Ecuador

A Week in Paradise

Tour Leaders: Eric Ripma and Edison Buenaño

March 21-29, 2025
Ecuador is full of incredible birding areas but Mindo is the most famous of them all. On this tour, we’ll spend a week visiting all of the amazing birding locations in this region of Ecuador. Some of our stops will include Silanche, Milpe, Mashpi, Long-wattled Umbrellabird Reserve, and Refugio Paz de las Aves where Angel Paz will feed his famous antpittas. The list of highlight species on this tour is long but some of the top species might include Barred Fruiteater, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Andean Cock-of-the Rock, Giant and Moustached Antpittas, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Toucan Barbet, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Rufous-winged, Blue-whiskered, Scarlet-browed, Gray-and-gold, Moss-backed, Glistening-green, Rufous-throated, Beryl-spangled, and Tawny-crested Tanagers, Club-winged and Golden-winged Manakins, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, and much more!

At the end of the tour we’ll also have a day to visit Antisana National Park to see the high elevation species that call the park home as well as time to explore Quito! Highlights at Antisana include Giant Hummingbird, Andean Condor, Andean Ibis, Paramo Pipit, Black-winged Ground-Dove, and Ecuadorian Hillstar.

**Itinerary Overview:**
- March 21: Arrival and Transfer to Hotel in Quito
- March 22: Zuro Loma Reserve and the Old Nono-Mindo Road – Transfer to Septimo Paraiso
- March 23: Refugio Paz de las Aves and Milpe Bird Sanctuary
- March 24: Tandayapa Valley
- March 25: Silanche Reserve
- March 26: Long-wattled Umbrellabird Reserve
- March 27: Reserva Amagusa and the Oilbird Caves – Transfer to Quito
- March 28: Antisana National Park
- March 29: City Tour and Departure from Quito

**Detailed Itinerary:**

**March 21: Arrival and Transfer to Hotel in Quito**

Upon arrival, you will be picked up at Mariscal Sucre International Airport (UIO) and transferred to the hotel for the night.

- **Overnight: San Jose de Puembo Garden Hotel**

**March 22: Zuro Loma Reserve and the Old Nono-Mindo Road – Transfer to Septimo Paraiso**

After breakfast, we’ll drive to the Zuro Loma Reserve, located at an elevation over 10,000 feet. Zuro Loma is well located for many high-elevation specialties, and we will spend the morning birding
around the property. We will spend some time watching where some locals have started feeding Chestnut-naped and Equatorial Antpittas, Barred Fruiteater, Andean Guan, Black-chested Mountain Tanager and Yellow-breasted Brush-Finch. We will also be watching for some spectacular hummingbirds including Sword-billed Hummingbird, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, Tyrian Metaltail, and Black-tailed Trainbearer.

We will enjoy a picnic lunch, after which we’ll begin the drive to Mindo via the Old Nono-Mindo Road, birding along the way. This road offers spectacular views of the forest and excellent birding, with the possibility of such sought-after birds as Torrent Duck and White-capped Dipper. In the afternoon we will arrive at Septimo Paraiso Lodge in Mindo, where we will spend the next four nights.  

- Overnight: Septimo Paraiso

March 23: Refugio Paz de las Aves and Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Early this morning we will head to Refugio Paz de las Aves to observe Andean Cock-of-the-Rocks at their lek, where males assemble during the mating season and engage in competitive displays to attract females. Afterwards, we will join Angel (the owner of the reserve) as he draws his “charges” in for breakfast, Maria the Giant Antpitta, Willi the Yellow-breasted Antpitta, and Susan the Moustached Antpitta! Other species that come in to feed include Dark-backed Wood-Quail, Red-headed and Toucan Barbets, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, and Golden Tanagers. In the forested areas we will be looking for Golden-headed Quetzal,
Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, and Powerful Woodpecker among others. We’ll have a wonderful breakfast as we watch fruit and hummingbird feeders for more of the special birds of this area. After lunch, we will visit the Milpe Bird Sanctuary where we will spend some time birding around the garden and hummingbird feeders, as well as walking the trails hoping to find a mixed flock. We will be searching for Choco endemics such as Moss-backed, Rufous-throated, and Glistening-green Tanagers, as well as Club-winged and Golden-winged Manakins.

