

DETAILED ITINERARY

Day 1 : ARRIVAL - QUITO

Our trip will start in **Quito**, the capital city, located on the flanks of the **Pichincha Volcano** (4701m) and encircled by three mighty snow-capped volcanoes, the **Cotopaxi** (5896m), the **Cayambe** (5796m) and the **Antisana** (5704m). If your arrival time permits, we will make a short drive to the nearby **Chiche Canyon**, where the xerophytic vegetation of dense scrubs is punctuated with emerging *Agave* flowers and cacti. We will have the chance of seeing a number of species relatively common in this type of habitat, *Sparkling Violetears*, *Black-tailed Trainbearer*, *Cinereous Conebill*, *Golden-rumped Euphonia*, *Blue-and-yellow Tanager*, *Southern Yellow Grosbeak*, *Hooded Siskin*...



Day 2 : YANACocha RESERVE - BELLAVISTA LODGE

Today we will climb the oriental slope of the **Pichincha Volcano**, progressing through agricultural landscape until we reach the western slope covered in temperate altitude forest as far as the eye can see. The **Yanacocha Reserve**, owned by the **Jocotoco Foundation** is dedicated to the protection of a large lot of this beautiful habitat. A magnificent and very easy and almost flat trail progresses through the forest and if weather is good allows for fabulous and scenic views of the volcano and the

interandean valley. Along this trail are a number of hummingbird feeders which allow to observe in the best of conditions some stunning species of these hovering feathered creatures: *Shining Sunbeam*, *Mountain Velvetbreast*, *Great Sapphirewing*, the unreal *Sword-billed Hummingbird*, *Golden-breasted* and *Sapphire-vented Pufflegs*, *Buff-winged Starfrontlet* or *Tyrian Metaltail*. Seeing the critically endangered and seasonal *Black-breasted Puffleg* would require an incredible stroke of luck; this species is so poorly known that no one knows where it spends a large part of the year. Flowering shrubs along the trail can attract *Purple-backed* or *Rainbow-bearded Thornbills* as well as two professional nectar robbers: the *Masked* and *Glossy Flowerpiercers*. **Yanacocha** is also one of the best sites in

Ecuador to see a few species difficult to see anywhere else: *Barred Fruiteater*, *Black-chested Mountain-Tanager*, *Undulated Antpitta* or the ultra-rare and discreet *Imperial Snipe*.

Among the flocks we might always encounter some more common species at this altitude such as *Andean Pygmy-Owl*, *Barbellied Woodpecker*, *Azara's* and *White-browed Spinetails*, *Pearled Treerunner*, *Blackish Tapaculo*, *Rufous Antpitta*, *White-throated Tyrannulet*, *Tufted Tit-Tyrant*, *Crowned Chat-Tyrant*, *Rufous Wren*, *Spectacled Whitestart*, *Blue-backed Conebill*, *Golden-crowned Tanager*, *Scarlet-bellied* and *Hooded Mountain-Tanagers*, *Yellow-breasted* and *Stripe-headed Brush-*

Finches...

We will then depart, chased by the increasingly thick fog usually afflicting this wonderful site to our next destination of **Bellavista**, in the upper **Tandayapa Valley**, not without a few stops along the road to investigate the beautiful subtropical forest. We will reach the lodge just in time to try our luck with some nocturnal species: *Rufous-bellied Nighthawk* or with bit more luck *Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl*.

Day 3 : BELLAVISTA LODGE - TANDAYAPA VALLEY

The subtropical **Chocó** forest surrounding the **Belavista Lodge**, aptly described as cloud forest gives one of the most powerful feeling of authentic and abundant wildlife imaginable. For a first time visitor, the dawn chorus will irresistibly drawn you out of bed long before the first lights of day. The fresh



and humid morning air often resonates with the strident and far-carrying whistles of the *Ocellated Tapaculo*, the melodious song of the *Russet-crowned Warbler*, the raucous calls of *Turquoise Jays* or the vocal battle between the gaudy *Golden-headed Quetzal* and *Masked Trogon*. Soon on our way on the trails around the lodge, we will look for the near-endemic and fabulous *Plate-billed Mountain Toucan* as well as the strangely ventriloquist *Toucan Barbet*.

