

## **PERU: Explornapo Lodge, the Canopy Walkway and Mishana White Sands Forest**

Saturday 5 February to Tuesday 15 February 2011

**Gary Rosenberg** as leader

**Price: \$3800**

The Amazonian region of northeastern Peru has an incredibly rich avifauna. The Iquitos area, in combination with a comfortable set of lodges operated by Explorama, makes for an exciting and rewarding short trip, with more than 550 species recorded on our tour's route. We'll begin with two days in Iquitos, with daily visits to the interesting white sands forest at the Mishana-Allpahuayo Reserve, at which we will search for no fewer than five **new** species of birds, that have been recently described from here! We'll then travel down the impressive Amazon River to Explornapo Lodge and the ACTS Field Station, where we'll have the better part of seven full days to explore the excellent trails, oxbow lakes, Amazonian river islands and best of all, the famous Canopy Walkway. The forest birding here is excellent, as is the service at the lodges, which have been in existence for more than 40 years!

We'll have the better part of two and a half days to bird the now-famous Mishana-Allpahuayo Reserve outside of Iquitos. Here we will look for newly described species, such as the Allpahuayo Antbird, Mishan Tyrannulet, and Iquitos Gnatcatcher, among others. The birding here is incredibly interesting, with a number of the species we search for quite rare and local in Peru, such as the fancy Pompadour Cotinga, and the very local Brown-banded Puffbird. The forest birding here is fun and exciting, with a dash of the unknown!

After Mishana, we'll travel down the mighty Amazon river to a series of three lodges, Explorama Lodge, Explornapo Lodge, and the ACTS Field Station where the famous Canopy Walkway is located. The Explorama lodge system is not overly fancy, but is quite comfortable, with excellent service – and they cater quite well to a birding tour such as ours. We'll have an entire week to visit and explore the three lodges, concentrating greatly on both Explornapo and the Canopy Walkway. Here the rainforest is quite intact, and the forest birding is excellent. Will cover a variety of different habitats, from oxbow lakes to Amazonian River Islands, to *terra firme* forest trails, to the wonderful canopy. The number of incredible birds we'll have a chance of seeing is quite impressive – with more than 500 species found at the lodges. We'll have the chance of seeing about 50 species of antbirds, including the fancy White-plumed Antbird, and several stunning cotingas, hopefully including the lovely Black-necked Red Cotinga. The trip is also great for a nice variety of parrots, toucans, puffbirds, jacamars, tanagers, and of course, flycatchers! We'll even do some night-birding and possibly encounter incredible birds such as Long-tailed or Rufous Potoo!

## **Day by Day Itinerary**

**Day 1:** The trip begins in Lima with the arrival of international flights. Night in Lima.

**Days 2-3:** On the morning of day 2, we'll board a morning flight to Iquitos, a relatively large city along the Amazon River in northeastern Peru. After a quick check-in at our excellent hotel, and lunch, we'll drive a short distance out of town to the Mishana-Allpahuayo White Sands Forest Reserve. Mishana is a fascinating birding location with a high potential for a number of specialties found virtually nowhere else in Peru. We'll look particularly for five newly described species: Ancient Antwren, Allpahuayo Antbird, Zimmer's Antbird, Mishana Tyrannulet and Iquitos Gnatcatcher – all of which were discovered right here at the reserve! In addition we hope to see a number of other birds that are exceedingly rare in Peru including Brown-banded Puffbird, Pearly Antshrike, Pompadour Cotinga, Saffron-crested Tyrant Manakin, Cinnamon Tyrant-Manakin, Zimmer's Tody-Tyrant, Citron-bellied Attila and possibly Rufous Potoo. On the afternoon of day 3, we'll hire a small boat to take us up a local river to a small community where there are Black-crested Antshrikes – another species considered scarce in Peru, and then finish the day looking for Band-tailed Nighthawks. Nights at Iquitos.

**Day 4:** After another full morning of birding at the Mishana, where we'll search for any of the specialties we may have missed so far, we'll return to Iquitos for an early lunch followed by an hour and one-half motorized canoe ride downriver to Explorama Lodge. Along the river we may see a number of "riverine" species, such as our first Large-billed and Yellow-billed Terns, and we'll keep a sharp eye out for river dolphins. We'll arrive at Explorama Lodge in the late afternoon, with enough time to bird one of the forest trails near the lodge looking in particular for Orange-eyed Flycatcher, a species first described to science in the 1980s. We'll also have a chance for a number of species that specializes on seasonally flooded forest, including White-eared Jacamar, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper, White-shouldered Antbird, Gray-headed Tanager, and many others. At dusk we'll finish the day out by the Amazon River where numbers of parrots come to roost, including numerous Short-tailed Parrots. Night at Explorama Lodge.

**Days 5-7:** We'll spend the early morning of day 5 at Yamamono Island, very different from the smaller, early successional islands we'll visit later in the trip and resembling the flooded forest one finds on the mainland. If the water is high enough, we'll canoe around a small oxbow lake on the island that is good for all the kingfishers, and walk a trail that is excellent for specialty birds such as Black-collared Hawk, Zimmer's Woodcreeper, Bay Hornero, Red-and-white Spinetail, Ash-breasted Antbird, Leaden Antwren and Dull-capped Attila. In the late morning, we'll continue on to Explornapo Lodge, our base for the next two or three nights.

