

SOUTHERN ECUADOR: JOCOTOCO RESERVES AND TUMBESIAN ENDEMIC

Saturday 6 March to Saturday 20 March, 2010

Guided by Gary Rosenberg

Price: \$3700

Two week tour designed to visit several Jocotoco Foundation reserves in Southern Ecuador, including Buenaventura, Tapichalaca (home of the Jocotoco Antpitta), Utuana, and Jorupe. Lodging is within the reserves. We'll also visit Copalinga Lodge on the Rio Bombuscaro, as well as Podocarpus National Park. Wonderful Andean birding. Large variety of Tumbesian endemics. Fancy species such as Jocotoco Antpitta and Long-wattled Umbrellabird. Fabulous hummingbird watching and photography with more than 40 species. Lots of fancy tanagers.

Ecuador is a very diverse country, especially in terms of habitats. The variety of incredible habitats, from Amazonian lowland rainforest, to lush cloudforest on both the eastern and western slopes of the Andes, to high Andean *Paramo* to the dry *Tumbesian* desert in the Southwest, all translates to an unbelievable richness of bird species for such a small country. A journey through Southern Ecuador allows the birder to sample most of these habitats, the result of which is the possibility for a huge bird list. The Jocotoco Foundation (an Ecuadorian based conservation organization started to protect the habitat of the Jocotoco Antpitta) has bought several parcels of land throughout southern Ecuador and created reserves to protect both endangered habitats, and threatened bird species. What's even better is that they developed the reserves with birdwatchers in mind, by building comfortable accommodations, maintaining trails, and putting up hummingbird feeders everywhere! It is wonderful to wake up right within the reserves, which makes the birding not only fantastic, but very convenient. The tour begins in Guayaquil. We then make a large circuit up the west slope to Buenaventura (home of the Long-wattled Umbrellabird), to Loja at the foot of Podocarpus National Park, to lovely Copalinga Lodge on the Rio Bombuscaro in the eastern foothills, to Tapichalaca (home of the Jocotoco Antpitta), to Jorupe on the Peruvian border (for *Tumbesian* endemics, and finally back to Guayaquil.

Each location has its incredible attributes. Buenaventura not only has a Long-wattled Umbrellabird lek within the reserve, Umbrellabird Lodge has the most amazing hummingbird feeders we have seen *anywhere!* You simply won't believe the number of hummingbirds coming in! The forest there is lovely, and a number of other specialties are possible, including the rare endemic El Oro Parakeet. Podocarpus National Park has stunning vistas of high-elevation cloud-forest, and amazing birds such as Bearded Guan, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, and a variety of fancy tanagers including Hooded Mountain-Tanager and Red-hooded Tanager. Copalinga Lodge was built by a lovely Belgian couple (birders) right at the entrance to the Rio Bombuscaro sector of Podocarpus National Park. The trails in the park allow us access to a stunningly beautiful

forest, with incredible birds such as Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Coppery-chested Jacamar, and Ecuadorian Piedtail – just to name a few. Tapichalaca is the reserve that started it all and is where we have an excellent chance of seeing Jocotoco Antpitta, not to mention a wide variety of high Andean hummingbirds and tanagers. Jorupe is one of their newest reserves, located right on the Peruvian border, and home to a rich assortment of *Tumbesian* endemics, such as stunning birds like White-tailed Jay and White-edged Oriole. We'll finish by returning to Guayaquil, with another overnight stop near Buenaventura (just in case we still need to see an umbrellabird!) where the tour will conclude.

The trip list should be close to 500 species, but perhaps more importantly, will see an amazing number of scarce species and regional endemics.

It should be noted that in order to stay at the Jocotoco reserves, this tour is limited to eight participants, and at a couple of the lodges (Buenaventura and Tapichalaca), singles cannot be accommodated. Waking up right at the reserves makes the shared accommodations well worth it!

Day by Day Itinerary

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS TOUR BEGINS AND ENDS IN GUAYAQUIL. ROUNDTRIP AIR TICKETS SHOULD BE MADE TO GUAYAQUIL – NOT QUITO. If there is some question of confusion, please contact the Avian Journeys office.

