NATURE COLOMBIA N.C



COLOMBIA IN FOCUS

A PHOTOGRAPHER'S BIRDING EXPEDITION

Colombia is a birder's paradise waiting to be discovered. Thanks to its wide variety of landscapes and climates, Colombia is a megadiverse country with some of the highest biodiversity on the planet. Regardless of size, Colombia holds almost 20% of all birds in the planet (1,940 species, with new species still being discovered).

This trip is crafted as a delightful journey exclusively for photographers, traversing the high and mid-elevation regions of the Colombian Western and Central Andes, as well as the northern part of the country. Along the way, we will explore some of the most spectacular birding reserves, each dedicated to safeguarding Colombia's vulnerable biological diversity.

These reserves boast pristine forests, cozy accommodations, and are specially curated for photographers seeking memorable bird encounters. Our relaxed pace ensures ample time at each location, allowing you to capture that perfect shot without feeling rushed.

ITINERARY

DAY	MORNING	AFTERNOON	ALTITUDE		OVERNIGHT	TEMPERATURE °C
			METERS	FEET		
1	Arrival & transfer to Hacienda San Jose		1800	5905	Hacienda San Jose	15-22
2	La Rivera Reserve					
3	Tinamú Reserve		1200	3937	Tinamu Reserve	18-30
4	Rio Blanco Reserve		2200	7217	Recinto del Pensamiento	10-25
5	Owl‘s Watch Reserve					
6	El Color de mi Reves		2850	9350		10-20
7	Hacienda El Bosque		3900	12795	Termales del Ruiz	10-25
8	Los Nevados PNN	Termales del Ruiz	4200	13780		8-20
9	Termales del Ruiz	Hacienda el Diamante	500	1640	Hacienda el Diamante	26-35
10	El Diamante	La Araucana Lodge	1800	5905	La Araucana Lodge	20-30
11	La Florida Reserve		2000	6261		18-25
12	Doña Dora Feeders / Alto Anchicaya		2100	6889		
13	Doña Dora	La Araucana Lodge				
14	San Felipe Reserve		2000	6261		20-30
15	International flights					

DETAILED ITINERARY

DAY 1. ARRIVAL IN PEREIRA

Your international flights are likely to arrive in the early morning or late afternoon and you will be taken to your hotel.

Accommodation at Hacienda San Jose

DAY 2. LA RIVERA RESERVE



The picturesque La Rivera Reserve is in the Barbas Bremen natural reserve in the northern portion of the Quindío department, including the towns of Salento and Filandia. This area, primarily covered in high Andean native forest, has water sources, wetlands, and is surrounded by protected areas. This area, known as the "fluvial star of Quindío," is the source of the region's rivers. It is historically notable since it was crossed by the colonial highway known as the "Camino Real" or "National Road," which connected Ibagué to Cartago and the Cauca River. This path was explored by notable personalities such as José Celestino Mutis, Alexander Von Humboldt, and Simon Bolivar. La Rivera Reserve offers a unique birdwatching experience in a culturally and ecologically rich setting.

The bird feeders are often visited by the spectacular Red-ruffed fruitcrow, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Blue-and-black Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager and more. Also, as we explore the surrounging forest, we may find the endemic Crested Ant-tanager.

Accommodation at Hacienda San Jose

DAY 3. TINAMU RESERVE

Tinamou Reserve is a charming reserve loaded with bird feeders and nice trails, located in San Peregrino village at 30 minutes from the city, in a dry forest of 15 ha. at 1.225 m.a.s.l. We will look for several endemics such as Grayish Piculet, Colombian Chachalaca and Parker's Antbird. Other specialties include Gray-headed Dove, Moustached Puffbird, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Andean Motmot, Blue-lored Antbird, Jet Antbird, Speckle-breasted Wren, Guira Tanager and Golden-rumped Euphonia.

At the feeders we can see near-endemics Western Emerald and Scrub Tanager, beside commoner species as Green Honeycreeper, Blue-necked Tanager, Long-billed Starthroat, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Green Hermit, White-vented Plumeleteer, Black-throated Mango, Lesser, Brown and Sparkling Violetears.

Accommodation at Tinamu Reserve.





DAY 4. RIO BLANCO RESERVE

Rio Blanco is one of the best birding sites in Colombia; It is a mecca for lovers of skulking species. Rio Blanco was the first birding location in Colombia to develop feeders for birds especially for antpittas.

It is located three kilometers northeast of Manizales (2150 m to 3700 m). It is an area of Cloud Forest with high biodiversity and protects numerous endangered species. There are over 360 species of birds recorded there, including 13 of Colombia's endemics.

