



CLASSIC COLOMBIA

**Santa Marta Endemics, High Andes, Hummingbirds, Antpittas,
Multicolored Tanager and Chocó Forest**

18 FEBRUARY - 5 MARCH 2018



The endemic **Santa Marta Parakeet** (photo Gabriel Utria) is one of our targets on this trip.

Colombia, with its diverse landscapes, is home to more bird species than any other country in the world. With the country's almost two thousand species be prepared to be in awe of the spectacular avifauna as we explore Colombia's lush cloudforest, wetlands, Caribbean coast, and high mountain plains on this 16-day adventure. Join Birding Ecotours on this wonderful Birding Tour Colombia to this dynamic birding destination.

Please note that the detailed itinerary below cannot be guaranteed as it is only a rough guide and can be changed (usually slightly) due to factors such as availability of accommodation, updated information on the state of accommodation, roads, or birding sites, the discretion of the guides and other factors.

Itinerary (16 days/15 nights)

Day 1. Arrival in Barranquilla

Our tour will start in the northern city of Barranquilla, which is our rendezvous point at the Caribbean coast. You will be met at the Barranquilla International Airport and transferred to the Hotel Barranquilla Plaza. If time permits, we might have the first try for **Chestnut-winged Chachalaca**.

Overnight: Hotel Barranquilla Plaza, Barranquilla

Day 2. Salamanca Island Nature Reserve, transfer to Santa Marta and Minca

Today we will visit the Salamanca Island Nature Reserve, where we will spend the morning to see the mangrove habitat and the special birds that inhabit it, including **Chestnut Piculet, Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird, Northern Screamer, Green Heron, Snowy Egret, Great Egret, Magnificent Frigatebird, Pied Puffbird, Rufescent Tiger Heron, Red-rumped Woodpecker, American Yellow Warbler, Prothonotary Warbler, Russet-throated Puffbird**, and with some luck **Bicolored Conebill**. We will scout the deciduous habitat near Barranquilla, looking for the specials **Chestnut-winged Chachalaca** and **Glaucous Tanager**.

Then we will transfer to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a place famous for its isolated, snow-capped mountains along the Caribbean coast, reaching altitudes from sea level to 5000 meters. Santa Marta is the home of almost 20 endemic birds and boasts several range-restricted species – a true paradise for birders!

After lunch at our accommodations our first approach to Santa Marta birds will be to those occurring at lower elevations near Minca. Our hotel holds hummingbird feeders with species like **Black-throated Mango, Steely-vented Hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin, Long-billed Starthroat**, and **Rufous-tailed Hummingbird** that can be seen daily.

In the afternoon we might find **Orange-chinned Parakeet, Keel-billed Toucan, Streaked Flycatcher, Whooping Motmot, Blue-necked Tanager, Coopmans's Tyrannulet, Black-chested Jay**, and **Red-eyed Vireo**.

Overnight: Minca

Day 3. Birding around Minca, transfer to El Dorado Lodge

The next day we will spend the morning birding around Minca, looking for more **Keel-billed Toucan, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Rufous-breasted Wren, Bicolored Wren, Rufous-and-white Wren, Yellow-legged Thrush, Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush**, and the endemics **Santa Marta Tapaculo** and **Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner**.

After a nice birding morning we will continue our drive toward El Dorado Lodge in the heart of the El Dorado Bird Reserve in the Santa Marta Mountains. El Dorado will be our base for two nights, allowing us to enjoy the environment and to get as many birds as possible, including most of the Santa Marta endemics.

The hummingbird feeders at the lodge are excellent for several species, including the endemic **White-tailed Starfrontlet**, **Brown Violetear**, **Crowned Woodnymph**, **Tyrian Metaltail**, and if we are lucky **Black-backed Thornbill**.

From the lodge grounds we can enjoy views of **Band-tailed Guan**, **Blue-naped Chlorophonia**, **Black-capped Tanager**, **Sierra Nevada Brush Finch**, **Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush**, and **Black-fronted Wood Quail**.