The diversity of birds surrounding Explornapo Lodge is impressive, and the possibilities way too numerous to list! We'll work especially the understory mixed-species flocks that are usually rich in antbirds, ovenbirds and woodcreepers and are often joined by tanagers and other understory birds. The list for this lodge alone is more than 500 species, a

remarkable total considering that it was achieved solely on foot and by canoe. The antbird list alone is more than 50 species! Some of the many possibilities include Many-banded Aracari, Golden-collared Toucanet, Chestnut and Scale-breasted Woodpeckers, Long-billed, Cinnamon-throated and Amazonian Barred Woodcreepers, countless antbirds including White-plumed Antbird, Black-spotted and Reddish-winged Bare-eyes, Black-chinned Antbird and Sooty Antbird, several antwrens including Dougand's, Gray, White-flanked, Long-winged and Stipple-throated, fancy manakins such as Striped, Blue-crowned, Golden-headed, Blue-backed and Wire-tailed, Spangled and Plum-throated Cotingas, Collared Gnatwren, Paradise and Green-and-gold Tanagers, and on and on.

We'll visit several of young river islands, a very specialized habitat, and the subject of the leader's Master's degree. Some of the more interesting riverine species that are restricted to these island covered with early successional habitat include Lesser Hornero, White-bellied Spinetail, Black-and-white Antbird, Castlenau's Antshrike, Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant, Riverside Tyrant, White-headed Marsh-Tyrant, Bicolored and Pearly-breasted Conebills and Oriole Blackbird, just to name a few. One afternoon we'll venture up the Sucasari River in search of the elusive Spotted Puffbird, and have a chance for more riverine species such as Greater Schiffornis and Striped Woodcreeper. At dusk we'll hope for the rare Rufous Potoo. Late afternoons may be spent in a clearing by the lodge that attracts numerous species such as Sunbittern, Yellow-billed Nunbird, Pygmy Antwren, Black-banded Woodcreeper, Green-and-gold Tanager and lots more! Nights at Explornapo Lodge.

**Days 8-9:** On the morning of day 8 we'll move our base of operations a short distance deeper into the forest to the ACTS Field Station, where the accommodations are similar to those at Explornapo. We'll bird as we walk through the marvelous forest, with our destination the famous Canopy Walkway. We'll spend the remainder of the early morning working the canopy from a series of walkway-connected platforms. The canopy is a world onto itself, and we'll find it thrilling to watch canopy species, often at point-blank range. The birding is unpredictable from the platforms, but always exciting, and we are sure to get close views of hard-to-see birds such as raptors, cotingas and toucans, and in particular Spangled, Plum-throated and Purple-throated Cotingas, Purple-throated and Bare-necked Fruitcrows, Many-banded, Ivory-billed and Lettered Aracaris, Channel-billed and White-throated Toucans, canopy flycatchers such as Pink-throated Becard, Gray Elaenia and Slender-footed Tyrannulet, and tanagers such as Paradise, Green-and-gold, Turquoise, White-lored Euphonia, Yellow-bellied Dacnis and Purple Honeycreeper. The walkway itself is interesting – spanning 15 different trees, and is very well constructed with metal ladders, boards, all encased in strong webbing. The incredible views across the tree tops is worth the visit!

Below the Canopy Walkway the forest is uncut and accessible from a network of excellent trails. We'll have nearly two full days to explore these trails and search for forest mixed species flocks. One of our most-wanted birds will be the incredible Black-necked Red-Cotinga, which is possible here, and we have seen the rare and elusive Long-tailed Potoo – both at night and luckily roosting during the day! The lodge itself is almost identical to Explornapo Lodge, minus a few amenities such as the bar with

internet service! Then again we'll have to put up with the sounds of Black-banded Owls and Long-tailed Potoos at night! There is even the chance of hearing Nocturnal Curassow! Nights at the ACTS Field Station.

**Day 10:** After a final morning on the platforms at the ACTS Field Station we'll bird our way back to Explornapo Lodge, for one last night. In the afternoon and following early morning, we'll have one more opportunity to search for any specialty we may be missing – perhaps another visit to an Amazonian River Island, or another venture up the Rio Sucasari for Spotted Puffbird. Night at Explornapo Lodge.

**Day 11:** After a final early morning excursion, we'll say goodbye to the rainforest and board the boat for the journey back to Iquitos. Time permitting, we'll break up the trip with short stops at river islands looking for any of the specialties we may have missed, such as Yellow-hooded Blackbird, and Pied Lapwing. We'll arrive back in Iquitos in time for a late afternoon flight back to Lima, arriving in time to connect with flights home.