Several *Furnarid* species tirelessly probe the deep coat of moss covering tree trunks for insects: *Pearled Treerunner*, *Streaked Tuftedcheek*, *Montane* and *Strong-billed Woodcreepers*. We will carefully scan *Cecropia* trees for passing tanager flocks, commonly seen at this altitude in search of fruits: *Fawn-breasted*, *Golden*, *Flame-faced*, *Golden-naped*, *Metallic-green*, *Beryl-spangled*, *Black-capped*, *Blue-capped* and *White-winged Tanagers*... The lodge feeders regularly attract more than a dozen hummingbird species: *Tawny-bellied Hermit*, *Green Violetear*, *Speckled Hum-*

mingbird, *Purple-bibbed Whitetip*, *Fawn-breasted Brilliant*, *Collared Inca*, *Buff-tailed Coronet*, *Gorgeted Sunangel*, *Booted Racket-tail*, *Violet-tailed Sylph* or *Purple-throated Woodstar*...

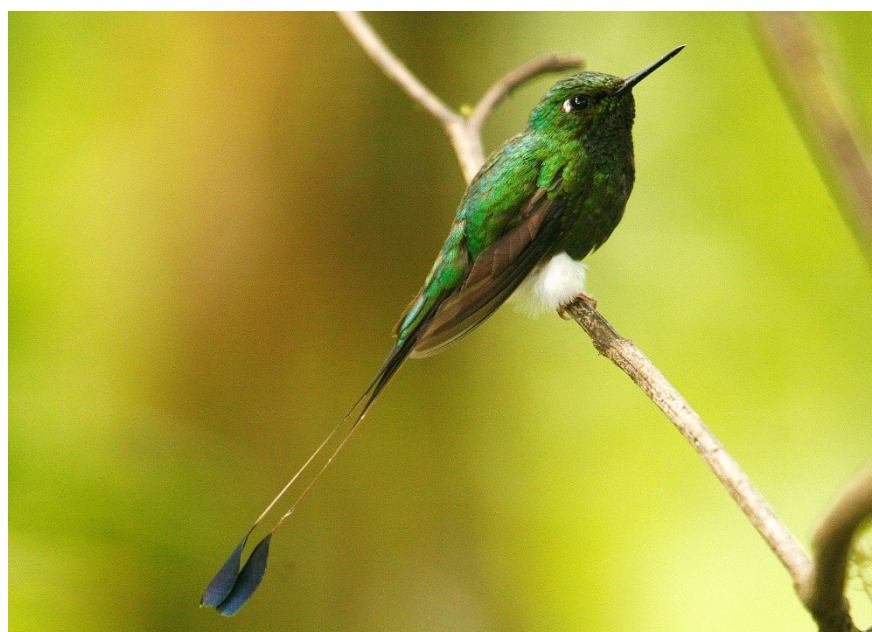
Each step will give us a chance to bump onto some of the many species occurring in this beautiful eco-

system: *Barred* or *Roadside Hawk*, *Band-tailed* and *Plumbeous Pigeon*, *Red-billed Parrot*, *Crimson-rumped Toucanet*, *Crimson-mantled* and *Powerful Woodpeckers*, *Azara's Spinetail*, *Spotted* and *Rusty-winged Barbtail*, *Lineated Foliage-gleaner*, *Streaked Treehunter*, *Streak-headed Antbird*, *Spillmann's Tapaculo*, *Sierran Elaenia*, *White-tailed* and *Golden-crowned Flycatchers*, *Green-and-black Fruiteater*, *Gray-breasted Woodwren*, *Brown-capped Vireo*, *Spectacled* and *Slate-throated Whitestarts*, *Black-crested* and *Three-striped Warblers*, *Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager*, *Dusky Bush-Tanager*,

Western Hemispingus, *White-winged* and *Chestnut-capped Brush-Finches*, *White-sided Flowerpiercer*.

Of course we will intently look for the absolute rarity to be found here, the enigmatic *Tanager Finch*.

We will also take some time to explore the altitudinal gradient available in the **Tandayapa Valley** and try to add species occurring at lower altitudes such as *Wedge-billed Hummingbird*, *Red-headed Barbet*,



Lineated Foliage-gleaner, Uniform Treehunter, Slaty Antwren, Nariño Tapaculo, Ornate Flycatcher, Scaled Fruiteater, Olivaceous Piha or Tricolored Brush-Finch.

