

ITINERARY
COLOMBIA'S EASTERN CORDILLERA
January 15 - 23, 2027



Apolinar's Wren is an endangered species found only in the marshes of the paramo of central Colombia. We'll look for them in the wetlands of Sumapaz National Park. Photograph by participant Linnet Tse.

We include here information for those interested in the 2027 Field Guides Colombia's Eastern Cordillera tour:

- a general introduction to the tour
- a description of the birding areas to be visited on the tour
- an abbreviated daily itinerary with some indication of the nature of each day's birding outings

Those who register for the tour will be sent this additional material:

- an annotated list of the birds recorded on a previous year's Field Guides trip to the area, with comments by guide(s) on notable species or sightings (may be downloaded from our web site)
- a detailed information bulletin with important logistical information and answers to questions regarding accommodations, air arrangements, clothing, currency, customs and immigration, documents, health precautions, and personal items
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for and keeping track of the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, a list of birds seen on the tour

Bogotá: the city's name brings to mind stunning panoramic vistas from Mount Monserrate, the vibrant art, architecture, graffiti (or street art), and cafés of historic La Candelaria, and the world's largest assemblage of gold artifacts at the Museo del Oro—the Gold Museum. Colombia's vibrant capital is captivating, without doubt, and more foreign tourists are discovering its charms each year. The local people are erudite, thanks to an abundance of good schools, libraries, theatres, and museums, and the easy flight connections and eclectic culinary offerings are what one might expect in a world-class capital city. Okay, there is one downside to all of this: the traffic!

But, what about the birds? They're marvelous! In fact, Bogotá is the best place to go to see quite a few range-restricted endemics, some of which are endangered, many of which are both distinctive and drop-dead beautiful. The

reason for the capital area's concentration of special birds is its location in the center of Colombia's Eastern Cordillera, the easternmost of the three Andean chains in this bird-rich country. Bogotá is a large, flat city set on a high plateau ringed by Andean peaks. To the west, the lower-elevation western slopes descend toward the Magdalena Valley. To the south, the world's largest *páramo* (South American alpine moorland) is protected as Sumapaz National Park. To the east, the peaks of Chingaza National Park hold tracts of cloudforest, elfin forest, and *páramo*. And farther to the southeast, the eastern slopes drop gradually toward the Orinoco Basin, with humid forests in the transitional upper subtropical zone home to scores of Amazonian birds mixed with Andean species that reach their lower elevational limits here.



The Cundinamarca Antpitta is a rare species that we'll look for near Monteredondo. These antpittas have a small range, and we'll be lucky to see one, but we have gotten great views on this tour.
Photograph by participant Linnet Tse.

In a week's birding, we'll cover all of these key compass points and habitats, based for three nights in the city and five nights out of town, in search of the area's specialty birds and many more widespread Andean and some Amazonian foothill and llanos species. Among the species we see only in this region are gems like Coppery-bellied Puffleg, Green-bearded Helmetcrest, Bronze-tailed Thornbill, Silvery-throated Spinetail, Apolinar's Wren, Bogota Rail, Rufous-browed Conebill, and those mesmerizing starfrontlets—Golden-bellied and Blue-throated. Add to these a host of other Andean and even Amazonian and llanos species, and this tour is really something special.

And this is a rather packed and energetic week of birding! We'll have a local guide and drivers, to help us navigate (there is a bit of traffic to contend with in the capital), and we'll catch the occasional "cultural moment" as we can, like trying out the local *aromática* at a café. Although we won't shop for emeralds or take in the gold treasures at Museo del Oro together, we'll wager that the hummingbird shows at Tabacal, Chicaque, and especially the Observatorio de Colibríes will outshine any display of gems or precious metals! The capital area has an active birding community, it's true, but the surrounding mountains still hold mysteries, like the enigmatic Bogota Sunangel—a gorgeous hummingbird species known only from one specimen—so we'll be on our toes in case fortune favors us with an El Dorado moment. Colombia has a way of surprising even veteran birders, we find.

We want to be sure you are on the right tour! Below is a description of the physical requirements of the tour. If you are concerned about the difficulty, please contact us about your concerns. We want to make sure you have a wonderful time with us, so if you are uncomfortable with the requirements, just let us know and we can help you find a better fitting tour! Field Guides will not charge you a change or cancellation fee if you opt out within 10 days of depositing.