Day 1: The tour begins this evening in Guayaquil. There will be a get together meeting at 7:00 pm, followed by dinner. **Night in Guayaquil.**

Hotel: Gran Hotel Guayaquil in Guayaquil

Day 2: This morning, we'll depart Guayaquil after breakfast for our journey to Buenaventura. Guayaquil is situated in the wet lowlands, and our drive out of the city will take us by lots of ponds and wet pastureland, where the birding can be very interesting. Snail Kites will be common, and we'll look for other open-country species such as Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Least Grebe, Limpkin, Savannah Hawk, Wattled Jacana, Black-necked Stilts, Croaking Ground-Dove, Chestnut-throated Seed-eater, and Peruvian Meadowlarks. Our first destination is the Manglares de Churute area where we will hopefully see Horned Screamer, which has a small remnant population there. Some roadside birding in the second growth thickets should produce a few specialties including Black-tailed Trogon, Jet Antbird, Snowy-throated Kingbird, Masked Water-Tyrant, Black-faced (Yellow-tufted) Tanager, and Orange-crowned Euphonia. We'll make a brief stop at some shrimp ponds to look for Cocoi Heron, waders including Collared and Wilson's Plovers, "Mangrove" Yellow Warbler, and Parrot-billed Seed-eater. After lunch we'll continue up into the foothills to Buenaventura, one of the Jocotoco Foundation's reserves established to protect the endangered El Oro Parakeet, and Umbrellabird Lodge. Arriving in the afternoon, we'll have ample time to watch the amazing hummingbird

feeders and bird along the entrance road to the lodge. The hummingbird feeders will be “buzzing” with activity, and it is truly amazing to see so many individuals feeding at once, including mind-boggling numbers of Green Thorntails and violet-bellied Hummingbirds. Along the road we’ll search for specialties such as Gray-backed Hawk, Barred Puffbird, Choco Toucan, Speckle-breasted Wren, and the Black-lored form of Masked Yellowthroat. In the very late afternoon, we’ll make our first attempt for the real specialty of the reserve, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, hopefully finding one as they come in and roost in their lekking area. **Night at Umbrellabird Lodge.**

Hotel: Umbrellabird Lodge

Day 3: Waking up at Buenaventura will be fantastic. We’ll have an early breakfast and start the day at the Umbrellabird lek if we have not seen this incredible species the previous evening. The birding at Buenaventura is really good. Apart from some of the best hummingbird watching anywhere, we’ll also bird along wide roadcuts that pass through excellent patches of wet foothill forest. One of our main target birds will be El Oro Parakeet, a member of the genus *Pyrrhura* that was described to science in the 1980s, and has a limited range in sw. Ecuador. The overall bird list at Buenaventura is impressive, and some of the many birds we’ll look for include Swallow-tailed Kite, Gray-backed Hawk, Black Hawk-Eagle, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Bronze-winged Parrot, Violet-tailed Sylph, White-vented Plumeteer, Green-crowned Woodnymph, Choco Toucan, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Buffy (Pacific) Tuftedcheek, Western Slaty-Antshrike, Esmeraldas and Chestnut-backed Antbirds, Ochraceous Attila, Ornate Flycatcher, Club-winged and White-bearded Manakins, Scaled Fruiteater, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Speckle-breasted, Whiskered, and Bay Wrens, Song Wren, Rufous-throated, Silver-throated, and Bay-headed Tanagers, Orange-crowned Euphonia, and Yellow-bellied Siskin. Add to this a plethora of common species and Buenaventura is one special place to bird. **Night at Umbrellabird Lodge.**

Hotel: Umbrellabird Lodge

Day 4: We’ll have one final morning birding at Buenaventura, most likely departing early for the “upper” area, which is better for El Oro Parakeet. This area is also good for tanager flocks, raptors, parrots, and we have seen fun birds such as Golden-headed Quetzal in the forest patches. When the activity dies down we’ll begin our drive to Loja. If driven straight, the journey would take 3-4 hours, but we’ll make several stops, particularly in the drier country near Catamayo, and in a higher-elevation subtropical cloud-forest where a number of specialties can be found. A few of the more local specialties we’ll look for include Chapman’s Antshrike, Three-banded Warbler, Bay-crowned Brush-Finch, and Black-cowled Saltator in the cloud-forest, and Pacific Parrotlet, Elegant Crescentchest, Tumbes Sparrow, and Drab Seedeater in the drier country. We’ll have other opportunities later in the trip for all these species. We’ll arrive at our comfortable hotel in Loja in the very late afternoon. **Night in Loja.**

Hotel: Quo Vadis in Loja.