Day 4 : RIO SILANCHE RESERVE

The **Rio Silanche Reserve**, owned by the **Mindo Cloud Forest Foundation** protects a tiny area of one of the most endangered ecosystem on earth. Lowland **Chocó** forests have been relentlessly exploited and cut and have seen their surfaces dwindle dramatically in the last 50 years. The vast expanses of lush forests that once covered the western part of the country have now given way to banana, pineapple, cocoa plantations or pastures. With the notable exception of the **Esmeraldas** province where some decent tracts of forest still exist, only tiny pockets and fragments of it remain elsewhere. **Rio Silanche** is precisely one of these subsisting among an ocean of Oil palm plantations and exploitation sites for tropical woods.

Despite this sad state of affairs, an impressive number of special species of lowland **Chocó** forests can be found in this reserve, and this day should leave you with some great recollections. Many species reach here the southern end of their distribution, otherwise centered on north-west **Ecuador** and south-west **Colombia** and generally difficult to access, and this should give us a supplementary motivation to try and find some of them:

Purple-chested Hummingbird, Spot-crowned Antwren, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Scarlet-browed, Blue-whiskered and Rufous-winged Tanagers, Scarlet-breasted Dacnis...

The flocks regularly passing by the canopy tower, if there are any fruiting trees around will give us a taste of lowland **Chocó** birding at its finest: *Dusky Pigeon, Pacific Parrotlet, Blue-headed Parrot, Gray-*

rumped Swift, Choco and White-tailed Trogon, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Olivaceous Piculet, Lineated, Black-cheeked and Guayaquil Woodpeckers, Streaked and Plain Xenops, Plain-brown, Black-striped, Spotted, Streak-headed or even Northern Barred Woodcreepers, Sooty-headed, Brown-capped and Yellow-crowned Tyrannulets, Greenish and Gray Elaenias, Black-capped and Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrants, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-margined Flatbill, Dusky-capped, Social and Rusty-margined Flycatchers, Cinnamon and One-colored Becards, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Red-eyed Vireo (of the resident subspecies), Lesser Greenlet, Band-backed, Bay and Stripe-throated Wrens, Bananaquit, Yellow-tufted Dacnis, Guira, Gray-and-gold, Blue-necked, Golden-hooded, Bay-headed, Blue-gray, Palm, Lemon-rumped, White-shouldered, Dusky-faced and Tawny-crested Tanagers...

The forest trails, although short, are a promise of some great finds: calling *Little Tinamous, Laughing Falcon, Stripe-throated Hermit, Broad-billed Mot-*



*mot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Western Woodhaunter, Western Slaty-Antshrike, Pacific, Moustached, White-flanked and Dot-backed Antwrens, Bright-rumped Attila, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, White-bearded or Green Manakin, Buff-rumped Warbler, Slate-colored Grosbeak....*With a bit of luck we might even bump onto one of the rarer species recorded here : the immaculate *Black-tipped Cotinga*, the discreet *Berlepsch's Tinamou* and the enigmatic



Semi-plumbeous Hawk or the vocal *Brown Wood Rail*.

Back to **Mindo** in the afternoon, we will have some time to explore the surrounding of this village, renowned for the quality of its birding. Many good tracts of lower subtropical forest subsist and we will look for some of the species that are still quite common and easy to observe here: *Bronze-winged Parrot*, *Choco* and *Chestnut-mandibled Toucan*, *Golden-headed Quetzal*, *Red-headed Barbet*, *Slaty-capped Flycatcher*... But we might even find surprises such as the discreet *Barred Puffbird* or its rare cousin the *White-faced Nunbird*, the incredible *Torrent Duck* or a small flock of *Yellow-collared Chlorophonias*.

Day 5 : MILPE RESERVE - MILPE GARDEN

The **Milpe Reserve**, also owned by the **Mindo Cloud Forest Foundation** protect a vast area of foothill forest. In these ecosystems threatened by deforestation, it is possible to observe a large number of very interesting species: *Chocó Trogon*, *Uniform Treehunter*, *Brown-billed Scythebill*, *Uniform Antshrike*, *Esmeraldas Antbird*, *Golden-winged Manakin*, *Ornate Flycatcher*, *Rufous-throated Tanager*...