Physical requirements of this tour

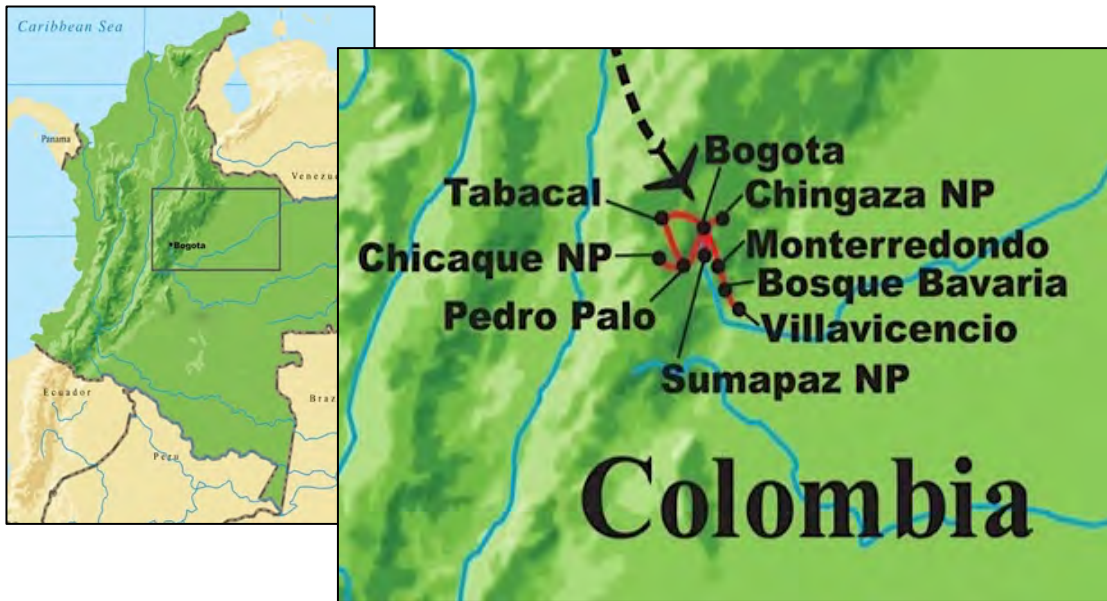
- **TRAILS & WALKING:** Moderate amounts of walking (2-4 miles per day), some of it on paved roads, some on gravel or dirt roads, and in one case on a fairly steep trail that includes cobblestone and earthen sections. In some places, it will be necessary to walk uphill for short segments, but in most areas, we attempt to walk downhill as we bird. It's important to remember that walking downhill can be very challenging (**walking sticks are useful**), especially when the terrain is a bit uneven or steep (as at Chicaque). There is birding spent above 10,000 feet at the national parks, Chingaza and Sumapaz, on two days. **YOU MIGHT RECONSIDER TAKING THIS TOUR IF YOU HAVE BAD KNEES OR TROUBLE WALKING ON AN INCLINE.**
- **PACE:** Early mornings (departures between 4:30 and 6:00 a.m.), with birding sessions in morning and afternoon broken by a picnic or restaurant lunch. We do not have many evening excursions during this tour, so we should be able to get plenty of sleep for the several early departures. We will travel by small bus.
- **ELEVATION:** We will reach a maximum elevation of over 10,000 feet on two days of this tour while visiting Chingaza and Sumapaz National Parks.
- **WEATHER:** The weather can be quite chilly in the higher mountains, with early morning temperatures in the 40s F but usually warming into the 60s by midday. Lower elevations are notably warmer, with temperature ranges from 65 to 85 degrees F and higher humidity (around Villavincencio).
- **VEHICLE SEATING:** So that each participant has equal opportunity during our travel, we employ a seat rotation system on all tours. Participants will need to be flexible enough to maneuver to the back of the vehicle on occasion. Those who experience motion sickness will need to bring adequate medication for the duration of the tour, as we are not able to reserve forward seats for medical conditions.
- **BATHROOM BREAKS:** We will be birding in natural habitats where there are often no restrooms, so it will be necessary to make comfort stops in nature when we are birding.
- **OPTING OUT:** When we are staying at the same lodging for multiple nights, participants can easily opt to sit out a day.

If you are uncertain about whether this tour is a good match for your abilities, please don't hesitate to contact our office; if they cannot directly answer your queries, they'll put you in touch with a guide.

This tour may be combined with Colombia's Santa Marta Mountains & Caribbean Coast, January 7-15, 2027 and Colombia's Marvelous Magdalena Valley, January 23-February 2, 2027.



*Some of our hikes will be in places that are rather steep, but it will be worth the effort to reach the special birds we'll see.
Photograph by participant Suzi Cole.*



About the Birding Areas

Colombia is full of birds, nearly 2000 species (about 20% of all the world's birds, and more than any other country!). Our Colombia program has six tours, all designed to see as much of this incredible country's avifauna as possible. Each tour tends to focus on a suite of species that is special to the itinerary's birding sites. For instance, if a scarce species is rather reliable on one tour but quite difficult on another, it's likely that we'll search for that species primarily where we have a reasonable chance of finding it (and often will not invest long hours looking for it where our chances are very low). For this tour, we do have a small core of specialty species not seen on any other Field Guides tours, such as Bogota Rail, Blue-throated and Golden-bellied starfrontlets, Coppery-bellied Puffleg, and Apolinar's Wren, and we'll give each of those a very strong Field Guides effort. In addition, we will have plenty of time to enjoy most of the more widespread species that the area has to offer, some of which (or close relatives) can also be seen on tours in Ecuador or Peru, but we will relish and take time with them on this tour, too. The species noted for each site below are just examples, and some species are possible at multiple sites, even though not mentioned in each account here.