Day 5: We'll depart Loja early to bird our way down the eastern slope to Lovely Copalinga Lodge. From Loja the highway rises up and crosses a relatively high-elevation pass (about 3200 m), where we'll stop and look for Mouse-colored Thistletail, and have our first chance for Golden-crowned Tanager. Dropping down lower we go along a rushing river where we'll search diligently for Torrent Duck, Torrent Tyrannulet, and White-capped Dipper. Our destination for the morning birding is the old Loja-Zamora Highway that parallels the newer highway and allows us access to a number of fine patches of subtropical forest at mid-elevation. The birding in these patches can be great, and we'll be looking for huge mixed-species flocks that are chock full of tanagers. There are a number of specialties that are found in these flocks, and we'll search for great birds such as Lined Antshrike, Yellow-breasted Antwren, Equatorial Graytail, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Lemmon-browed Flycatcher, Olive-chested Flycatcher, Olivaceous Greenlet, Gray-mantled Wren, and amazing tanagers including Vermilion, Blue-browed, Golden-eared, Spotted, and Orange-eared, just to name a few. We'll until mid-afternoon to work this road before heading the short distance to Copalinga Lodge. The newly constructed lodge is situated at the entrance to the Rio Bombuscaro section of Podocarpus National Park. We'll have a comfortable three night stay at this wonderful location. **Night at Copalinga Lodge.**

Hotel: Copalinga Lodge

Days 6-7: We'll have two full days to bird this great location. We'll visit the trails at Podocarpus National Park, revisit the old Loja-Zamora road, do some roadside birding in the lowlands to the east of Zamora, and just enjoy the birding from the deck at Copalinga. Podocarpus National Park is lovely, particularly this section that surrounds the Rio Bombuscaro. The trail is wide, a little hilly, but relatively easy to walk. The birding along the trail can be fantastic, with huge mixed-species flocks of tanagers and flycatchers. There are many specialty birds to look for here. One of the more interesting is a small flycatcher recently described to science within the past ten years called Foothills Elaenia, and this location is the best place to see this rare bird. The trail is also a great place to bump into both Andean Cock-of-the-Rock or Amazonian Umbrellabird. Other non-flock species possible include fancy birds such as White-breasted Parakeet, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Black-streaked Puffbird, Lanceolated Monklet, Black-billed Treehunter, Foothills Antwren, Ornate and Orange-crowned Flycatchers, Blue-rumped and Striped Manakins, and Olive Finch. The mixed-species flocks can be very exciting, mainly composed of tanagers including Spotted, Paradise, Green-and-gold, Golden-eared, Bay-headed, Orange-eared, and lots of Yellow-throated Bush-Tanagers. Cool birds such as Red-headed Barbet and Green Jays are also present in the flocks. In the lowlands outside of Zamora we can see a number of open-country species, including fun birds such as White-eyed Parakeet, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Thrushlike Wren, Black-capped Donacobius, Yellow-bellied and Black-faced Dacnises, and Crested Oropendola. Birding right around the lodge itself will be very productive. Birds we have seen in the garden include Band-bellied Owl, Sickle-winged Guan, Violet-fronted and Black-throated Brilliants, Wire-crested Thorntail, Spangled Coquette, Golden-winged Tody-Flycatcher, Long-tailed Tyrant, Green-backed Becard, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, and lots of tanagers and flycatchers. Everyday we have lunch while birding from the

wonderful deck! Our hostess (and owner of the lodge) is Catherine Vits, who is an excellent birder herself! **Nights at Copalinga Lodge.**