The reserve also host a famous lek of *Club-winged Manakin*. We will also intently look for mixed flocks of understory and canopy species that abounds along the forest trails: *Ruddy* and *Dusky Pigeons*, *Maroon-tailed Parakeet*, *Bronze-winged Parrot*, *Squirrel* and *Striped Cuckoos*,

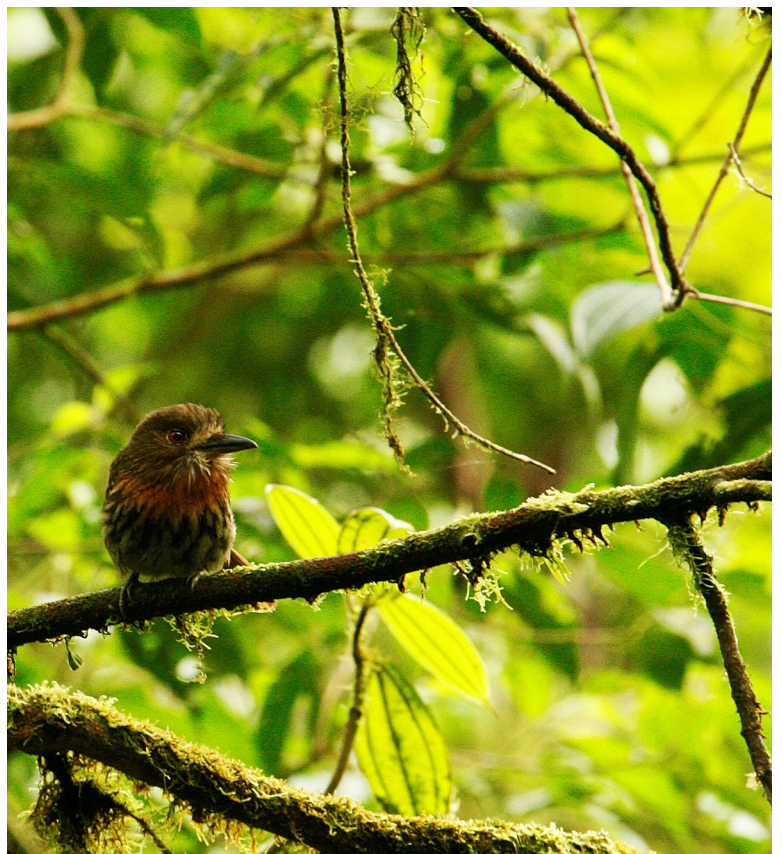
Chocó Toucan, *Red-headed Barbet*, *Slaty-throated* and *Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners*, *Slaty* and *Red-faced Spinetails*, *Rufous-rumped Antwren*, *Zeledon's Antbird*, *Ashy-headed Tyrannulet*, *Rufous-winged Tyrannulet*, *Chocó Warbler*, *Silver-throated*, *Golden*, *Guira* and *Ochre-breasted Tanagers*, *Yellow-throated* and *Ashy-throated Bush-Tanagers*, *Buff-throated* and *Black-winged Saltators*...

The hummingbird feeders are also very attractive with a ceaseless ballet of scintillating species: *White-necked Jacobin*, *Green Thorntail*, *White-whiskered Hermit*, *Green-crowned Woodnymph*, *Rufous-tailed Hummingbird*, *Andean Emerald* or *Green-crowned Brilliant*.

Day 6 : MASHPI SHUNGO - MASHPI AMAGUSA

Today, we will visit one of the latest fashionable sites in the neo tropical ornithological world. The region of **Mashpi** because of its particular topography experiences very special climatic conditions with a extremely high humidity reminiscent of lowland **Chocó** forests.

The combination of lowlands and mountain influences conspires to create an original and extended species list: *Rose-faced Parrot*, *Pacific Tufted-*



cheek, Scaled Fruiteater, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Rufous-brown Solitaire, Black Solitaire, Indigo Flowerpiercer, Swallow Tanager, Moss-backed Tanager, Glistening-green Tanager, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager and the ultra-rare Choco Vireo and Banded Ground-Cuckoo all of which have been seen but will require an extreme amount of luck to see.

We will visit early this morning, the **Mashpi Shungo Reserve** which is home to a few individuals of the rare and fabulous *Rufous-crowned Antpitta* whose systematic status remains uncertain. It seems difficult to classify it among *Grallaridae*, *Conopophagidae* or even *Rhinocryptidae*.

We will spend the rest of the day pacing the **Mashpi Amagusa Reserve** and the **Mashpi** road in search of all the specialties of these ultra-humid forests.

Finally, we will rally our lodge for the night, near the famous village of **Mindo**.