Laguna del Tabacal—Around this pretty crater lake, the local municipality of La Vega has established a park with trails through scrub and secondary forest typical of the Eastern Cordillera's western foothills, that is, the slopes draining to the Magdalena River. Birding here, as well as in arid scrub habitat along the main highway below La Vega (with its many coffee plantations), can be remarkably productive in the early morning and late in the day, despite the somewhat limited habitat, with nearly 400 species reported for the vicinity. Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Velvet-fronted Euphonia, and Bar-crested Antshrike will be among our targets for the morning, along with Spectacled Parrotlet, Jet, White-bellied, Dusky, and Blue-lored antbirds, Gray-throated Warbler, Speckle-breasted Wren (the endemic *columbianus* subspecies), Ash-browed and Stripe-breasted spinetails, Moustached Puffbird, and White-bearded Manakin. More widespread species of note here often include Rosy Thrush-Tanager, Red-billed Scythebill, Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Golden-faced and Sooty-headed tyrannulets, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, Cinereous Becard, Long-billed Gnatwren, Plain Antvireo, Rufous-naped Greenlet, Black-bellied and Band-backed wrens, and Plain-colored, Bay-headed, and Scrub tanagers. Along the lake edges, White-throated Crakes and Gray and Dull-colored seedeaters are sometimes evident, along with several duck or heron species, and Black Hawk-Eagles sometimes hunt the surrounding second growth. Wintering warblers from North America should be plentiful.

Jardín Encantado—This private home is called the called the “Enchanted Garden” because of its dozens of hummingbird feeding stations, which will give us an excellent opportunity to study the endemic Indigo-capped Hummingbird, which often patronizes flowers and feeders here. Gorgeted Woodstar is another range-restricted species we hope to see here (with White-bellied Woodstars for comparison), and we'll certainly enjoy every hummer we see, including potentially Black-throated Mango, Green Hermit, White-vented Plumeleteer, Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Red-billed Emerald, and three species of violetear—Brown, Lesser, and Sparkling. Of the more than three-dozen species of hummingbirds reported here, more than a third are regular patrons, and those will keep us busy!



The Black-headed Hemispingus is one of four hemispingus species we'll watch for in Chicaque Natural Park. Photograph by participant Jose Padilla-Lopez.

Chicaque Natural Park—Located about 25 miles southwest of the capital, at elevations of 6900-8900 feet (about 2100-2700 m), Chicaque is a private park with an extensive trail system through wonderfully lush cloudforests bursting with ferns, orchids, epiphytes, palms, oaks, and many other Andean evergreen trees. Although many of the birds found in the mixed flocks here are of widespread Andean distribution, two hummingbirds are not: Golden-bellied Starfrontlet and Black Inca. The former sometimes visits feeders at the park restaurant, but the latter usually does not, and so we'll search for it carefully in the forest and edges, along with the range-restricted Moustached Brushfinch. We will take our time as we walk, slowly and carefully (**walking sticks are very helpful**), downhill over a trail that begins as cobblestone but becomes earthen and narrower as we descend (we'll get a ride in 4x4 trucks back to the entrance rather than walking back uphill!).

Among the many species we hope to encounter here (many are hummingbirds!) are Andean Guan, Speckled Hummingbird, Tourmaline and Longuemare's sunangels, Glowing Puffleg, Collared Inca, Mountain Velvetbreast, Buff-tailed Coronet, Booted Racket-tail, Andean Pygmy-Owl, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Southern Emerald-Toucanet (subspecies *albivitta*), Uniform Antshrike, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta (usually just heard), Blackish Tapaculo, Brown-billed Scythebill, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Montane and Lineated foliage-gleaners, Rufous and Ash-browed spinetails, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Masked Trogon, Rufous-breasted and Flavescent flycatchers, Rufous-crowned Tody-Tyrant, Brown-bellied Swallow, Whiskered and Sharpe's wrens, Andean Solitaire (a lovely cloudforest singer), Common Chlorospingus, Three-striped and Black-crested warblers, Gray-browed and Chestnut-capped brushfinches, and a host of tanagers: Blue-capped, Beryl-spangled, Metallic-green, Fawn-breasted, and Blue-and-black commonly, along with Scarlet-bellied and Buff-breasted mountain-tanagers. Remarkably, four of Colombia's five hemispingus species—Black-capped, Black-eared, Superciliaried, and Oleaginous—are here, though it's tough to score all four in a morning. Less common residents here include Lined Quail-Dove, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Undulated Antpitta, Spillmann's Tapaculo, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant, Black-chested Jay, Black-billed Peppershrike, Rufous Wren, and Flame-faced Tanager. Although the birding here is not as overwhelming as in some more-famous Andean sites, it should be darn good.

