

**Henry Eco Tours**  
[www.henryecotours.com](http://www.henryecotours.com)

## **Birding in the Eastern Ecuador from the High Andes to the Amazon Jungle 15 Days Tour**

On this tour, we cover everything from the snow-capped peaks of the high Andes all the way down to the humid rainforests of the Amazon basin. The biodiversity of this area is arguably the highest in the world, with more than 1000 bird species. We selected excellent birding spots, lodges and tour guides to make this trip an unforgettable.

### **Day 1: Quito**

we will meet you at the Airport for the transfer to a Hotel in Quito.

On this tour, we highly recommend be to prepare for the high altitude of the first two days.



Antisana holds the largest population of Andean Condors in Ecuador

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**Day 2: Antisana, Papallacta, Guango**

as we climb up the eastern Andes, we leave the crowded metropolis of Quito far below us. On clear days the views of the snow-clad volcanoes of Antisana and Cotopaxi are staggering. Today we bird montane scrub and verdant paramo looking for Black-faced (Andean) Ibis, Andean Condor, Carunculated Caracara, Ecuadorian Hill star, and many other high Andean species. A nearby lake holds a variety of waterfowl, including Silvery Grebe. Later we drive over Papallacta Pass and down to Guango Lodge for the night (a journey of around an hour and a quarter). This small lodge boasts great hummer feeders, which attract Tourmaline Sun angel, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Collared Inca, Long-tailed Sylph, and the incredible Sword-billed Hummingbird.



We will need to reach nearly 14,000ft to try for Rufous-bellied Seed-snipe.

**Day 3: Papallacta, Guango and San Isidro**

we start birding near Papallacta Pass. If the weather looks nice, we may head straight up to the top. The paramo here is wet and lush, and we'll look for species that we haven't seen the day before, like the charismatic Rufous-bellied Seed-snipe and the skulking White-chinned Thistle tail. If the weather does not cooperate, we may first bird some elfin forest just before treelined, where we have

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a decent chance to find some scarce birds such as Masked Mountain-Tanager, Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, Black-backed Bush-Tanager, and Agile Tit-Tyrant. Later on, we check the Polylepis woodland for Giant Cone bill before birding our way down to San Isidro, checking for Torrent Ducks as we go. Located on an old ranch adjacent to extensive subtropical cloud forest. The hummer feeders here usually have one or two species that we did not see at Guango, including Bronzy Inca.



Chestnut-breasted Coronet; one of the most numerous hummers at the Guango feeders

#### **Day 4: San Isidro area**

we spend the whole day birding the subtropical forest and there is plenty to keep us busy. In the morning – numerous birds can be see almost on your doorstep like Green Jay, Andean Motmot, Black-capped Tanager, Montane Wood creeper, Black-billed Peppershrike, Subtropical Cacique, and Pale-edged Flycatcher. The lodge has had some success feeding ant pittas, and we may find Chestnut-crowned and White-bellied Ant pittas coming into worms. Birding the roadsides near the lodge is a lot of fun. Large mixed species flocks roam the forest and hold flashy birds such as Saffron-crowned Tanager, Black-eared Hemispingus, and Rufous-breasted Flycatcher. At night, we will search owls.

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The subtropical forests around San Isidro hold the gorgeous Golden-collared Honeycreeper.

#### **Day 5: Guacamayos to Sumaco**

Only 30 minutes' drive from San Isidro is the famous Cordillera de Guacamayos, an outlying ridge of the Andes with extensive forest and numerous rare and local species. The trail along the ridge holds numerous neat birds, some of them seriously rare, and we hope to see at least a few of them. Possibilities include Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Slate-crowned Antpitta, Dusky Piha, Barred Ant thrush, Greater Scythe bill, Ocellated Tapaculo, Chestnut-breasted Wren, and White-faced Nunbird, among many other more common species. Later, we start driving to Sumaco, making stops along the Loreto Road to look for Cliff Flycatcher, Blackish. In late afternoon, we will reach the base of the Sumaco volcano. We'll spend the next three nights at a nice lodge.

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Golden-tailed Sapphire in Sumaco

**Day 6-7: Sumaco National Park area**

the forest at Sumaco is loaded with east slope foothill not easily seen elsewhere. We'll spend much of our time birding the dirt roads and forest trails nearby. The possibilities are many, but here's a list of a few of the more tempting birds: Coppery-chested Jacamar, Lined Antshrike, Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Golden-collared Toucanet, Blue-rumped Manakin, Rufous-napped and Olivaceous Green lets, Spotted and Paradise Tanagers, Yellow-breasted Ant wren, Lafresnaye's Piculet, Gray-mantled and Coraya Wrens, and Black-billed Tree hunter.

At night, Band-bellied Owl often sings its haunting song near the lodge. We'll try to track it down, and there will also be chances to try for Foothill and Rufescent Screech-Owls. Hummingbird activity is best late in the afternoon. Napo Sabrewing will hopefully be the star of the show, with a great supporting cast that can include Brown and Sparkling Violetears, Green Hermit, Ecuadorian Pied tail, Wire-crested Thorn tail, Booted Racket tail, Violet-fronted Brilliant, Golden-tailed Sapphire, and Many-spotted Hummingbird.

