



SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS



ECUADOR BIRDING: SOUTHERN HIGHLIGHTS

Day	Description	Meals	Spanish Speaking Driver or English Speaking Guide
1	<p>Cuenca & El Cajas National Park: You will be picked up from your hotel at Cuenca City, and then be transferred to El Cajas National Park, this natural reserve. This place preserves some of the prettiest Paramo in the country with several majestic highland lagoons. Paramo is habitat above the normal tree line characterized by shrubs, grass tussocks, and patches of gnarly Polylepis Trees. We will be looking in particular for Violet-throated Mettaltail, Tit-like Dacnis and Giant Conebill. In the afternoon, you will have a packed lunch while sitting at a hummingbird feeder in Yunguillo Reserve and then look for the endemic Pale-headed Brushfinch and other specialties of the reserve before moving on to Piñas.</p> <p>*Night: Buenaventura</p>	BL, D	SEBG
2	<p>Buenaventura & Piñas: Today you will visit Buenaventura Reserve, which is considered lowland and foothill forest containing both Chocoan and Tumbesian species. The Long-wattled Umbrellabird is well-known in this site and if we get to the right spot at the right time we will have a decent chance hopefully of seeing them. Afterwards we will bird the grounds for the rest of the morning looking for the mixed flocks and everything else we can find. In the afternoon we will go look for the critically endangered and endemic El Oro Parakeet or any other particular desired targets.</p> <p>*Night: Buenaventura</p>	B,L, D	SEBG
3	<p>Buenaventura: After breakfast, you will have a flexible morning. You can try the umbrellabird one more time if needed, bird one of the other trails for a few hours, look or flocks along the amazingly birdy road filled with flocks, or just focus on the coatis and hummingbirds that come up to the lodge for food before heading out around 10 a.m. for Jorupe reserve, stopping only for lunch along the way. You will arrive to Jorupe in the afternoon to bird the rest of the time, until dinner at night.</p> <p>*Night: Jorupe</p>	B,L, D	SEBG

B= Breakfast
 BL=Box Lunch
 L= Lunch
 D= Dinner
 SEBG= Specialized Expert Birding Guide



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4	<p>Zapotillo & Jorupe: Early in the morning, after breakfast, you will visit Zapotillo, located in the far southwest corner of the country and great for racking up Tumbesian endemics. We will bird the morning here. At some point, like maybe lunch time, we will need to focus on the corn feeders for the charismatic Guayaquil squirrel and slew of birds that they attract. The afternoon can be spent birding the trails of Jorupe again or we can go for birds that like disturbed habitat more and bird the rice field and river Macará on the outskirts of the nearby town.</p> <p>*Night: Jorupe</p>	B,L, D	SEBG
5	<p>Utuna, Catamayo, Cerro Tapichalaca: Early wakeup call and breakfast at around 5 a.m. to begin the journey to Utuna Reserve at about 06:30. This place consists of a different, moist habitat. The gems of this reserve are the purple-throated Sunangel and Rainbow Starfrontlet. We may see two subspecies of Rainbow Starfrontlet and the male in Utuna has a crest with all colors of the rainbow present. The Black-crested Tit-Tyrant is another showstopper and we can only find him here. Other specialties to be enjoyed mean we will want to spend several hours here. We will have lunch in Catamayo, which will offer us our most arid habitat. To contrast our lunch stop, Cerro Tapichalaca will be our wettest habitat. We should get there in time to bird a bit close to the lodge and enjoy the feeders which will have mainly new and distinct hummers.</p> <p>*Night: Casa Simpson</p>	B,L, D	SEBG
6	<p>Cerro Tapichalaca & Valladolid: Early in the morning, after breakfast, you will visit the montane cloud forest, protected by Tapichalaca, where it often rains and is cold, but the birds, love it!. We want to try our first opportunity possible with the enigmatic Jocotoco Antpitta. If it gets rained out the first day, then we have one more chance! The plan is to get the antpitta and keep birding the trails, racking in as many quality views of birds as possible. This bird list of these places are so long we will have hundreds of options. After lunch, we will leave the reserve, heading south towards the Peruvian border once again. This time we will be in the drainage area of the River Marañon, offering us a host of new possible endemics as well as just plain out good foothill birding.</p> <p>*Night: Copalinga</p>	B,L, D	SEBG

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7	<p>Tapichalaca: After breakfast, and if necessary, we can again search out for the Jocotoco Antpitta. Otherwise we will hit a different trail to see what we can find, like Chestnut-crested Cotinga or maybe an Undulated or Chestnut-naped Antpitta. Around 10 a.m. we will pack up and move on to Copalinga. On the way we will bird the old Zamora road where we can pick up several goodies, one of which being Cliff Flycatcher. Copalinga is an excellent Amazon foothill birding site and once you arrive, you can bird the area close to the lodge in the afternoon.</p> <p>**Night: Copalinga</p>	B,L, D	SEBG
8	<p>Copalinga: After breakfast, you will spend the morning birding at the National Park Podocarpus adjacent to Copalinga. Head back to Copalinga for lunch and spend some time at the hummingbird feeders as they attract species that will be new for the trip. From here, you will return to Cuenca City in the hotel of your choice or the airport, which will end the service.</p>	B	SEBG

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Inclusions:

- ✓ Private transport starting and ending in Quito (hotel or airport)
- ✓ Specialized expert birding guide with spotting scope
- ✓ Breakfasts, lunches, dinners (from lunch on day1 to breakfast on final day)
- ✓ Double / Twin room accommodation
- ✓ Entrance fees and access permits to all scheduled visits on itinerary

Exclusions:

- ✗ International airfare
- ✗ Single Supplement
- ✗ Alcoholic beverages
- ✗ Extra snacks
- ✗ Tips
- ✗ Personal expenses & souvenirs
- ✗ Extra activities not specified in the itinerary

This program can be adapted to your personal needs - just let us if you would like to make any changes, we'll be happy to help!

RECOMENDED TO BRING: Cameras, binoculars, rain proofing (just in case), decent walking shoes, warmer clothes, water bottle, head covering (hat or buff), sunscreen, insect repellent, flashlight.

This tour is available to start on any day throughout the year, depending on the availability of the birding guide.



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