Laguna de Pedro Palo—Our final morning on the western slope will find us in this mostly scrub and second-growth nature reserve that belongs to the municipality of Tena. The reserve spans 6600-7500 feet (2000-2280 m) in elevation, where temperatures are usually very pleasant. In the early mornings, the endangered Turquoise Dacnis often forages here, in the forest canopy comprised of species of oak, cecropia, fig, alder, walnut, willow, laurel, sweetwood, and coralberry, along with *Ocotea*, *Cedrela*, the lovely endemic Encenillo (*Weinmannia tomentosa*), and the magnificent *Retrophyllum rospigliosii* of the family Podocarpaceae, once called Romeron Pine. We'll bird slowly among these trees and along pasture edges, mostly from a gravel road but also from a short trail. We might see a Silvery-throated Spinetail

or Gray-cowled Wood-Rail here, and we'll have an additional chance to see some of the species we might have seen (or missed?) earlier, including Spectacled Parrotlet, Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner, Bar-crested Antshrike, Black Inca, Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Red-headed Barbet, Ash-browed Spinetail, Whiskered and Speckle-breasted wrens, Moustached Brushfinch, or Flame-faced, Golden, Saffron-crowned, Scrub, and Black-capped tanagers. White-winged Becard, Yellow-backed Oriole, and Metallic-green Tanager are occasionally present.



Blue-throated Starfrontlet (here an adult male) is one among many glorious hummingbirds of Colombia's eastern Andes that we'll seek during this week exploring the national capital area and a bit beyond. Photograph by participant Steve Parrish.

Chingaza National Park—Towering over Bogotá to the east, Chingaza National Park's peaks rise to almost 11,200 feet (3400 m) and offer some of the tour's most scenic Andean vistas. Here, high-elevation cloudforest gives way to temperate scrub mixed with *Chusquea* bamboo, then at higher elevations to gorgeous *páramo*. We will bird roadsides and a few short trails along an entrance road to the park, concentrating on species we are unlikely to see later at Sumapaz: Bronze-tailed Thornbill, Amethyst-throated (Longuemare's) Sunangel, Rufous-browed Conebill, White-browed Spinetail, and that fifth hemispingus, the sometimes tricky Black-headed. Some of these birds are nearly endemic to Colombia, found also in parts of Venezuela. The endemic Brown-breasted (Flame-winged) Parakeet is a threatened species found at lower elevations, and we have a small chance to see it. More birds we'll watch for here are (East Andean) Rufous Antpitta (nominate *rufula*), Red-crested Cotinga, Golden-fronted Redstart, Black-chested and Hooded mountain-tanagers, Tyrian Metaltail, Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant, Brown-backed, Rufous-chested, and perhaps Slaty-backed chat-tyrants, Silvery-throated Spinetail, White-chinned Thistletail, Many-striped Canastero, Pale-naped Brushfinch, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, and Andean Siskin. Our visit will take in but a sliver of the park's 131,000 acres, but we'll try to make it a rich and rewarding outing, with picnic lunch.

Observatorio de Colibries—This quiet garden bordered by a small patch of forest seems modest at first, but the blizzard of hummingbirds that attend the flowers and feeders here are anything but modest, in color or behavior! We stop by here primarily to see the endemic Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Coppery-bellied Puffleg, and Glowing Puffleg, but Sword-billed Hummingbird, Black-tailed and Green-tailed trainbearers, Great Sapphirewing, White-bellied Emerald, and Sparkling and Lesser violetears make for generous lagniappe. A few nice Andean birds are often in the parking area—Black-backed Grosbeak, Red-crested Cotinga, or Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, so we'll try to tear ourselves away from the garden for a few minutes before heading back to Bogotá.



Another range-restricted endemic we'll seek is the Bogota Rail, found in just a few high elevation wetlands such as those at Sumapaz National Park. Photograph by participants David and Judy Smith.