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Orange-cheeked Parrot, another visitor to the Yasuni clay lick.

#### **Day 8-9-10-11-12 Yasuni National Park - Pilche Lodge**

Pilche Lodge is located right in the heart of some of the most biodiverse forest on the planet, with easy access to both hilly terra firme forest and flooded várzea forest.

In this area, we have a 45-meter high of birdwatching tower.

On one day, we will work the terra firme trails, and lagoon and with the help of eagle-eyed local guides, we will search several species of manakin, other handsome birds like Yellow-billed Jacamar and Collared Puffbird, and many species of antbird.

We need to keep an eye out for ants – if we luck into a big army ant warm, we could find the outrageous White-plumed and Hairy-crested Antbirds along with Sooty, White-cheeked, Lunulated, and more. We'll also spend a morning at the well-known clay lick within Yasuni National Park.

There are two different licks; at the first one near the Napo, Mealy and Yellow-crowned Amazons, Dusky-headed Parakeet, and Blue-headed Parrot often congregate in staggering numbers. The second lick is farther from the river and may attract some rarer species like Orange-cheeked Parrot, Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet, and Scarlet Macaw among the hordes of Cobalt-winged parakeets (Note: sometimes we visit the clay licks from Sani Lodge instead). Birding the flooded forest along the edge of the lake and channel is a great way to spend the afternoons when the trails can be slow. Greater Ani, Azure Gallinule, Lesser

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Kiskadee, many herons and egrets including the superb Agami Heron, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Rufous-tailed Flatbill, Casqued Oropendola, Pale-tailed Barbthroat, and Rufous-breasted Hermit are just a few possible species that can be seen on these outings.



A Channel-billed Toucan drops into photographic range.

**Days 13-14: Limoncocha Biological Reserve.**

Limoncocha is a species barrier, and the avifauna is slightly different on the north side.

In the reserve, there are some harpy eagles, Slate-colored Hawk, Gray-headed Kite, and Double-toothed Kite. Other species that are often seen include Many-banded Aracari, Gilded Barbet, Great Jacamar, Paradise and Opal-crowned Tanagers, Yellow-billed and White-fronted Nunbirds, White-throated and Channel-billed Toucans. It is also a good place to see several species of monkeys including Red Howler and squirrel monkey.

The lake and forest are great places to do some relaxing birding from canoes in the afternoon. It's a nice way to see neat birds and a lot easier than the forest trails. Black-capped Donacobius, White-winged Swallow, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, Capped Heron, Pale-vented Pigeon, Lesser Kiskadee, and Greater Ani are some

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of the more conspicuous birds around the lake. The channel is like a tunnel through the towering forest, and is better for shy kingfishers including American Pygmy and Green-and-rufous, as well as Agami Heron, the near-endemic Cocha Antshrike, Orange-crested Manakin, White-chinned Jacamar, perched hummingbirds, monkeys, sloths, and more. We'll also spend some time on one of the river islands in the Napo, where a number of species are restricted, such as Castlenau's Antshrike, Oriole Blackbird, Black-and-white Antbird, Parker's Spinetail, and Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant.



Black-mantled Tamarins

#### **Day 15: Limoncocha to Quito**

There may be some time for some early morning birding before travelling by car back to Coca. We then take a short flight over the snow-capped volcanoes of the Andes that often allows spectacular views of snow-capped volcanos. Flight schedules vary, but typically we will be back in Quito by around noon or 1 pm. We will transfer to your hotel in Quito and the tour ends here.

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The black water lagoons in the Amazon are home to Black-capped Donacobius

### Considerations

Fairly early starts are necessary since birding is almost always best early in the morning, and breakfast will typically start between 5:00 and 5:30am. On most (but not all) days there will be some downtime after lunch to relax. You will usually get to the lodge before dark, but on at least one or two evenings there will be some night birding, meaning you will arrive back at the lodge after dark. At least four lunches will be packed lunches. The drives are not especially long on this tour, with the longest being about three hours on day 5. There are also boat rides on the Napo River of about 2 to 3 hours. As afternoon birding is usually less productive than morning birding, some participants choose to skip some of the afternoon birding sessions and relax around the lodge instead.

**IMPORTANT:** The program and itinerary are subject to change to safeguard the safety of passengers, due to force majeure, unforeseen circumstances or the negligence of third parties or bad weather.

We remind you that the activity of the animals also depends a lot on the climate.

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**Included.**

Lodging and 3 meals per day, purified water 24 hours a day, snacks, rubber boots, rain poncho, mosquito repellent, sunscreen, first aid kit, one staff like an assistant, Private Guide, river and land transportation, entrance fees, last day an one-way air ticket from Coca to Quito.

**Not included.** additional drinks apart from those included; alcoholic beverages; travel insurance; excursions not included in the tour itinerary; extras in hotels such as laundry service, minibar, room service, telephone calls, and personal items; medical fees; other items or services not specifically mentioned as being included.

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