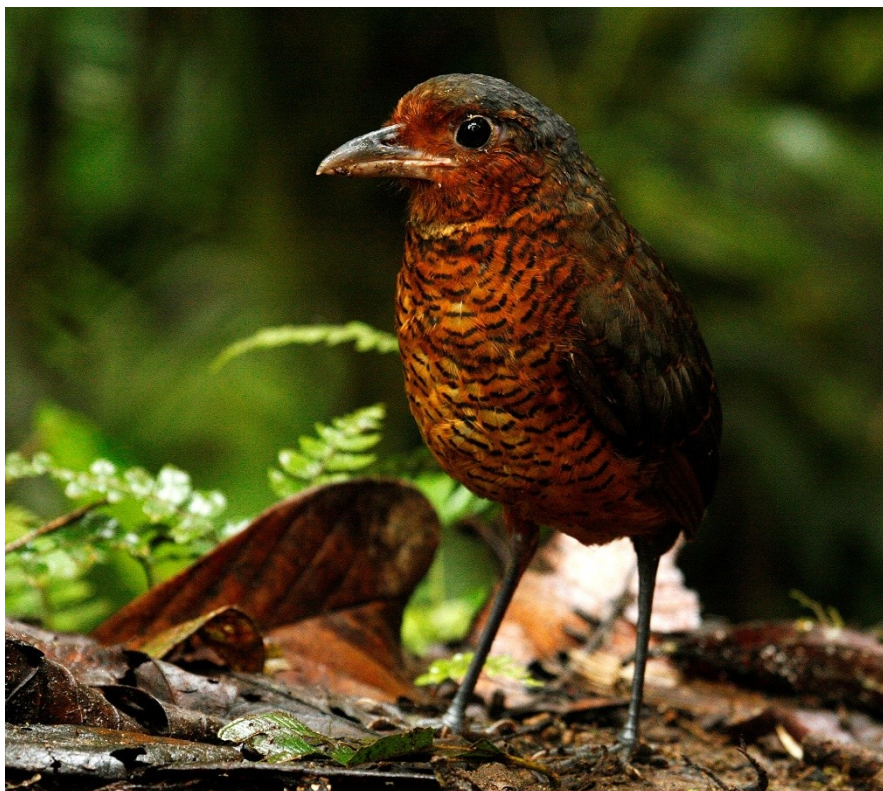
Day 7 : PAZ DE LOS AVES - ALAMBI LODGE - CALACALI

This particular day should be one of the great moment of the trip. **Angel Paz**, a local farmer, fell in love with the all too rapidly disappearing **Chocó** forest and its inhabitants. As a result, he decided to protect a large portion of completely untouched forest on his property, and over the years has developed an uncanny ability to provide fabulous observations of some of the most difficult species, namely *Antpittas*, living in it to visiting birders. He has done so by gradually habituating these to human presence and by feeding them with worms to particular places in the forest. If you are familiar with neotropical birding, you will surely have heard about the extreme difficulty of glimpsing, let alone getting satisfying looks at, these species in the dense forest they inhabit. So it is a marvel to see **Angel** and his brother distributing worm rations here to a *Giant Antpitta*, a little further to a *Moustached* or a *Chestnut-crowned Antpitta*, then deep in a humid ravine to a wonderful *Yellow-*

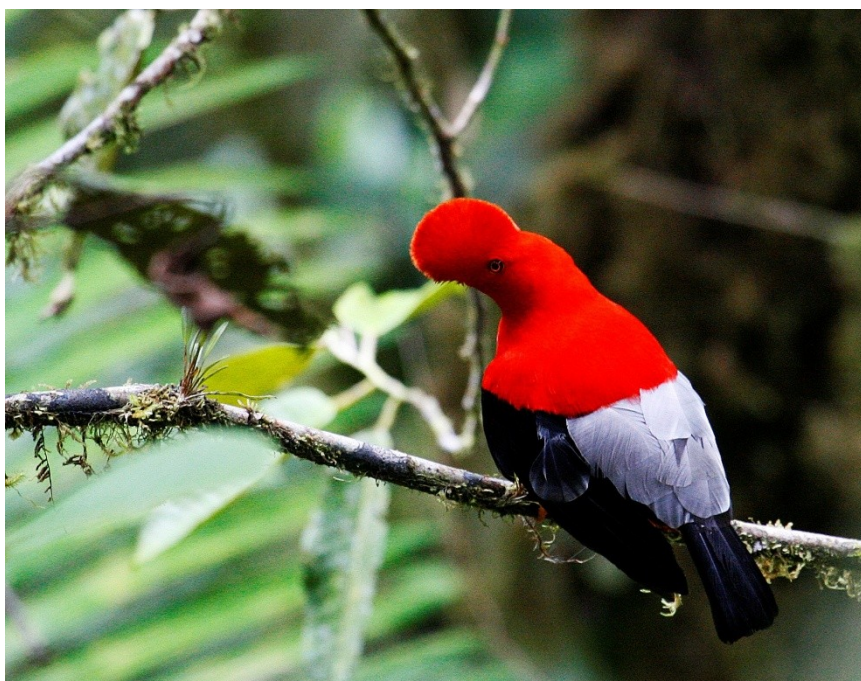
breasted Antpitta, or finally to one of the midget in the family, the cute *Ochre-breasted Antpitta* (which they have affectionately dubbed Shakira, owing to its constant sideways tail-wagging). **Angel** has constantly worked to extend the list of species he can habituate in this way and over the years Pepito, the *Rufous-breasted Antthrush*, Tomas the *Ocellated Tapaculo* or a family of *Dark-backed Woodquails* have all come to his calls on a more or less regular basis.