We will walk into the reserve and begin with the local guide taking us to multiple feeding areas where we can get close views of the endemic and once almost impossible Brown-banded Antpitta, the near-endemic Bicolored Antpitta, The Chestnut-crowned Antpitta and the charismatic Slaty-crowned Antpitta.

The hummingbird feeders provide good and new species such as Long-tailed Sylph, Speckled Hummingbird, Bronzy Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet and Fawn-breasted Brilliant.

Other species that we´ll look for include the near-endemic White-throated Wedgebill, Pearled Treerunner, Black-capped and Black-eared Hemispingus, Streak-headed Antbird, Lachrymose Mountain-tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Andean Motmot, Grass-green Tanager, Golden-plumed Parakeet, Slaty brush-finch, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Bar-bellied and Crimson-Mantled Woodpeckers and Grey-browed Brush-finch. Further searching should reveal Masked saltator, Plushcap, Yellow-billed Cacique, Ash-colored Tapaculo, and Ocellated Tapaculo.

Accommodation at Recinto del Pensamiento.





DAY 5. OWL 'S WATCH RESERVE

Owl's Watch is an exclusive ecolodge filled with unique experiences, perfect for hiking and birdwatching in an area spanning over 80 hectares within the Rio Blanco Reserve, situated in a privileged high-altitude spot. Adventurers will explore nearly 3 kilometers of trails winding through our pristine forests.

Owl's Watch features several observation platforms designed for comfortable birdwatching, photography, or simply relaxing amidst nature. Here, we can eagerly anticipate sightings of majestic species such as the Buff-

breasted Mountain Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Black-billed Mountain Toucan, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker among others, and in the hummingbird feeders: Collared Inca, Buff-tail Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Long-tailed Sylph, and more.

Accommodation at Recinto del Pensamiento.





DAY 6. EL COLOR DE MI REVÉS

El Color de mi Reves is an exceptional birding location meticulously designed for bird photography in the High-andean forest of the central Andes of Colombia. The reserve also has worm feeders, providing unique opportunities to add the near-endemic Bicolored Antpitta and the elusive Ocellated Tapaculo to our list of sightings. Moreover, this site offers excellent opportunities for capturing the spectacular Andean Pygmy-owl through the lens. Among the myriad of species to seek out are the Black-collared Jay, Hooded Mountain Tanager, the majestic Sword-billed Hummingbird, Long-tailed Sylph, Lachrymose Mountain-Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, and numerous others, ensuring an unforgettable bird photography experience.

Accommodation at Recinto del Pensamiento.









DAY 7. HACIENDA EL BOSQUE

Hacienda el Bosque is located 30 minutes from Manizales. It has an altitude gradient from 2,800 to 3,900 altitude (9514 to 12790 feet) and contains varied ecosystems such as pastures for livestock and dairy production and large extensions of high Andean and Paramo forests protected for more than 40 years. The place contains a number of feeder stations for hummingbirds and tanagers where Collared Inca, White-bellied Woodstar, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sparkling Violetear, Lesser Violetear, Tourmaline Sunangel, Tyrian Metaltail, Buff-Winged Starfrontlet and the sought-after Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan can be found, however the main attraction are the feeders of one of the most enigmatic antpitta species: the Crescent-faced Antpitta besides the Central-Andes member of the Rufous Antpitta complex, the Equatorial Antpitta.

Accommodation at Termales del Ruiz Hotel (Los Nevados National Park)

DAY 8. LOS NEVADOS NATIONAL PARK & TERMALES DEL RUIZ

Nevado Del Ruiz is a National Park situated below the Ruiz Volcano between 2800 m and 4000 m.a.s.l (9180 to 13120 feet) it is a combination of paddocks, elfin forest, patches of bamboo, Paramos and an active volcano.

The elfin forest and paramos of this massive park are home to endemic species including the rare and local Rufous-fronted Parakeet, and near-endemic Black-thighed Puffleg. Starting in the elfin forests we will look for these two species along with the near-endemic Black-backed Bush Tanager, Paramo Tapaculo, while small roving flocks may include Hooded Mountain Tanager, Golden-crowned Tanager, Grass wren, Plain-coloured Seedeater, Paramo Seedeater, Tawny Antpitta, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Andean Tit-spinetail, Crowned Chat-tyrant, Brown-backed Chat-tyrant and Andean Tit-spinetail.

The main target of this stunning mountain is the endemic Buffy Helmetcrest, we will look for this amazing bird in flowering bushes of Speletia (commonly known as 'frailejones' – a unique type of subshrubs, in the sunflower family, that inhabits Paramo ecosystem only)

Accommodation at Termales del Ruiz Hotel (Los Nevados National Park)



On day 9, we will relish the stunning setting of Termales del Ruiz. We will kick off the day with a delightful breakfast at the lodge, followed by a visit to the splendid feeders and surroundings of Termales del Ruiz. Here, amongst the breathtaking scenery, we will have the chance to spot the exquisite Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Buff-wing Starfrontlet, the magnificent Great Sapphirewing, Shining Sunbeam, and many other winged treasures.