Hotel: Copalinga Lodge

Day 8: We'll have one final morning to bird the Copalinga area. Depending on what we may be missing, we'll have a somewhat flexible schedule to check one of several locations. We'll bring a box lunch today as we head back to Loja, and continue on to Tapichalaca, one of the Jocotoco Foundations reserves, and in fact the location of the discovery of the Jocotoco Antpitta! We'll bird our way there, stopping along the route to look for Three-banded Warbler, and tanager flocks at the high-elevation pass above the reserve. These flocks can have a number of interesting species, including Golden-crowned, Tanager, Black-headed Hemispingus, Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager, Glossy Flower-piercer, and Pale-naped Brush-Finch. We'll arrive at Casa Simpson at Tapichalaca in the late afternoon, our base for the next two nights. We will certainly have time to check out the hummingbird feeders at the lodge, which will be alive with incredible species such as Collared Inca, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, both Little and Amethyst-throated Sunagels, and White-bellied Woodstar. *It should be noted here that in order to stay at Casa Simpson, we will need to double (and sometimes triple) up, as there are only four bedrooms for guests. We feel that it is very much worth it being able to stay directly on the grounds of the reserve.* **Night at Tapichalaca.**

Hotel: Casa Simpson

Day 9: Today is Jocotoco Antpitta Day! Although it is always dangerous to *promise* a species such as this, and we do *not* guarantee seeing one, we will say that the staff (as of 2009) has "trained" anywhere from 2-4 Jocotoco Antpittas to come out on the trail and feed on worms – a truly amazing thing to witness. This morning we will bird our way to the "feeding" area and hopefully see this for ourselves! The birding along the way is excellent as well, and some of the high temperate forest species we are likely to see include, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Chestnut-naped and Rufous Antpittas, Chusquea Tapaculo, Orange-banded Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Rufous and Plain-tailed Wrens, Spectacled Redstart, Citrine Warbler, Hooded, Scarlet-bellied, and Lacrimose Mountain-Tanagers, Black-capped and Superciliaried Hemispinguses, and Pale-naped Brush-Finch. This is an excellent area for Golden-plumed Parakeet, and we can see more scarce species such as Barred Fruiteater, Dusky Piha, Grass Green and Red-hooded Tanagers, or Plushcap. In the afternoon we'll bird down slope below the lodge to the town of Valladolid. Along the road we'll search for several target species, including Rufous-fronted Thornbird, Green-backed (Yellow-cheeked) Becard, Marañon Thrush, Black-lored (Masked) Yellowthroat, Silver-backed Tanager, and others. The birding here is quite good! **Night at Tapichalaca.**

Hotel: Casa Simpson

Day 10: we'll begin this morning birding along the road in the forest patches below the lodge, but above Valladolid. The biding in these remnant patches of subtropical forest

can be excellent, and we'll look for flocks that may contain birds such as White-breasted Parakeet, Golden-headed Quetzal, Long-tailed Antbird, Sulfur-bellied Tyrannulet, Smoky Bush-Tyrant, Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant, Barred Becard, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Mountain Wren, and a number of incredible tanagers, including Flame-faced, Saffron-crowned, Blue-necked, Silver-backed, golden, Blue-winged Mountain- and Rufous-crested Tanagers, just to name a few! We have seen some very rare birds along this stretch, including Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, and White-capped Tanager, just to give an idea of the potential! We'll return to the lodge for an early lodge, and then head back towards Loja, with an afternoon birding stop at Podocarpus National Park. The Cajanuma section of the park is just a short 30 minutes outside Loja, and we will hope for a few new birds, which may include Bearded Guan and Red-hooded Tanager. This evening we'll return to Loja. **Night in Loja.**

Hotel: Quo Vadis in Loja

Day 11: Leaving the eastern Andes behind, we next head into the *Tumbesian* section of the tour, particularly to a new Jocotoco Foundation reserve right at the Peruvian border near the town of Macara. We will break up the long drive by birding first outside Catamayo, again looking for a number of dry country species, including Pacific Parrotlet, Pale-legged Hornero, Collared Antshrike, Elegant Crescentchest, Tawney-crowned Tyrannulet, Fasciated Wren, Chiguanco Thrush, Tumbes Sparrow, Drab Seedeater, and Band-tailed Sierra-Finch. Further along we will have another chance for Chapman's Antshrike, Black-cowled Saltator, and Bay-crowned Brush-Finch. Around lunch time we'll stop at another Jocotoco Foundation Reserve at Utuana, where we can see both Rainbow Starfrontlet and Purple-throated Sunangel, Jelski's Chat-Tyant, and the very local black-crested Tit-Tyrant. Our main destination, though is Jorupe, the site of a new Jocotoco Foundation reserve, and a new lodge built right on the grounds! We'll have the better part of two days to bird the Jorupe area, including the road to Zapotillo. This is the heart of the *Tumbesian* region, and we can expect to see many of the regional endemics. **Night near Macara.**