The day will start however with a dawn visit to a lek of *Andean Cock-of-the-rock* to admire the showy display of this crimson *Cotinga*. Finally, after a stop to the fabulous feeders attracting swarms of colorful hummingbird and many frugivorous species, we will wrap up in style by savoring a gargantuan traditional breakfast. Our short visit here will give us good chances of seeing new species: *Empress Brilliant*, *Velvet-purple Coronet*, *Purple-bibbed Whitetip*, *Western Emerald*, *Olivaceous Piha*, *Black-chinned Mountain Tanager*, *Sickle-winged Guan*, *Orange-breasted Fruiteater* and with some luck a roosting *Common Potoo* or a *Colombian Screech-owl*.



After a light lunch in front of the constant and frantic hummingbirds ballet in the **Alambi Lodge**, we will return at the end of the day, to the interandean valley, where we will visit a small site near **Quito** where the xerophytic vegetation host some of the last *White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant* in **Ecuador**. In this place we will also have the opportunity to see some typical species of the dry interandean valley: *Rufous-collared Sparrow*, *Blue-and-yellow Tanager*, *Band-tailed Seedeater*, *Black-tailed Trainbearer*, *Purple-collared Woodstar*. Then we will join our comfortable hacienda at the feet of the majestic **Antisana Volcano**.



Day 8 : ANTISANA VOLCANO

This morning, we will explore the immense plateaus at the foot of the **Antisana Volcano**, one of the highest in **Ecuador** (and in the world incidentally), culminating at more than 5700m. The National Park in which it is located is mostly composed of **páramo** and rocky hills and outcrops.

After a thorough scan of the brushy slopes around our hacienda looking for the scintillating aerial ballet of Shining Sunbeams, Sparkling Violetear or the aptly named *Black-tailed Trainbearer*, we will more specifically focus on the blooming *Chuquiraguas* with their characteristic orange flowers which are the preferred target of the incredible *Ecuadorian Hillstar*. This endemic is supremely adapted to very high altitude (probably the highest living hummingbird in the world), being able to enter a physiological semi-dormancy to resist the glacial nights that are frequent at more than 4000m.

We will then keep ascending to the vast expanses of verdant **páramo** just at the base of the snow-capped cone of the volcano. A few species are common here: *Carunculated Caracara*, *Aplomado Falcon*, *Andean Lapwing*, *Stout-billed* and *Chestnut-winged Cinclodes*, *Black-winged Ground-Dove*, *Many-striped Canastero*, *Paramo Ground-Tyrant*, *Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant*, *Paramo Pipit*, *Plumbeous Sierra-Finch*...

With a bit of luck we will observe the only Ecuadorian population of *Black-faced Ibis* (the altitude subspecies sometimes called *Andean Ibis*). This very small population inhabits the immense grassy plateaus and sometimes seeing them requires a bit of patience. We'll finish our visit here by scanning the **Laguna La Mica** where a good deal of water species are resident and readily observed: *Silvery Grebe*, *Andean Teal*, *Blue-winged Teal*, *Yellow-billed Pintail*, *Ruddy Duck*, *Slate-colored Coot*, or *Andean Gull*...

However our main target for this day will be to observe the mythical *Andean Condor* which can best be found here in **Ecuador**. The occasional demise of some of the numerous grazing cows and sheep is a good food insurance for this



source for the *Spectacled Bear*) are often used as perch by the rare *Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant*.