Overnight: El Dorado Lodge

Day 4. Birding the San Lorenzo Ridge and El Dorado Bird Reserve

We will have an early start, leaving the lodge before dawn to look for the endemic **Santa Marta Screech Owl**. We will reach our highest point in the mountains at the famous San Lorenzo Ridge at 2700 meters above sea level. Here we will look for **Santa Marta Parakeet**, **Santa Marta Bush Tyrant**, **Brown-rumped Tapaculo**, **Santa Marta Warbler**, **White-tipped Quetzal**, **Santa Marta Antpitta**, **Rufous Antpitta**, **White-lored Warbler**, **Santa Marta Mountain Tanager**, and many more, so we will be busy for the whole morning.

In the afternoon we will explore the road leading down from the lodge to look for **Santa Marta Woodstar**, **Santa Marta Blossomcrown**, and **Orange-breasted Fruiteater**.

Overnight: El Dorado Lodge

Day 5. Transfer to Riohacha, birding en route

After three nights and a last morning birding in the Santa Marta area we will leave towards the Guajira Peninsula in the desert lowlands of the Caribbean coast near the border of Venezuela.

En route we will try for **Rufous-vented Chachalaca**, **Sapphire-throated Hummingbird**, **Lance-tailed Manakin**, **Venezuelan Flycatcher**, **Southern Bentbill**, **Caribbean Hornero**, **Green-rumped Parrotlet**, and **Black-crowned Antshrike**.

We will spend the night in the city of Riohacha, which is the main access to the birds of Guajira.

Overnight: Hotel Taroa, Riohacha

Day 6. Birding the Guajira Peninsula, flight to Pereira

The next morning we will explore the Guajira desert, looking for the striking **Vermilion Cardinal**, **Crested Bobwhite**, **Buff Hummingbird**, the secretive **Tocuyo Sparrow**, **White-whiskered Spinetail**, **Bare-eyed Pigeon**, and **Orinoco Saltator**. We will also try for **Scarlet Ibis** and **American Flamingo**.

Later we say goodbye to the Caribbean coast and take a domestic flight from Riohacha to the city of Pereira in the Central Andes.

Overnight: Movich Hotel de Pereira, Pereira

Day 7. Otún-Quimbaya Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, transfer to Manizales

A relatively short drive from Pereira will take us to the Otún-Quimbaya Flora and Fauna Sanctuary, where we will look for the endemic **Cauca Guan** and, with luck, for our first **Multicolored Tanager**. Other birds here include **Red-ruffed Fruitcrow**, **Rufous-chested Tanager**, **Blackburnian** and with luck **Cerulean Warblers**, **Chestnut-breasted Wren**, **Crested Ant Tanager**, **Andean Motmot**, **White-throated Toucan**, **Stiles's Tapaculo**, and others.

Then we will drive to the city of Manizales, which will be our base for the next two nights to explore the famous Rio Blanco Ecological Reserve.

Overnight: Hotel Estelar Recinto del Pensamiento, Manizales

Day 8. Birding the Rio Blanco Ecological Reserve

The list of birds at the Rio Blanco Ecological Reserve is quite impressive, and in good weather we can find many of the special birds of this reserve, such as **Black-billed Mountain Toucan, Dusky Piha, Masked Saltator, Ocellated Tapaculo, Spillmann's and Ash-colored Tapaculos, Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager, Lacrimose Mountain Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Black-eared and Superciliaried Hemispingus, Plushcap, Yellow-vented Woodpecker, and Rusty-crowned Tody-Flycatcher**. With luck we might also find a flock of **Golden-plumed Parakeet** and, even better, the uncommon **Rusty-faced Parrot**.

Rio Blanco is also great for night birds, with good chances for **White-throated Screech Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Band-winged Nightjar, and Rufous-bellied Nighthawk**.

Overnight: Hotel Estelar Recinto del Pensamiento, Manizales

Day 9. Birding the Rio Blanco Ecological Reserve, transfer to Los Nevados

Perhaps the main reason why Rio Blanco is well-known among birders is because the sighting of five species of sought-after antpittas is possible at its worm feeders station. During a full morning we may enjoy views of the endemic **Brown-banded Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Chestnut-naped Antpitta, Bicolored Antpitta, and Slaty-crowned Antpitta**.