Hotel: Jorupe Lodge

Day 12: We'll wake up at Jorupe, which we consider one of the finest birding locations we have visited! The birding here is incredible, not only for the diversity and numbers of individuals, but virtually everything we see is a regional endemic! Some of our target species that we'll look for here include Red-masked Parakeet, Gray-capped Cuckoo, Amazilia Hummingbird, Black-tailed (Ecuadorian) Trogon, Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Ecuadorian Piculet, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Collared Antshrike, Watkin's Antpitta, Rufous-winged Tyrannulet, One-colored and Slaty Becards, Sooty-crowned Flycatcher, White-tailed Jay, Speckle-breasted Wren, Plumbeous-backed Thrush, Black-and-white Tanager, Black-capped Sparrow, White-headed Brush-Finch, Streaked Saltator, Gray-and-gold Warbler, and both Yellow-tailed and White-edged Orioles. The birding here is excellent. IN the afternoon we'll venture along the highway toward Zapotillo, where we have seen amazing birds such as Comb Duck, and the relatively newly described Tumbes Swallow.

In the evening we'll have an excellent chance for West Peruvian Screech-Owl, as well as Spectacled Owl. **Night near Macara.**

Hotel: Jorupe Lodge.

Day 13: We'll have another full morning birding at Jorupe searching for any additional species we are missing, or just enjoying all the specialties for a second time! In the late morning we'll depart for our journey back toward Guayaquil. In the much drier valleys along the way, we'll almost certainly see Baird's Flycatcher, another *Tumbesian* specialty, and we'll look for the local Tumbes Hummingbird. We'll break our journey up by spending one more night in the Buenaventura area. This will give us yet another chance for a few of the incredible specialties of this area, such as Long-wattled Umbrellabird and El Oro Parakeet. We'll arrive in the late afternoon in time to do some more hummingbird watching. **Night in Piñas.**

Hotel in Piñas.

Day 14: We'll have the entire morning to bird the Buenaventura area again in search of anything we may not have seen on our previous visit, or just enjoying a relaxing morning of birding in one of the finest birding locations in South America! After an early lunch, we'll depart for Guayaquil, retracing our journey of the first morning of the trip. We'll have time to poke our way back, stopping at will at ponds, or flooded fields, and we'll have a good opportunity of seeing open country species such as lots of raptors, egrets and herons, Peruvian Meadowlarks, Masked Water-Tyrants, Snail Kites, etc... We'll plan on arriving in Guayaquil around dark, where we'll have time to clean up and have a nice farewell dinner at the hotel. **Night at Guayaquil.**

Hotel: Gran Hotel Guayaquil.

Day 15: The trip ends with flights out of Guayaquil this morning. There is no scheduled birding today.

Maximum size of group: The maximum group size for our Southern Ecuador tour is eight.

Tour Leader for your Ecuador Tour: Gary Rosenberg

Gary Rosenberg lives in Tucson, where he has designed and led about 50 birding tours to Ecuador during the past 25 years. He has birded and conducted tours in Southern Ecuador for the past 14 years, which as rapidly become one of his favorite birding locations. He has been birding since early childhood, studied Ornithology for a Master's degree at Louisiana State University, and is the author or co-author of numerous scientific and popular articles on bird identification and behavior. Gary is also a passionate photographer, and has had numerous bird photos published in magazines and books. He is currently the secretary of the Arizona Bird Committee, which evaluates rare

bird reports within Arizona. His current areas of expertise, apart from Ecuador, include most areas in North America, in particular Arizona, Florida, and Alaska, as well as Costa Rica, Panama, and Peru.

Pace of the tour: The pace of this tour is Easy to Moderate. Most of the birding will be done from along roads, and well-maintained forest trails. The trails are generally wide (like road-cuts), but a little hilly at times. The best birding in the Neotropics is done in the early mornings, so one should expect relatively early breakfasts (5:30). We will try and schedule mid-day siestas during the hottest part of the day. On at least a few nights, there will be before-dinner owling excursions that may shorten our normal break between birding and dinner. The big advantage of staying at the Jocotoco reserves (and Copalinga) is waking up at the reserves, which eliminates lengthy driving times to our birding locations.