Sumapaz National Park—In 1539, Swabian conquistador Nikolaus Federmann, a co-founder of Bogotá, crossed the Sumapaz moorlands with a large party, part of an epic but disastrous search for the mythical golden city of El Dorado (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/El_Dorado). Two hundred sixty years on, in 1799, the German naturalist Alexander von Humboldt wrote the first scientific descriptions of this hauntingly beautiful *páramo*, which by then the Spanish inhabitants of the region called *País de la Niebla* (“Country of Fog”) because of the dense clouds that often blanket the landscape. Small tributaries that wind through this alpine moor feed the two main river systems of Colombia, draining eastward, into the Orinoco River basin, as well as westward, into the Magdalena River valley. The national park lands range in altitude between 9200 and 13,125 feet (2800-4000 m), but most of our birding will be below 11,480 feet (3500 m), in stunted, scrubby forest and in *páramo*, both being dream habitats for botanist and birder alike, with Pagoda Trees (*Escallonia myrtilloides*), *Polylepis*, Valerian, and dwarf or prostrate species of plantain, bamboo, bean, or thistle at every turn. We will bird mostly along level roadsides here, partly because these ecosystems are fragile, partly because the ground can be tricky underfoot, with many *chupaderos* and *chucas* (drainages and boggy seeps) concealed by *Sphagnum* moss, blueberry, and other low vegetation.

Around these wet patches and larger ponds created by glacial forces, we'll look carefully for two endangered endemic birds that evolved in these high-elevation wetlands—Bogota Rail and Apolinar's Wren—as well as for more widespread species such as Noble Snipe, Andean Duck, Andean Teal, American Coot (endemic *colombiana*), and any wintering shorebirds that might be about. Grand *Espeletia* plants, known in Colombia as *frailejones* (“tall monks”), tower above the landscape, and around these strange sunflower relatives we hope to see the endemic Green-bearded Helmetcrest, a handsome hummingbird species found only from Sumapaz north very sparingly to Bucaramanga. In the surrounding heath-like habitats, we'll work to locate Silvery-throated Spinetail, White-chinned Thistletail, Many-striped Canastero, Pale-bellied Tapaculo, Tawny Antpitta, Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Chestnut-winged Cinclodes, Sedge (Grass) Wren, Glossy Flowerpiercer, and Plumbeous Sierra-Finch. Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant, Paramo Pipit, and Paramo Seedeater are also possible (but less likely) here. In the skies, we'll watch for Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, which preys on Mountain Rabbit and the endemic local subspecies (*anolaimae*) of Brazilian Guinea Pig. Although a few Spectacled Bears and Mountain Tapirs are said to hang on in the park, we have yet to see one here, as they do not normally venture near the roadways where we bird.

Bosque Bavaria—Although the Villavicencio-area forests have some avifaunal overlap with areas to the west of Bogotá, there are scores of new species to be seen on the eastern slope! This patch of forest, named for the old Bavaria beer plant along the entrance road (now closed), is home to a 74-acre ProAves preserve dedicated to conservation of nesting Orange-breasted Falcons. We will bird at lower elevations than the actual preserve, at about 3300 feet (1000 m), where

the humid forest is home to birds with distinctly Amazonian affinities: Spix's Guan, Cobalt-winged Parakeet, Amazonian Umbrellabird, White-chinned Jacamar, Amazonian Motmot, Lettered Aracari (what a bill!), White-chested Puffbird, Yellow-billed Nunbird, Scaled Piculet, Yellow-tufted and Red-stained woodpeckers, Gray-chinned, Sooty-capped, and White-bearded hermits, Blue-fronted Lancebill, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Green-backed Trogon, Gilded Barbet, Northern Slaty-Antshrike, Black-faced, Dusky, White-browed, and Spot-winged antbirds, White-bearded, Striolated, and Golden-headed manakins, Violaceous Jay, Russet-backed and Crested oropendolas, Purple-throated, Orange-bellied, and Golden-bellied euphonias, and Paradise, Speckled, Turquoise, Swallow, and Masked tanagers. More open areas may have Pectoral Sparrow, Buff-throated Saltator, and seedeaters and perhaps flocks of swifts overhead. There are no must-see endemics here, it's true, but this is a fascinating elevation to visit, particularly when contrasted with Monterredondo, a short distance upslope! At some point, however, if we see flowering *Erythrina* trees (usually about 4000 feet/1200 m at this time of year), we will check them carefully for the elusive endemic Green-bellied Hummingbird.



The Sickie-winged Guan is found in the temperate forests of the Andes. It is one of the smaller cracids, and perhaps has less hunting pressure, but it still can be difficult to see. Photograph by participant Wayne Whitmore.