The sheltered bushes between rocky outcrops host species such as *Andean Tit-Spinetail*, *White-chinned Thistletail*, *Many-striped Canastero*, *Tawny Antpitta*, *Paramo Tapaculo*, *White-throated Tyrannulet*, *Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant*, *Red-crested Cotinga*, *Grass Wren*, *Black Flowerpiercer*, *Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager*, *Pale-naped Brush-Finch*, *Plain-colored Seedeater* or *Plumbeous Sierra-Finch*. A few patches of *Polylepis* might give us the opportunity of seeing the shy *Giant Conebill*

magnificent scavenger. We will thoroughly examine all the potential roosting sites and with a bit of luck we might end up seeing the majestic raptor effortlessly gliding in the sky with the mighty volcano as a fitting backdrop.

By the end of the day, we will depart to the small thermal village of **Papallacta**, our next destination.

Day 9 : PAPALLACTA PASS - GUANGO LODGE

The **Papallacta** pass acts as a powerful barrier that efficiently intercepts the humid clouds coming from the **Amazonian Basin** and lapping the eastern slopes of the **Andes**. Incidentally, it is also one of the sites with the most capricious weather in the whole of **Ecuador**.

With a clear weather, the view is breathtaking, encompassing the snow-capped summits of the **Cotopaxi**, **Cayambe** and **Antisana** volcanoes surrounding the green and yellow expanses of **páramo** dotted with small altitude lakes. The air is so crisp that you almost feel that you could touch the yet distant volcanoes.

A very few trees and *Puyas*, a terrestrial *Bromeliad* (which incidentally is one of the favourite food

and the rare *Black-backed Bush-Tanager*. Let us keep an eye however on the sky since it is not rare to see a circling *Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle* or a *Variable Hawk*. The altitude peatbogs host the ultra-rare *Noble Snipe*. We will keep our ascent to the upper limit of vegetation in hope of seeing the magnificent and highly cryptic *Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe*. Then from the **Papallacta** pass we will start a descent through a fabulous altitudinal gradient on the eastern slope of the **Andes**.



Our first step along the way down will be at **Guango Lodge** a beautiful place nestled in a magnificent temperate altitude forest. The roar of the nearby fast flowing torrent is loud enough to mute the sound of the road. We should be ready to catch the purposeful dives of the superb *Torrent Duck* in the agitated swirls. This little duck is an accomplished diver and forages for food by skillfully manoeuvring amidst the strong currents. The delicate *Torrent Tyrannulet* and the plump *White-capped Dipper* are usually seen looking for food in more sheltered coves along the river. The lodge itself surely holds one of the most fabulous feeding station for Hummingbirds in **South America**, the unreal *Sword-billed Hummingbird*, *Tourmaline Sunangel*, *Tyrian Metaltail*, *White-bellied* and *Gorgeted Woodstars*, *Collared Inca*, *Buff-winged Starfrontlet*, *Buff-tailed Coronet*, *Long-tailed Sylph*, *Sparkling Violetear*, *Glowing Puffleg* and with a bit of luck, the rare *Mountain Avocetbill*.

Days 10 and 11 : GUANGO LODGE - SAN ISIDRO LODGE

During the morning we will keep enjoying the wonders around **Guango**. We will explore a trail along



the mountain flank where numerous species of mountain forest can be found: *Powerful Woodpecker*, *Grey-Breasted Mountain Toucan*, *White-banded Tyrannulet*, *Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant*, *Dusky Piha*, *Mountain Wren*, *Plushcap*, *Glossy Flowerpiercer*, *Scarlet-bellied* and *Hooded Mountain-Tanagers*, *Red-hooded Tanager*, *Pale-naped* and *Slaty Brush-Finches*, *Black-crested Warbler*, *Mountain Cacique*...

Then we will continue along our altitudinal gradient to the **San Isidro Lodge**.

Located in the subtropical forest level, this lodge is somewhat the equivalent of the **Bellavista Lodge** for the eastern slope. It protects a large area of valleys, ridges and slopes covered in lush moss-laden forest rich in epiphytic *Bromeliads* and orchids.

The deep forest here is always alive with bird songs, from the three tinkling notes of the *White-bellied Antpitta* to the loud calls of the *Barred Forest-Falcon*. But the chorus is not limited to the forest, the beautiful gardens in the lodge are alive with the melodious song of the *Black-billed Peppershrike*, the onomatopoeia of the *Crested Quetzal* and the raucous mocking of the *Inca Jay*.