Tour Price: **\$3700.** The cost of the tour includes all accommodations, food, within-tour transportation, baggage handling (when needed), entrance fees, water during the day's tour activities, and guide services, as indicated by the itinerary. In general the hotels and lodges we use on the tours are nice and comfortable, and often the best-available in the more remote areas we visit. In the cities we stay in above average (but not necessarily the most expensive) hotels. Meals are typically taken in local restaurants near the hotels and lodges.

The following items are not included in the tour price: travel to and from the location the tour begins and ends, laundry, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, and other items of a personal nature.

Single Supplement: It should be noted that Single Accommodations are not available at most of the places we stay on this tour, in particular at both Tapichalaca and Umbrellabird Lodge. These facilities have four and five rooms, respectively, and doubling up will be essential to stay at these lodges. The big advantage is saving ourselves as much as an hour and a half driving time (each way) to arrive at our morning birding. Plus, staying at the reserves supports the ecotourism efforts of the Jocotoco Foundation, and provides much needed revenue to continue their excellent efforts! Singles will be available at both Guayaquil and Loja. **Single supplement cost: \$335.**

Deposit policy: At the time of booking a tour, a \$300 deposit is required to secure a space on the tour. This deposit is refundable or transferable up until 120 days prior to the departure date of the tour. The deposit must be received within 14 days of booking, or the reserved space will be released. Up to the 120 day prior to departure date, a deposit may be transferred to another Avian Journeys tour without penalty. Between 119 and 90 days prior to tour departure, cancellation of a reservation will result in forfeit of 50% of the \$300 deposit. Cancellation of a reservation within 90 days of the tour departure date will result in forfeit of the deposit.

Tour Registration: To register for this Ecuador tour, please first contact Avian Journeys by email or phone to check on availability. Once we have confirmed that there is space

on the tour, please fill out the registration form, which is available on the “Register for a tour” page, and mail it to Avian Journeys. It is very important that you read all the information in this document, and then make sure you sign and date the waiver at the end of the registration form. A \$300 deposit is necessary to secure a space on the trip. Full payment for the tour will be invoiced 100 days prior to the departure date, and must be received within 90 days of departure.

Cancellation policy: Cancellation by a tour participant greater than or equal to 90 days prior to the departure date will result in full refund of payments to Avian Journeys (minus 50% of the deposit if the cancellation occurs between 119 and 90 days prior to the tour departure). Cancellation by a tour participant within 90 days of a tour will result in a refund of amounts we are able to recover from our hotels and ground agents. Fixed cost amounts can not be refunded. In general, the amount we can potentially refund may be as low as 50% or 25% of the cost of the tour.

Trip insurance. At the time of payment of your deposit for the tour, we highly recommend purchasing travel insurance. The following companies offer trip insurance, and/or emergency medical insurance: <http://www.travelinsured.com>, <http://www.accessamerica.com>, www.aaa.com. One never knows when personal illness, or an illness in the family is going to strike. Given that a cancellation by a participant within 90 days of departure might result in a loss of most, if not all of the cost of a tour, trip insurance is a good idea. Furthermore, insurance is recommended in case of an illness on a tour, and in a worse case scenario, the need for an emergency medical evacuation, which can be prohibitively expensive. Purchasing insurance is a personal choice, and Avian Journeys does not recommend one company over another.

Travel to Ecuador

Once the tour is confirmed, you will need to purchase your airline ticket to Ecuador. Several major airlines, such as American, Continental, and Iberia Airlines service both Quito and Guayaquil. Please note in the detailed itinerary which city your tour begins at (all of our Ecuador tours begin and end in Quito **EXCEPT** our Southern Ecuador tour which begins and ends in Guayaquil). We strongly suggest planning your arrival in time for the Introductory Meeting on Day 1. If you are unable to arrive early on Day 1, please be aware that we often leave very early on Day 2, and there is the possibility that you will get very little sleep. An additional issue is that occasionally the weather in Quito can close the airport, resulting in the diversion of flights to Guayaquil. If this happens, there is the likelihood that you will miss our departure from Quito, and you will be responsible for the cost in catching up to the group. If you decide to arrive a day early, we would be happy to arrange for an extra night’s hotel in Quito.