After two days birding Rio Blanco we will leave Manizales in the afternoon to explore the road to Los Nevados National Natural Park in the central Andes. This national park protects the snow-capped Nevado del Ruiz volcano and its páramo ecosystem, dominated by *Espeletia* at 4000 meters above sea level.

We will stay at the nice Hotel Termas del Ruiz at the base of the mountain, where the gardens are surrounded by hot springs and hummingbird feeders attract high-elevation species like **Great Sapphirewing, Shining Sunbeam, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Black-thighed Puffleg, Purple-backed Thornbill, and Viridian Metaltail**.

Overnight: Hotel Termas del Ruiz, Termas

Days 10. Birding Los Nevados National Natural Park, transfer to Tatamá

A full morning birding the road to Los Nevados National Natural Park will hopefully provide the most-wanted **Buffy Helmetcrest, Andean Tit-Spintail, Paramo Seedeater, Tawny Antpitta, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Blue-backed Conebill, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Paramo Tapaculo**, and if we are lucky the endemic **Rufous-fronted Parakeet**.

Later we will transfer to Tatamá National Park in the Chocó rainforest for a total of three nights.

Overnight: Montezuma Eco-Lodge, Tatamá National Park

Days 11 – 12. Birding Tatamá National Park

During the next two days we will enjoy the high diversity of species of this habitat with birds like the endemic **Gold-ringed Tanager, Chestnut Wood Quail, Beautiful Jay, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, White-faced Nunbird, Glistening-green Tanager, Streak-capped Treehunter, Lineated Foliage-gleaner, and Indigo Flowerpiercer**.

Overnight: Montezuma Eco-Lodge, Tatamá National Park

Day 13. Birding Tatamá National Park, transfer to Buga

During the last morning around our lodge we will look for **Toucan Barbet, Black Solitaire, Choco Vireo, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia, Munchique Wood Wren, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Flame-faced Tanager, Tanager Finch, Black-and-gold Tanager, Rufous-throated Tanager, and Golden-chested Tanager.**

After three nights at Montezuma Eco-Lodge we will continue the trip towards the town of Buga to visit the Sonso Lagoon Nature Reserve.

Hotel Guadalajara, Buga

Day 14. Birding Sonso Lagoon Nature Reserve, transfer to Cali

The Sonso Lagoon Nature Reserve is a great wetland for an easy birding day, where a lot of birds can be seen, such as the endemic **Apical Flycatcher, Greyish Piculet, Blackish Rail, Jet Antbird, Common Potoo, Wattled Jacana, Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling Ducks, Greater Ani, Ringed Kingfisher, Spot-breasted Woodpecker,** and many more.

At noon we will head to Cali and transfer to the famous Km 18 birding site on the road to the Pacific coast.

Overnight: B & B Chalet Santa Eulalia, Cali

Day 15. Birding the Anchicayá Valley and Km18

We will spend the last two days exploring the Anchicayá Valley and the Km 18 cloudforest, looking for the endemic **Multicolored Tanager, Colombian Chachalaca, Scaled Fruiteater, Crested Ant Tanager, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, 'Alto Pisones' Tapaculo** (undescribed species), and if we are lucky **Ornate Hawk-Eagle and Barred Hawk.**

We will also have time to visit the Finca Alejandria "El Paraiso de los Colibries" hummingbird garden, where we will see species such as **Steely-vented Hummingbird, White-chinned and Blue-headed Sapphires, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Brown Inca, and Booted Racket-tail,** among others.

Overnight: B & B Chalet Santa Eulalia, Cali

Day 16. Birding the Anchicayá Valley and Km18, departure

At the end of another day birding Anchicayá and Km 18, and after 16 days of amazing birding in Colombia, you will be transferred to the Cali airport to connect with your flights home.

Duration: 16 days
Limit: 4 – 8
Date: 18 February - 5 March 2018
Start: Barranquilla
End: Cali

Price: US\$6325 per person sharing
Single Supplement: US\$672

Price includes:

Accommodation throughout the tour
 All meals (except where is indicated)
 Domestic flights
 All ground private transportation
 Admission fees to parks and reserves
 Private tour leader

Local guides

Water

Price excludes:

International flights

Lunch and dinner on Day 16

Private expenses (drinks, alcoholic drinks, laundry, any other personal items)

Insurance cover