Following the example of the famous **Angel Paz** the rangers of the reserve have habituated two species of *Antpittas* to human presence by feeding them on a regular basis: the *White-bellied Antpitta* and the *Chestnut-crowned Antpitta*. Hummingbird feeders attract a good number of



species, among which *Bronzy Inca*, *Chestnut-breasted Coronet* or *Long-tailed Sylph*.

The large unsurfaced road leading to the lodge further continues to the village of **Las Caucheras** and crosses some excellent portions of forest providing some prime observation conditions. We will actively scan the fruiting trees or clumps of *Chusquea* bamboos to search for species such as *Black-billed Mountain-Toucan*, *Striped Treehunter*, *Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher* or *Plain-tailed Wren*.

The very comprehensive trail network will allow us to observe many fascinating species: *White-capped Parrot*, *Scaly-naped Amazon*, *Yellow-vented Woodpecker*, *Montane Foliage-gleaner*, *Rufous Spinetail*, *Blackish Tapaculo*, *Ash-colored* and *Equatorial Rufous-vented Tapaculos*, *Sulphurbellied Tyrannulet*, *Rufous-breasted* and *Pale-edged Flycatchers*, *Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant*, *Barred Becard*, *Black-chested Fruiteater*, *Glossy-black* and *Chestnut-bellied Thrushes*, *Capped Conebill*, *Common Bush-Tanager*, *Bluish Flowerpiercer*, *Golden-collared Honeycreeper*, *Saffron-crowned Tanager*, *Subtropical* and *Northern Mountain Caciques*...

With a bit of luck we might even see one of the rarer denizen of the place, the ever vocal but generally invisible *Wattled Guan*, the *Andean Potoo*, supremely confident in its immobility and cryptic plu-



mage, the splendid *Rufous-banded Owl* or the fabulous *White-capped Tanager*.

At night, we shouldn't miss the prime attraction that made San Isidro famous worldwide, the mythical "*San Isidro*" Owl. This mystery owl, intermediate in plumage between the *Black-and-white Owl* of the western Andean slope and the *Black-banded Owl* of the eastern lowlands, has been at times considered as a new species, or a mountain subspecies of *Black-banded Owl*. To this day, the enigma is not solved, and it is remarkable that whatever this beautiful bird will turn out to be, it has to this day never been found anywhere else in the world!



Day 12 : HUACAMAYOS RIDGE - NARUPA RESERVE - QUITO

A few kilometers from **San Isidro**, just past the small village of **Cosanga**, the steep slopes of the **Huacamayos Cordillera** constitute one of the best birding sites in the country, in the middle of a fabulous subtropical forest. A narrow trail runs along a forested ridge amidst beautiful trees covered in epiphytes. The view from the pass is all encompassing with

the vastness of the Amazonian plains rolling as far as the eyes can see.

In the dense vegetation and the often misty canopy we will look for *Andean Guan*, *Rufous Spinetail*, *Flammulated Treehunter*, *Tyrannine Woodcreeper*, *Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet*, *Rufous-breasted Flycatcher*, *Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant*, *Handsome Flycatcher*, *Smoky Bush-Tyrant*, *Dusky Piha*, *Green-and-black Fruiteater*, *Rufous Wren*, *Grass-green Tanager*, *Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager*, *Black-capped Hemispingus*...

Some rarer or more discreet species also occurs here and can sometimes be seen: the incredible *Swallow-tailed*

Nightjar, the stealthy *Slate-crowned Antpitta*, the enigmatic *Barred Antthrush*, the noisy *Ocellated Tapaculo*, or even the poorly known *White-rimmed Brush-Finch* or the ultra-rare *Greater Scythebill*.

We will then start the precipitous descent to the luxuriant Amazonian basin. Along the way, we will stop to check the feeders of the **Narupa Reserve**, property of the **Jocotoco Foundation**, where several new hummingbird species will greet us, frantically sipping their sugary cocktail: *Many-spotted Hummingbird*, *Gould's Jewelfront*, *Napo Sabrewing*, *Wire-crested Thorntail*, *Ecuadorian Piedtail*, *Green Hermit*, *Violet-fronted* et *Black-throated Brilliant*... With luck we might even glimpse one of the rarities to be found here: *Black Tinamou*, *Foothill Elaenia*, *Military Macaw*, *Andean Laniisoma*, *Red-billed Tyrannulet* or *Gray-tailed Piha* for example.

At the end of the day, we will return to the capital of the country, **Quito**.

Day 13 : QUITO - INTERNATIONAL DEPARTURE

After a night near the airport in the inter-Andean valley, the trip will end the next day with your international flight.