In the afternoon, we will journey to Hacienda el Diamante, a newly opened destination located in the Cauca Valley, an inland valley nestled between the western and central chains of the Andes in southwestern Colombia. Considered one of the most fertile plains in Latin America, the region remained economically stagnant for centuries, detached from global markets. However, it experienced significant growth fueled by the remarkable sugar cane boom from 1930 to 1980. This period saw the transformation of inefficient haciendas into modern, large-scale sugar agribusinesses. Unfortunately, this expansion led to deforestation and the replacement of native dry forests with vast sugar cane plantations.

Accommodation at Eco Hotel Hacienda El Diamante.

DAY 10. HACIENDA EL DIAMANTE & TRANSFER TO ARAUCANA LODGE



We will expend most of the morning at Hacienda el Diamante, where the main star is the Crested Bobwhite that visit the feeders of the reserve. Other birds that can be found on the banana feeders include the Blue-necked Tanager, Guira Tanager, Crimson-backed Tanager, Thick billed Euphonia, Scrub Tanager, the endemic Colombia Chachalaca among others.

Later, we will make the 2 hours' drive to the fantastic Araucana lodge, an incredible place Nestled in a bamboo and palm grove on a 'finca' in the Western Andes of Colombia at 1600 meters above sea level. If time permits, we will explore the lodge grounds and observe the feeders in search of bird species such as the Red-headed Barbet, Saffron-crowned and Golden Tanagers, Andean Emerald, Black-billed Thrush, and many others.

Accommodation at Araucana Lodge



DAY 11. LA FLORIDA RESERVE

On day 11 we will do a short drive towards Finca La Florida, a true Paradise for hummingbirds and tanagers located in beautiful cloud forest at 2000m.a.s.l. in the km18 of the new Buenaventura Road and where we will spend the full day working on its amazing set of feeders and nearby forest. Some of the Targets of the area include the endemic and stunning Multicolored Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Golden-naped Tanager, Green Honeycreeper, Golden Tanager, Black-winged Saltator, Red-headed Barbet, Brown Violetear, Long-tailed Sylph and many more. However, one the main Targets of the place and the reason we need to arrive early, is the skulky and endemic Chestnut Wood-Quail, which come to feeders allowing top tier views and photo opportunities, along with Scaled Antpitta and Little Tinamou.

Accommodation at Araucana Lodge



DAY 12. DOÑA DORA FEEDERS (ALTO ANCHICAYA)

Early in the morning we will head to the Old Buenaventura road which descends from the western Andes to the Pacific lowlands through the Anchicaya valley, holding a mind-blowing biodiversity and a spectacular mix of Chocó and andean species. Our first stop will be at an Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek, where we anticipate witnessing their vibrant displays during their active early morning rituals. Afterward, we will return to the house for breakfast, where we expect to find numerous bird species visiting the feeders. Among the highlights will be Chocó region endemics such as the Toucan Barbet, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, Empress Brilliant, Rufous-gaped Hillstar, Rufous-throated Tanager and Purple-bibbed Whitetip, along with a diverse array of other avian treasures including the near-endemic Black-headed Brushfinch, Green Thorntail, Crimson-rumpled Toucanet, Flame-rumped Tanager and more.

Accommodation at Araucana Lodge





DAY 13. DOÑA DORA FEEDERS (ALTO ANCHICAYA) & ARAUCANA

We will enjoy a second morning or full day at this marvelous location, allowing flexibility to focus on observing the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek or spending additional time at the bustling feeders, which are most active in the early morning hours. In the afternoon, we will have the option to either remain at the current site or venture to the Aracuana lodge feeders for further birdwatching opportunities.

Accommodation at Araucana Lodge

DAY 14. SAN FELIPE RESERVE

San Felipe, located in the renowned km 18 area, an area that was designated by BirdLife International as an Important Bird and Biodiversity Area (IBA) in 2004. Since its acquisition in 1989, this 54-acre reserve has been a testament to a little family's commitment to environmental conservation. Situated at an elevation of 1,950 meters above sea level, San Felipe Reserve boasts a delightful array of feeders, attracting sought-after species such as the endemic Chestnut Wood Quail, the elusive Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush, the White-naped Brushfinch, the Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, the Golden Tanager, and a myriad of other vibrant avian treasures.

Accommodation at Araucana Lodge



DAY 15. INTERNATIONAL FLIGHTS

On our last morning, we'll enjoy the final hours photographing the vibrant birdlife around Araucana Lodge before heading to the airport for our international flights — taking home not only thousands of images, but also unforgettable memories of Colombia's incredible avian diversity.