*Overnight: Septimo Paraiso*

**March 24: Birdwatcher’s House and Septimo Paraiso**

After breakfast, we’ll drive to the Tandayapa Valley where the Birdwatcher’s House is located. We should have great opportunities to see and photograph the near-endemic Plate-billed Mountain Toucan and Hoary Puffleg as well as Striped Treehunter, Tricolored Brush-Finch, Golden-headed Quetzal, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Toucan Barbet, and Flame-faced, Blue-capped, Golden, and Black-capped Tanagers.

In the afternoon, we will spend some time birding around our lodge. The birding can be quite good and the hummingbird feeders are usually buzzing with activity. You can regularly see 10-15 species of hummingbirds including the Velvet-purple Coronet.

*Overnight: Septimo Paraiso*

**March 25: Silanche Reserve**

After an early breakfast, we will drive downslope to the Silanche Reserve. At 1,000 feet, this is the lowest elevation preserve we will visit. We’ll spend at least a few hours at the canopy tower as well as some time birding along the trails. Even the entrance road can be unbelievably busy with birds! The canopy tour which rises 50 feet from the forest floor, provides great looks at many species that tend to stay in the canopy. Many specialties are possible including Purple-chested Hummingbird, Choco Trogon, Slate-throated Gnatcatcher, Rufous-winged, Blue-whiskered, Scarlet-browed, Gray-and-gold, and Tawny-crested Tanagers, and much more.

*Overnight: Septimo Paraiso*

**March 26: Long-wattled Umbrellabird Reserve**

Today, we’ll drive to the Los Bancos area to look for a very special Chocó endemic, Long-wattled Umbrellabird! We’ll spend the morning searching for this difficult species. While looking for the umbrellabird, we’ll keep an eye out for other highlights such as Rose-faced Parrot, Golden-headed
Quetzal, many raptors, and more. In the afternoon, we’ll have time to bird around our lodge and get packed up for our trip back to Quito the following day.

- Overnight: Septimo Paraiso

March 27: Reserva Amagusa and the Oilbird Caves - Transfer to Quito

After breakfast, we’ll travel to Reserva Amagusa where we will visit a couple fruit feeding stations and spend time birding along the road and trails. Many species visit the feeders and occur in the surrounding forest, but our main targets for the morning will be Indigo Flowerpiercer, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Black Solitaire, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, and Moss-backed, Glistening-green, Rufous-throated, and Beryl-spangled Tanagers. Afterwards, we’ll travel to the Oilbird Cave in hopes of seeing this enigmatic bird before returning to Quito for the night.

- Overnight: San Jose de Puembo Garden Hotel

March 28: Antisana National Park

After breakfast, we’ll head for Antisana National Park where we will be birding at elevations above 12,000 feet. As we get close to the park, we’ll stop at a small restaurant and hotel where Giant Hummingbird can be found. This area also has a good view of cliffs where Andean Condors are regular. Then, we will continue on to Antisana where we will search for Andean Condor, Black-faced Ibis, Paramo Pipit, Black-winged Ground-Dove, Ecuadorian Hillstar, and other paramo specialties. We will also take a hike to Suco Lake in search of Silvery Grebe and other waterbirds.

- Overnight: San Jose de Puembo Garden Hotel

March 29: City tour and departure from Quito, Ecuador

Oilbird
**Trip Details:**

**Cost:**
Price per person (double occupancy), from Quito, Ecuador: $4,399  
Single Supplement: $500  
Min Participants: 6  
Max Participants: 10

**Price Includes:**
- 2 Expert Guides  
- Ground Transportation in Ecuador  
- All Lodging  
- All Meals  
- Park Entrance Fees

**Price Does Not Include:**
- Airfare to and from Quito, Ecuador  
- Airport Taxes  
- Passport and Visa Fees  
- Alcoholic Beverages  
- Personal Items  
- Travel Insurance  
- Tips

**Deposit:**
A deposit of $500 per person is required to hold your spot on this tour. The remaining balance is due no later than 3 months prior to the scheduled start date of the tour (December 21, 2024).

If you have any questions about this tour or would like to sign up for it, please contact us at info@sabrewingnaturetours.com, by phone at 317-324-8505, or register through our website at sabrewingnaturetours.com.

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