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Southern Peru Birding Trip with optional Machu Picchu extension *15 DAYS/ 14 NIGHTS*

OVERVIEW

Peru is an exciting and biodiverse country with habitats ranging from arid plains to mountains to rainforest and hosts over 1850 bird species. Peru has one of the biggest bird lists in the world, with 107 endemic bird species. This tour visits southern Peru with a possible extension to Machu Picchu. From Lima, we will visit Cusco, the Eastern Slopes of the Andes and the magical Manu Biosphere Reserve, which has the highest diversity of life on Earth and is one of the most important conservation units in the world. Manu is one of the world's great wilderness areas where wildlife is still plentiful and over 1000 species of birds have been recorded there. The best months for visiting Peru are March to November.

DAILY SUMMARY

DAY 1	Arrival in Lima
DAY 2	Flight from Lima to Cusco, birding around Huacarpay Lake
DAY 3	Birding drive from Cusco to Wayquecha lodge
DAY 4 -6	The Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge
DAY 7-9	Amazonia Lodge
DAY 10-14	Manu WildLife Center
DAY 15	Flight back to Cusco and onwards to Lima or Machu Picchu Extension

DETAILED DAILY ITINERARY

DAY 1: Arrival in Lima

Today we arrive in Peru's capital city of Lima. You will be transferred from the airport to a comfortable city hotel.

DAY 2: Flight from Lima to Cusco, birding around Huacarpay Lake

This morning we will board a flight from Lima to Cusco. From here we will have a half hour drive to reach Huacarpay Lake, where we will bird most of the day. The lake is surrounded by both Incan and pre-Incan ruins, and we will have time to look for a wide variety of high Andean waterfowl. These include Puna, Yellow-billed and Cinnamon Teals, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Duck, Silvery and White-tufted Grebe, Andean Coot and many other wetland-associated species. We will also search the surrounding reed beds for the furtive Wren-like Rushbird, beautiful Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Yellow-winged Blackbird, Puna Ibis and Andean Negrigo, to name just a few.

The seemingly barren arid scrub that covers the surrounding hillsides is loaded with birds, and we will search for the endemic Rusty-fronted Canastero, Streak-fronted Thornbird and the prime target of the area; the gorgeous endemic Bearded Mountaineer feeding in the yellow flowers of tobacco bushes. While the Bearded Mountaineer is sometimes tricky to find, it is often associated with the larger Giant Hummingbird, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Greenish Yellow Finch, Blue-and-yellow Tanager and Peruvian, Ash-breasted and Mourning Sierra Finches. We may also encounter some raptors, including Aplomado Falcon, Cinereous Harrier, Variable Hawk and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle. We return to Cusco to settle into our lodge for dinner and some well-deserved rest.

DAY 3: Birding drive from Cusco to Wayquecha lodge

This morning we will make our way from Cusco to Wayquecha lodge. Just 3.5 hours northeast of Cusco, this is a spectacular drive through the snow-capped Andes.

Wayquecha Cloud Forest Biological Station is one of the world's best sites to explore the lush cloud forest ecosystem bordering Manu National Park. Situated where the eastern slopes of the Andes meet the Amazon lowlands, the cloud forest absorbs moisture from passing clouds and is often blanketed in mist and fog. The constant supply of moisture allows a remarkable diversity of plants to grow here, which in turn supports thriving populations of birds, amphibians, and mammals.

We will bird around the lodge and look out for Moustached Flowerpiercer, Tit-like Dacnis, Golden-collared Tanager and the Puna Thistletail. We will search for flocks that will contain Grass-green Tanager, Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Black-throated Tody-Flycatcher, Barred Fruiteater, White-banded and White-throated Tyrannulets and much more. If we are lucky we may see Peruvian Treehunter, Golden-plumed Parakeet or Greater Scythebill. Tonight we will enjoy dinner and overnight at Wayquecha Lodge.

🏠 **Accommodation: Wayquecha lodge**

DAY 4-6: Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge

This morning we will travel to the Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge. It is located in the pristine Manu cloud forest on the verdant eastern slopes of the Andes. The lodge is named after the Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Peru's large, bright-red national bird that puts on a colorful, noisy mating display adjacent to the lodge every morning.

Spectacled Bears, Woolly Monkeys, Brown Capuchin Monkeys, quetzals and a host of other colorful birds inhabit the surrounding forest, and a bubbling mountain stream tumbles past the lodge.

PLEASE TAKE NOTE THERE IS NO ELECTRICITY HERE.

Walking around the lodge enables you to see the under-story of the Cloud Forest first hand and facilitates seeing some species not likely from the road such as Chestnut-breasted Wren, Scaled Antpitta, Rufous-breasted and Short-tailed Antthrushes, Slaty Gnateater and the endemic Cerulean-capped Manakin.

We will spend the next two days birding in the area around the lodge. We will be on the lookout for White-rumped Hawk, Solitary Eagle, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Crested Quetzal, Golden-headed Quetzal, Masked Trogon, Highland Motmot, Black-streaked Puffbird, Blue-banded Toucanet, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Montane Woodcreeper, Spotted Barbtail, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Uniform and Variable Antshrikes, Slaty Gnateater, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Scaled Fruiteater, Bolivian Tyrannulet, Inca Flycatcher (endemic), Yungas Mankin, Uniform Antshrike, White-throated Spadebill, Fulvous-breasted Flatbill, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Yellow-rumped and Slaty Antwrens, Deep-blue Flowerpiercer, Peruvian Piedtail (endemic) and lots more.

We will also do some night birding here and are looking for Foothill and Rufescent Screech Owl, Rufous-banded Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar and Andean Potoo.

