, Los Bancos Milpe is in a Birdlife International-defined Important Bird Area (IBA), and birding guides consider this one of the finest sites in all of Ecuador. Many of the most spectacular Chocó endemics are protected here, including Plumbeous Forest-Falcon, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Glistening-green Tanager, Chocó Trogan, Club-winged Manakin, and Long-wattled Umbrellabird, to name just a few. This site is also known for sightings of the rare Moss-backed Tanager. Continue to Mirador Río Blanco for lunch. This place is a birder's dream and great for seeing tanagers. Return to the lodge in the late afternoon. If time permits, we will have an optional excursion to Mindo Loma Reserve. Mindo Loma is a medium altitude (4,590 ft) private cloud forest located between Nanegalito and the road to Mindo. It has 17 acres of primary and secondary recovering cloud forest. It may be possible to see the Velvet-purple Coronet, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, and the Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager. *Overnight at Sachatamia Lodge. (BLD)*

MARCH 19 - SANGOLQUÍ

Depart from Mindo early this morning and travel to the Sangolquí Valley. En route, visit Refugio Paz de las Aves, a small, private reserve that has become a birding sensation and is sometimes referred to as "the antpitta farm." Here, Angel Paz, a local farmer, has gained the trust of some normally rare and shy forest species. Yellow-breasted, Ochre-breasted, and Giant Antpittas are regularly seen here, and the local covey of Dark-backed Wood-Quail is seen sometimes too. Other forest birds regularly encountered are Golden-headed Quetzal, Olivaceous Piha, and Scaled Fruiteater. Crested Quetzal can occasionally be found at fruiting trees. There is also a lek where Andean Cocks-of-the-rock display at dawn, and Angel and his brothers

have constructed a blind for excellent views. Enjoy breakfast on site. Continue along the Mindo-Calacalí road, with a quick stop at Calacalí. The dry scrub at Calacalí is home to species such as the Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Golden-rumped Euphonia, and the vulnerable White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant. Box lunch en route. The rest of the afternoon is at leisure to enjoy the hacienda. *Overnight at Hacienda La Carriona. (BLD)*

MARCH 20 - COSANGA

Full morning of birding along the trails at Antisana Ecological Reserve. Located between the Andes and the Amazon lowlands, the privately-owned Antisana Ecological Reserve's 297,000 acres have varied ecological zones ranging from páramo (18,886 ft) to lowland rainforest. More than 70 bird species can be found here, including the Andean Condor, Giant Hummingbird, Carunculated Caracara, Black-faced Ibis, Speckled Teal, Andean Duck, Silvery Grebe, Slate-colored Coot, Andean Gull, Andean Lapwing, and Aplomado Falcon. The snow-capped Antisana Volcano is the fourth highest peak in Ecuador with an altitude of 18,900 feet, adding to the breathtaking Andean scenery that can be enjoyed along the trails. In the afternoon continue to Cabañas San Isidro. This private reserve forms an important bridge between the Antisana and Gran Sumaco Reserves, and the area boasts a bird list of about 330 species, many of which are more easily found here than anywhere else in the country. *Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)*

MARCH 21 - COSANGA

Explore the area accompanied by your guide. San Isidro Lodge is situated at about 6,726 feet above sea level, but the trails lead through elevations ranging from 7,874 feet all the way down to 6,069 feet, making this an ideal base to observe Andean birds from the lower reaches of the temperate zone down into the heart of the subtropical zone. Among the rarities here are Highland Tinamou, Bicolored Antvireo, Peruvian Antpitta, and White-faced Nunbird. Commonly spotted species include Powerful Woodpecker, Smoky Bush-Tyrant, Inca Jay, Black-billed Peppershrike, Wattled Guan, and Glossy-black Thrush. Look for Sickle-winged Guan, Masked Trogan, Andean Motmot, Streak-capped and Striped Treehunters, Long-tailed Antbird, Slate-crowned Antpitta, Black-chested Fruiteater, Pale-footed Swallow, and a variety of colorful tanagers among the mixed understory. *Overnight at San Isidro Lodge. (BLD)*

MARCH 22 - QUITO

After breakfast, check out of San Isidro and continue to Guango Lodge. Located about one hour away from San Isidro, Guango lies at an elevation of about 8,858 ft on Ecuador's eastern slope. This area is classified as humid temperate forest, a habitat distinctly different from San Isidro and is characterized by its more stunted trees, thicker canopy, cooler climate, and different bird and plant composition. The hummingbird feeders here are especially popular, with some of the more noteworthy species being Mountain Velvetbreast, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, Golden-breasted and Glowing Pufflegs, Mountain Avocetbill, and White-bellied and Gorgeted Woodstars. Other birds of particular interest that are seen regularly include the Andean Guan, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Turquoise Jay, Scarlet-bellied, Lacrimose, Buff-breasted and Hooded Mountain-Tanagers, Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager,

Black-headed, Black-capped, and Black-eared Hemispingus and Slaty Brushfinch. Enjoy lunch at Guango and in the afternoon continue the drive back to Quito. This evening reflect on the journey during a farewell dinner at the hotel. *Overnight at Rincón de Puembo. (BLD)*

MARCH 23 - DEPARTURE

Transfer to the airport for the flight home. Check-out time is at 12:00pm. (B)

LAND PRICING

\$3,750 (10-11 participants)

Price includes accommodations, meals, entrance fees, and activities as indicated in the itinerary, international airfare, private transportation unless otherwise noted in itinerary, non-alcoholic beverages with meals, full-time guide for duration of the program, and donation to ASWP.

Does not include gratuities or items of a personal nature.

TRAVEL PROTECTION

Holbrook Travel purchases Travel Protection on behalf of all participants traveling in 2018 or beyond. These plans help provide coverage once the trip has departed and offer benefits for Baggage/Personal Effects, Accident & Sickness Medical Expenses, Emergency Evacuation and more.

Optional additional coverage is available in the form of the Group Deluxe Plan, which offers benefits for Trip Cancellation/Interruption, in addition to many other insurance benefits and non-insurance assistance services. If interested in this optional plan, we can provide you with rates and plan details.

THE FINE PRINT

Price is based on double occupancy. For a single room throughout the trip, add \$275 per person. A \$200 per person non-refundable deposit and enrollment form are required to reserve your space on the trip. Final non-refundable payment is due December 21, 2018.

ADDITIONAL NOTES

Binoculars are required for this program. We recommend wide angle binoculars, something within the range of 7x35, 8x40 or even 10x50 with good light gathering characteristics. Although light and comfortable, pocket binoculars don't work as well in low light conditions. Participants should be in good physical condition and able to walk unassisted for several hours per day.

FOR MORE INFORMATION OR TO ENROLL:

Visit holbrook.travell/aswp-ec19 or contact Brian Shema at bshema@aswp.org