Monterredondo—Our route back toward Bogotá from Villavencio partly follows the arid, rocky Rio Negro valley, but as we pass higher, we'll see that the forests receive more rainfall, and trees grow to considerable heights. By about 5600 feet (1700 m) elevation, at the lower part of the road above Monterredondo, we have returned to an Andean avifauna, with birds like Grass-green Tanager, Collared Inca, Pearled Treerunner, Black-collared Jay, White-capped Tanager, and Green-and-black Fruiteater typically found. Birding above Monterredondo is splendid but remarkably unpredictable. Because this road continues up into Chingaza National Park, rising several thousands more feet in elevation, the bird list here is impressive (over 400 species), but many species are quite scarce or difficult, so we will not fret if we don't see or hear Black-and-chestnut Eagle, Golden-headed Quetzal, Highland Tinamou, Violet-fronted Brilliant, or other seldom-reported species. However, we are more likely run into prizes like Sickie-winged Guan, Long-tailed Sylph, Brown-breasted (Flame-winged) Parakeet, Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet, Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant, Ochre-breasted Brushfinch, Crested Spinetail, or Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager. It was along this road that U.S. birder Peter Kaestner discovered the Cundinamarca Antpitta in 1989, and there are still a few territories around 6500-7550 feet (2000-2300 m) elevation here. We would be very lucky to hear one of these rare birds, and even if we do, it's unlikely we'll be able to see the bird, as the known territories are away from the road, mostly on very steep slopes. But even hearing one would be splendid—and provide assurance that this endangered species persists.



Green-bearded Helmetcrest is one among many wonderful hummingbirds that we'll seek during this week exploring the Bogotá area and a bit beyond. Photograph by participant Linnet Tse.

Itinerary for Colombia's Eastern Cordillera

Day 1, Fri, Jan 15. Flights to Bogotá depart from the US. On arrival at Bogotá, and after clearing customs and immigration, you may wish to change money for Colombian pesos at the El Dorado airport if you have not already done so in the United States. Most flights from North America arrive in the evening; transfers will be scheduled from the airport to our hotel in Bogotá. To visit Bogotá attractions, such as the Gold Museum (Museo del Oro), our office can easily help you with arrangements, adding a day or more to your stay. Our local ground operator in Bogotá also offers guided tours to the old colonial quarter of La Candelaria, to Simon Bolivar Central Park, and to Mount Monserrate, accessed by cable-car, with stunning views of the city and mountains. Night near the international airport in Bogotá (8600 feet elevation).

Day 2, Sat, Jan 16. Laguna del Tabacal and Jardín Encantado. We will depart early (likely 4:45 a.m.) for a full morning of birding at Tabacal, which is about 1h 45m drive from our hotel in Bogotá. We plan on lunching in the small town below the site and then making a stop at Jardín Encantado for the dazzling hummingbird display. Species we hope to find at Tabacal include Bar-crested Antshrike, Spectacled Parrotlet, Jet, White-bellied, Dusky, and Blue-lored antbirds, Gray-throated Warbler, Stripe-breasted Spinetail, Rusty-breasted Antpitta, Speckle-breasted Wren, White-bearded Manakin, and a host of commoner lowland and foothill species. At Jardín Encantado, we will focus on the endemic Indigo-capped Hummingbird and localized Gorgeted Woodstar but will also hope to find White-vented Plumeeleeter, Green Hermit, Black-throated Mango, Red-billed Emerald, and three species of violetears, among others. Night in La Mesa.

Day 3, Sun, Jan 17. Chicaque Natural Park. Starting along the entrance road and around the car park, we'll be looking for Pale-naped and Moustached brushfinches, Andean Guan, and Andean Pygmy-Owl. We'll then check the feeders, which attract Golden-bellied Starfrontlet, Glowing Puffleg, Tourmaline Sunangel, Mountain Velvetbreast, and White-bellied Woodstar, then bird slowly down through the forest where, as we drop in elevation, the species composition changes. Species we may encounter include Gray-browed and Chestnut-capped brushfinches, Black-eared, Black-capped, Superciliaried, and Oleaginous hemispinguses, Cinnamon and Rufous-breasted flycatchers, Southern Emerald-Toucanet (*albivitta* subspecies), Blackish Tapaculo, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant, a selection of tanagers including Flame-faced, Rufous-tailed Tyrant, Striped Treehunter, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Brown-billed Scythebill, and Chestnut-crowned Antpitta—to name a few. Night in La Mesa.

Day 4, Mon, Jan 18. Laguna de Pedro Palo. Our main focus at Pedro Palo will be the endemic Turquoise Dacnis and Black Inca, but we will be on the lookout for any birds we haven't seen or would like to see better before leaving the

western slope, including perhaps Stripe-breasted Spinetail, Moustached Brushfinch, Rufous-naped Greenlet, Olivaceous Piculet, Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner, or Metallic-green Tanager. Night in La Mesa.