🏠 **Accommodation: Cock-of-the-Rock Lodge**

DAY 7-9: Amazonia Lodge

Today we will transfer to our next lodge called Amazonia Lodge, where we will spend the next two days. By now we have dropped from 3,400 meters (11,200feet) in Huacarpay to 500 meters or 1,600 feet.

Amazonia Lodge is located in the tropical rainforest of the Manu Biosphere Reserve, near the village of Atalaya. It is located in the transition zone between the Andes foothills and the tropical lowland rainforest, right on the banks of the Alto Madre de Dios River.

The Lodge has a bird list of around 650 species and others are continually being added to the list. The lodge is situated in the transitional zone at 500 meters, where the last low foothills of the Andes begin to flatten out into the lowland Amazon Basin proper. There are Butterfly bushes that attract various Hummingbird species including the pretty Rufous-crested Coquette, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Blue-tailed Emerald, Black-eared Fairy and Wire-crested Thorntail. A canopy tower on the hill enables us to watch canopy foothill flocks.

There are a vast amount of birding possibilities around the lodge and some species we will be on the lookout for include: Black-capped Tinamou, Blackish Rail, the strange Hoatzin, Buckley's Forest Falcon, Wattled Guan, Military Macaw, Blue-headed Macaw, Pheasant Cuckoo, Koepcke's Hermit, Rufous-webbed Brilliant, Bluish fronted Jacamar, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Fine-barred Piculet, Red-billed Scythbill, Dark-breasted Spinetail, Dusky-cheeked Foliage-gleaner, Bamboo Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antshrike, Amazonian and Thrush-like Antpitta's, Rusty-belted Tapaculo, Mottle-backed Elaenia, Red-billed Tyrannulet, Johannis' Tody-tyrant, Yellow-browed Tody-flycatcher, Black-backed Tody -Flycatcher, Ornate Flycatcher, Band-tailed, Fiery-capped and Round-tailed Manakins, White-thighed Swallow, Cuzco Warbler and Black-faced Dacnis. Night birding might produce Mottled Owl, Black-banded Owl, Tawny-bellied Screech-owl, Great, Long-tailed and Common Potoo.

🏠 Accommodation: Amazonia Lodge

DAY 10-14: Manu Wildlife Center

Today we will transfer to the Manu Wildlife Center, where we will spend the next three days. The Manu Wildlife Center is located in the wild and remote Manu wilderness of Peru along the Manu de Dios in the Manu Biosphere Reserve. Manu is one of the world's great wilderness areas where wildlife is still plentiful and over 1000 species of birds have been recorded.

We will have the opportunity to visit the Macaw lick and observe the spectacle of hundreds of Parrots and Macaws at close quarters. Here we will see the beautiful Orange-cheeked Parrot, hundreds of Blue-headed Parrots as well as Mealy and Yellow-crowned Parrots. Smaller visitors include White-eyed, Cobalt-winged and Dusky-billed Parrotlets. The rest of the time will be spent birding the extensive trail systems which have been designed to visit different forest types. The area around this lodge has the most forest types of anywhere in the Manu area, and thus the highest biodiversity - which means the most species of birds. Large stands of Bamboo hold many local and much sought after species, and coupled with the extensive Varzea, Terra Firma and Mature Transitional Floodplain Forest, this means a mind-boggling variety of birdlife. 600+. We will spend time at a canopy observation tower accessed by a spiral metal stairway watching canopy flocks which include Sclater's Antwren, Chestnut-winged and Lineated Foliage-gleaners, Three-striped Flycatcher, Red-billed Pied Tanager, Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak and a multitude of Tanagers, Dacnis and Honeycreepers.

Some of the more interesting and unusual species we will be searching for in the Bamboo include Rufous-headed Woodpecker, Manu Antbird, Flammulated Bamboo-tyrant, Large-headed and Dusky-tailed Flatbills, Peruvian Recurvebill, Dusky-cheeked and Brown-rumped Foliage-gleaners, Ihring's (Bamboo) and Ornate Antwren, White-lined Antbird, Striated Antbird and more.

Some of the scarcer forest species we will be on the lookout for include: Bartlett's Tinamou, Razor-billed Curassow, Pale-winged Trumpeter, Sunbittern, Pavonine Quetzal, Purus Jacamar, Striolated Puffbird, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Cream-colored Woodpecker, Ocellated Woodcreeper, Collared Puffbird, Ruddy Spinetail, Plain Softtail, Striped Woodhaunter, Banded Antbird, Ash-throated Gnateater, White-throated Antbird, Black-spotted Bare-eye, Black-faced Cotinga, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, White-bellied Tody-tyrant, Royal Flycatcher, Musician (Ferruginous) Wren, Pale-eyed Blackbird, Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak to name but a few. We will also visit Ox-bow lakes in the area where we will see lakeside birds including Hoatzin, Sungrebe, Agami Heron, Black-billed Seed-finch, Silvered and Band-tailed Antbirds, Amazonian Streaked Antwren, Rufous-sided Crake, Gray-breasted Crake and we may be lucky and see one of the two Giant Otter families that live in the area.

Night birding may produce Long-tailed, Great and Gray Potoos, Amazonian Pygmy Owl, Spectacled Owl, Ocellated Poorwill and Silky-tailed Nightjar amongst others. A visit to the large mammal lick in the forest, apart from attracting Tapirs, Peccaries and maybe a Jaguar, also attracts Guans, Curassows, Chachalacas as well as Rose-fronted and Rock Parakeets and Dusky-billed Parrotlet.

🏠 Accommodation: Manu Wildlife Centre

DAY 15: Flight back to Cusco and onwards to Lima or Machu Picchu Extension

Today is the end of our wonderful birding trip in Southern Peru. We take a flight back to Cusco and onwards to Lima or you can join us on the extension to Machu Picchu.

Thank you for choosing Nature Travel Birding.