In this age of the Internet, booking a flight online is easy! Each individual airline has their own web site for booking flights, such as www.AA.com for American Airlines, and www.continentalairlines.com for Continental Airlines. Alternatively, one can visit sites such as www.orbitz.com or www.expedia.com which list multiple airline options.

IMPORTANT. You will need a valid passport to enter Ecuador. The passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your date of entry. A visa is not needed to enter Ecuador – you will need to fill out an entry form provided to you by the airlines and present this along with your passport to immigration. You will also be asked to fill out a customs declaration.

Entering Ecuador

Entering Ecuador is easy and should be stress free. When you deplane, follow the crowd to immigration. Hopefully your line will not be long, although there is a chance that multiple planes arrive simultaneously, and the immigration line can be long. Patience is a virtue! The immigration process is quick and professional. You will be handed back a small portion of your entry form. Please keep this piece of paper in your passport and try not to lose it. Don't worry though, if you do lose the paper, you will simple be asked to fill out a "new" one when you leave the country. Once through immigration you will arrive at the baggage claim area. Locate your carousel and retrieve your bags. You will next hand your customs declaration to a uniformed customs agent and likely be asked to pass your luggage through an x-ray machine. This is just a formality, and it is unlikely that they will ask you to open any bags.

Once through immigration and customs, you will pass through a door and be engulfed by a crowd of agents and loved ones meeting the flight. There will be a person with a sign with YOUR NAME on it, and/or AVIAN JOURNEYS. Our ground agent in Ecuador is BIRD ECUADOR. One, two, or all three of these should be on the sign. The person making the transfer usually speaks English and will help you with your luggage. They will transfer you to the hotel.

The language of Ecuador is Spanish. While many Ecuadorians speak some English, please be aware that English is a second language. Typically the persons making the transfer, and those at the reception at the hotel speak some English. Learning a few important words, such as the Spanish word for "beer" is recommended.

The currency of Ecuador is the US dollar. All hotels accept cash or the major credit cards. We do not recommend bringing Travelers Checks – these have become more difficult to cash in recent years. ATM machines are usually available in the major cities.

Be aware that Quito is at nearly 9000 feet elevation, and if you are arriving in the evening, or if the weather is rainy, the temperature will be cool (not cold). A light jacket or sweater is advised.

Health Issues

We recommend checking with the CDC at www.cdc.com for recent warnings and recommendations for preventive medications and/or inoculations required (or suggested) for the areas you will be visiting in Ecuador. Be prepared that they will likely suggest a preventative for both Yellow Fever and Malaria.

In general we believe you will probably be surprised by the lack of biting insects. While some areas might have some mosquitoes, and small biting flies (no-see-ums), they usually don't present much of a problem. Chiggers are also occasionally present. We do recommend a relatively strong insect repellent that contains "DEET".

Hotels and Food

Avian Journeys and Bird Ecuador (our ground agent in Ecuador) have many years experience organizing tours in Ecuador. The hotels and lodges we have selected are both comfortable and well-situated for the birding. All hotels and lodges provide rooms with private bathrooms (unless specifically indicated in the itinerary). Our hotel in Guayaquil can store extra baggage if needed. Most of the hotels and lodges provide laundry service.

The food in Ecuador varies from standard international food (meat, chicken, fish) at the larger hotels, to relatively gourmet food at some of the lodges (such as Copalinga). Most of the hotels and lodges we stay at cater to birders and provide early breakfasts for our groups. Lunches are either taken at the hotel and lodges, or we have box lunches provided by them. All dinners will be at the hotels and lodges. A non-alcoholic beverage will be provided with all meals – bottled water is available everywhere. Beer and wine is available everywhere. Please note that alcoholic beverages are not included in the price of the tour.

Jocotoco Foundation Lodges

On the Southern Ecuador tour, we take advantage of staying at the facilities provided at the specific Jocotoco Foundation reserves, particularly at Tapichalaca, Buenaventura, and Jorupe. The upside of staying at the lodges on the reserves is that it eliminates long drives to get to our birding locations, and it is wonderful to wake up at the reserves, step outside and begin birding! The slight downside is that singles are not possible due to the limited number of rooms at the lodges. Each room **does** have private bathroom facilities.