*The Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle is a large hawk that we will watch for in the paramo of Sumapaz National Park.
Photograph by participant Jody Gillespie.*

Day 5, Tue, Jan 19. Sumapaz National Park to Villavencio. To reach Sumapaz National Park, just south of town, at a decent hour, we'll depart early again, to enjoy a full morning here. This stark environment, mostly above treeline, seems to have plants designed by Dr. Seuss, particularly the *frailejones*, of which there are many species here. We might have a bit of weather to contend with, including thick clouds at ground level, but hopefully that will add to the experience of entering another world entirely. Our big birds today are Bogota Rail, Apolinar's Wren, and Green-bearded Helmetcrest, and (if we haven't already seen them) Silvery-throated Spinetail, White-chinned Thistletail, Many-striped Canastero, and Pale-bellied Tapaculo. Marvelous paramo birds like Tawny Antpitta, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant, Andean Tit-Spinetail, and Chestnut-winged Cinclodes should add to this delightful morning. After lunch, we'll make the 3-hour- (ish) drive to Villavencio. Night at Camana near Restrepo.

Day 6, Wed, Jan 20. Bosque Bavaria and Camana. We will breakfast and depart early, spending the morning in the Bosque Bavaria foothill forest where we hope to find a range of Amazonian foothill (east slope) species including White-chinned Jacamar, Amazonian Motmot, Yellow-billed Nunbird, Pectoral Sparrow, Violaceous Jay, Speckled Chachalaca, Bare-eyed Thrush, Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher, Gray-chinned Hermit, Green-backed Trogon, Gilded Barbet, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Scaled Piculet, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Black-faced Antbird, and Paradise Tanager, among a flood of new birds for the triplist. After lunch, the afternoon will be spent on the lodge grounds and birding feeders, or in the nearby surrounding area (possibly a visit into the llanos). Night at Camana.

Day 7, Thu, Jan 21. We will leave very early to bird the road above Monterredondo for mixed flocks with the chance of Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet, Ochre-breasted Brushfinch, Grass-green Tanager, Brown-breasted Parakeet, , Black-collared Jay, and plenty of tanagers, hemispinguses, brushfinches, and flycatchers. The birding has many potential "wild cards," and we'll keep an ear out for the rare endemic Cundinamarca Antpitta. In the late afternoon, we will return to Bogotá. Night in Bogotá.

Day 8, Fri, Jan 22. Chingaza National Park and Observatorio de Colibries. Today will be our first excursion into the higher elevations, above 10,000 feet in the Andes! We'll depart early (about 5:00 a.m.) for our 90-minute drive to the national park, where we'll take the walking very slowly. Key birds this morning will be Bronze-tailed Thornbill, Amethyst-throated (Longuemare's) Sunangel, Black-headed Hemispingus, Rufous-browed Conebill, and White-browed Spinetail.

After a picnic lunch, we'll head back downhill toward El Cerrito, home to the hummingbird observatory, where we'll luxuriate for an hour or so in the pageant of colors, paying particular attention to Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Coppery-bellied Puffleg, and Glowing Puffleg—so named because the male pulses his small gorget rhythmically, like a flickering ember. We'll have our farewell dinner with traditional balloting on Favorite Birds tonight at the hotel restaurant. Night in Bogotá.

Day 9, Sat, Jan 23. We recommend arranging a complimentary airport shuttle at the hotel today for your trip to El Dorado airport tomorrow. We also recommend arriving at El Dorado airport 3 hours before your scheduled departure. We wish everyone a *buen viaje* homeward!

Financial Information

FEE: \$5,525 per person from Bogotá

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$500 (*Singles are limited at Camana and not included in the single supplement*)

DEPOSIT: \$550 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: July 19, 2026

LIMIT: 7

About Your Guide

Willy Perez, who was born in Ecuador, has been leading birding tours for more than fifteen years. He also served as a resident guide at Maquipucuna Reserve on the west slope of the Andes and at Kapawi Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon, mastering the art of finding and identifying the many secretive birds of the lowland rainforest. He worked protecting marine turtles in Costa Rica, and on bird conservation in northwestern Ecuador.

Willy joined Field Guides in 2011 and has been delighting our tour groups ever since; his schedule includes tours to all parts of Ecuador as well as to Chile and Argentina. He lives in England with his wife, Fiona, and their two daughters. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads enjoyable and fun.

“Willy Perez was an incredible birder and an extraordinary guide. I do a lot of traveling and have been on a fair number of birding trips...and Willy is one of the best guides I've ever seen.” N.D., Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/our-staff/> for Willy's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

Other Things You Need to Know

TOUR MANAGER: The manager for this tour is Sharon Mackie. Sharon will be happy to assist you in preparing for the tour. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact her!

ACCOMMODATIONS: Accommodations in Bogotá, La Mesa, and Villavicencio are comfortable: more modern in the capital, more rustic in La Mesa and Camana, but both very comfortable.

AIR ARRANGEMENTS: This tour begins and ends in Bogotá, Colombia (El Dorado International Airport, BOG).

Arrival: Bogotá (BOG) on January 15, at any time.