**Maximum size of group:** The maximum group size for our Peru: Mindo and the Western Andes tour is nine.

**Tour Leader for your Peru Tour: Gary Rosenberg**

**Gary Rosenberg** lives in Tucson, where he has designed and led about 25 birding tours to Peru during the past 25 years. He has spent nearly two years of his life (in terms of number of days in the field) birding in Amazonia, and has visited the Iquitos region, as well as the Explornapo Lodge system at least 12 times. He has been birding since early childhood, studied Ornithology for a Master's degree at Louisiana State University, where he participated in four research expeditions to Peru, 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 Peru, include most areas in North America, in particular Arizona, Florida, and Alaska, as well as Costa Rica, Panama, and Ecuador.

**Pace of the tour:** The pace of this tour is Easy to Moderate. Most of the birding will be done from along reasonably level forest trails. The trails are generally well-maintained, and mostly flat. There is considerable travel by boat, but the boat is very comfortable. 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, when possible. On the morning we depart Lima, we may leave predawn to reach the airport for our very early flight. On at least a few nights, there will be before-dinner owling excursions that may prevent our normal break between birding and dinner.

**Tour Price: \$3800.** The cost of the tour includes all accommodations, food, within-tour transportation (including round-trip flight from Lima to Iquitos and back to Lima), 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 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, international airport tax, laundry, alcoholic beverages, phone calls, and other items of a personal nature.

**Single Supplement = \$220**

**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 Peru 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](http://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 Peru**

Once the tour is confirmed, you will need to purchase your airline ticket to Peru. Several major airlines, such as American, Continental, and Iberia Airlines service Lima Peru. 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 will be departing very early on Day 2 with a dawn flight to Iquitos, and there is the possibility that you will get very little sleep. If you decide to arrive a day early, we would be happy to arrange for an extra night's hotel in Lima.

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](http://www.AA.com) for American Airlines, and [www.continentalairlines.com](http://www.continentalairlines.com) for Continental Airlines. Alternatively, one can visit sites such as [www.orbitz.com](http://www.orbitz.com) or [www.expedia.com](http://www.expedia.com) which list multiple airline options.

**IMPORTANT.** You will need a valid passport to enter Peru. The passport needs to be valid for at least six months beyond your date of entry. A visa is not needed to enter Peru – 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 Peru**

Entering Peru 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.** 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 Peru is MANU EXPEDITIONS. 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, which is only about 5-10 minutes from the airport.

The language of Peru is Spanish. While many Peruvians 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 Peru is the Nuevo Sol. It is easy to change some money upon arrival at the airport. All hotels and lodges on the tour will accept U.S. cash and those in Lima will accept all 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 Lima, although on the coast, is usually chilly, and if you are arriving in the evening, 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](http://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 Peru. 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 general lack of biting insects. While some areas might have some mosquitoes, and small biting flies (no-seeums), they usually don’t present much of a problem, but it is always wise to be prepared. Chiggers are also occasionally present. We do recommend a relatively strong insect repellent that contains “deet”.

### **Hotels and Food**

Avian Journeys and Manu Expeditions (our ground agent in Peru) have many years experience organizing tours in Peru. The hotels and lodges we have selected are both comfortable and well-situated for the birding. Most of the hotels and lodges provide laundry service.

### **Explorama Lodge**

Explorama Lodge has been in existence for more than 40 years! The rooms are in long buildings sharing a common roof. Each room has its own bathroom, and the beds all have mosquito netting. Meals are taken in a common dining room, and are of the buffet style, with lots of salad, rice and beans, meat, chicken or fish – not fancy but quite tasty and nourishing! Nice bar area with internet!

### **Explornapo Lodge**

Designed like a smaller Explorama Lodge, it is more remote and located right at the edge of primary forest along the Sucasari River. The rooms are all in a long building that share

a common roof. All beds have mosquito netting. Bathrooms and showers are in a common building – and although the toilets are of the latrine variety, and there is no hot water (not that one really wants or needs it in Amazonia!), they are kept very clean! Nice bar area with internet!

### **ACTS Field Station**

Identical to Explornapo Lodge, but lacks the bar area. More remote and deep in the middle of the forest – close to the beginning of the Canopy Walkway!

### **Electricity**

Peru does **NOT** have the same electric current as the United States – the entire country is on 220 volts. If you are from a country that uses 220 volts. Most chargers today have a voltage range of 100-240 volts. Please make sure you are aware of this, check your charger (s) and plan accordingly. Most of the lodges we stay at do not have electricity in the rooms, but do have some sort of electricity (generator) to recharge batteries. If you have any questions about electricity, please contact Avian Journeys.

### **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 probably essential for all the lodges as there might be very muddy trails and/or muddy edges to the river, etc. We understand that many simply don’t like walking around in rubber boots all day, but there **WILL** be times that you will want them. If you are considering rubber boots, we recommend a particular brand called “Extra Tuff,” available online at <http://www.xtratufboots.com/>. We have found these very comfortable.

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**.

Forsyth, Adrian and Ken Miyata. 1984. *Tropical Nature*. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons.

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.

**Schulenberg, Thomas S., Douglas F. Stotz, Daniel F. Lane, John P. O'Neill, and Theodore A. Parker. 2007. *The Birds of Peru*. Princeton University Press. Princeton New Jersey. This is the new, long-awaited field guide for Peru. Excellent and essential!**

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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