Electricity

Ecuador has the same electric current as the United States – 110 volts. If you are from a country that uses 220 volts, please make certain that any charger you plan on using can function at 110 volts. Most chargers today have a voltage range of 100-240 volts. The electricity at Copalinga Lodge is generated by hydro-electric power from a home-made system.

Meeting the Group

There will be a meeting in the lobby of the hotel at 7:00 pm on Day 1. This meeting is designed to "get acquainted" with the other participants on the tour, and to meet the leader. Immediately following the meeting we will have dinner. Again, we recommend trying very hard to arrive in time for this meeting.

What to Bring

Clothing – Over the years we have discovered that “everyone” has their own tastes regarding clothes. We will suggest that you consider quick-drying pants and shirts, particularly if you plan on doing your own laundry. Many of the higher quality field clothes available from companies such as “Ex Oficio” or “REI” also offer protection from UV rays. We also recommend clothes with “neutral” colors, such as browns, tans, and greens that blend with the natural environment, which is less threatening to forest birds. Bright reds and pinks should please be avoided.

Footwear – Comfortable footwear is perhaps the most important item to consider, as we are on our feet most of the day, every day! We suggest lightweight hiking boots, preferably waterproof to a certain degree. “Goretex” type boots are an excellent choice. Rubber boots are sometimes useful for very muddy trails, but we understand that many simply don’t like walking around in rubber boots all day. If you are considering rubber boots, we recommend a particular brand called “Extra Tuff,” available online at <http://www.xtratuffboots.com/>.

The following items are important:

- Binoculars (waterproof)
- Camera (optional)
- Hat
- Rain Jacket (lightweight)
- Small Umbrella (ESSENTIAL!!)
- Small Flashlight w/ replacement batteries
- Small LED Headlamp (useful at poorly lit lodges)
- Alarm Clock
- Plastic Bags (to protect equipment)
- Insect Repellant
- Sunscreen
- Water Bottle
- Small backpack
- Ear Plugs (optional)

Photography: Our leaders are typically very interested in photography, in particular “digiscoping”, and within the context of the tour, photography is encouraged. Certain sensible guidelines will be adhered to, such as not approaching a bird for photos until all in the group has had a satisfying look, and we will avoid unnecessary disturbance of a bird, particularly if it is nesting. At the end of the tour the leader will share his or her photo highlights, making them available on CD, or downloadable from a social network web site.

Field Guides and References. All books listed below are available from **Amazon.com**.

Dunning, John S. 1989. *South American Birds: A Photographic Aid to Identification*. Harrowood Books, Newtown Square, Pennsylvania, USA.

Fjeldså, Jon and N. Krabbe. 1990. *Birds of the High Andes: A Manual to the Birds of the Temperate Zone of the Andes and Patagonia, South America*. Apollo, Denmark.

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. 1984. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. A superb and very readable introduction to the ecology of tropical rain forests. Recommended.

Green, Clive. 1996. *Birding Ecuador*. Second edition.

Hilty, S.L. 1994. *Birds of Tropical America*. Chapters Publishing, Ltd., Shelburne, CT.

Hilty, S.L. and W.L. Brown. 1986. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton University Press.

Kricher, J.C. 1989. *A Neotropical Companion*. Princeton University Press, Princeton.

Ortiz, Fernando, Paul Greenfield and Juan Carlos Matheus. 1990. *Birds of Ecuador: locational checklist*. Feprotours, Quito, Ecuador.

Pearson, David et al. 1997. *New Key to Ecuador and the Galapagos* (New Key Guides). Soho Press. ISBN 1569750750.

Ridgley, Robert S. and Paul J. Greenfield. 2001. *The Birds of Ecuador*. Comstock Publishing Associates, Cornell University Press, Ithaca NY. **This is the recommended field guide for the tour.**

Ridgely, Robert S. and Paul J. Greenfield. 2001. *The Birds of Ecuador: Status, Distribution and Taxonomy*. Cornell University Press. This is the companion book to the field guide listed above.

Ridgley, R. S. and G. Tudor. 1989. *The Birds of South America Volume 1: The Oscine Passerines*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

Ridgley, R. S. and G. Tudor. 1994. *The Birds of South America Volume 2: The Suboscine Passerines*. Oxford University Press, Oxford.

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