Departure: Bogotá (BOG) on January 23, at any time.

Please wait to purchase airline tickets until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate. At that time, we'll be glad to assist with your flight arrangements at no service fee.

DOCUMENTS: Be sure to verify the latest entry requirements for each country you will visit or transit.

Passport: A valid passport is required for international travel. It should be in good condition, valid for at least 6 months beyond your return date, and have at least one blank page for each country on your itinerary.

Visa: No visa is required for U.S. and Canadian citizens. Non-US citizens should consult the consulates of each destination for current entry requirements.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The tour fee is \$5,525 for one person in double occupancy from Bogotá.

It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 8, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 9, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of the tour leader(s). Tipping at group meals and for drivers, porters, and local guides is included in your tour fee and will be handled for the group by your Field Guides leader(s). However, if you would like to recognize your Field Guides leader(s) or any local guide(s) for exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are optional and not expected.

The above fee does not include your airfare to and from Bogotá, airport taxes, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional tips to local drivers, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The single supplement is \$500 for those requesting a single room. *Singles are limited at Camana and not included in the single supplement. Please be prepared to share on Days 5 & 6, though we will do our best to accommodate all requests.*

If you do not have a roommate but wish to share, we will try to pair you with a roommate from the tour; but if none is available, you will be billed for the single supplement. Our tour fees are based on double occupancy; one-half the cost of a double room is priced into the tour fee. The single supplement is calculated by taking the actual cost of a single room and subtracting one-half the cost of a double room (plus any applicable taxes).

TOUR REGISTRATION: To register for this tour, please contact us at fieldguides.com/contact-us/. Our office will be in touch with you by email by the next business day (Mon-Fri) with instructions on how to complete our electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please send your deposit of \$550 per person; see fieldguides.com/payment-options/ for our Payment Options.

Full payment of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or by July 19, 2026. We will bill you for the final payment at either 180 days or when the tour has reached sufficient subscription to operate, whichever date comes later.

Since the cost of your trip insurance and airline tickets is generally non-refundable, please do not finalize these purchases until you have received final billing for the tour or have been advised that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate by your tour manager.

TOUR LIMITS: Our limits are firm and we don't exceed the limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space remains open.

SMOKING: Almost all of our clients prefer a smoke-free environment. If you smoke, please be sensitive to the group and refrain from smoking at meals, in vehicles, and in proximity to the group on trails and elsewhere.

CANCELLATION POLICY: Refund of deposit and full payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the full tour fee is non-refundable, which would include the full deposit if the final payment has not yet been paid. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable and non-transferable.

Our cancellation policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour (and any services included in those fees). Airline tickets not included in the tour fee and purchased separately often carry penalties for cancellation or change, or are sometimes totally non-refundable. Additionally, if you take out trip insurance the cost of that insurance is not refundable, so it is best to purchase the policy just prior to making full payment for the tour or at the time you purchase airline tickets, depending upon the airline's restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure. In most such cases, full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. Note this exception, however: If you have been advised pre-tour that there is a non-refundable portion of your tour fee no matter the reason for Field Guides cancellation of the tour, that portion will not be refunded. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE: We strongly recommend purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to protect your investment in case of injury or illness to you or an immediate family member before or during a trip. Because we must remit early and substantial deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer refunds for cancellations outside of our Cancellation Policy. If a participant is unable to join or continue a tour due to illness, all related expenses will be their responsibility, and no refunds can be issued for missed days. Please wait to purchase insurance until we notify you that the tour is confirmed to operate, as most policies are non-refundable.

For full details, visit our Trip Cancellation Insurance page at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/>.

RESPONSIBILITY: For and in consideration of the opportunity to participate in the tour, each tour participant and each parent or legal guardian of a tour participant who is under 18 agrees to release, indemnify, and hold harmless Field Guides Incorporated, its agents, servants, employees, shareholders, officers, directors, attorneys, and contractors as more fully set forth in the Release and Indemnity Agreement on the registration form. Field Guides Incorporated acts only as an agent for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, or other means, and assumes no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity caused by defect in such vehicles or for any reason whatsoever, including the acts, defaults, or bankruptcies of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. You acknowledge and agree that Field Guides Incorporated is not responsible for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. The tour participant shall bear all such losses and expenses. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. Field Guides Incorporated reserves the right to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely.

Participants should be in good health and should consult a physician before undertaking a tour. If you have questions about the physical requirements of a tour, please contact our office for further information. Participants should prepare for the tour by reading the detailed itinerary, the information bulletin, and other pertinent matter provided by Field Guides. Each participant is responsible for bringing appropriate clothing and equipment as recommended in our bulletins.

THE RECEIPT OF YOUR TOUR DEPOSIT SHALL BE DEEMED TO BE CONSENT TO THE ABOVE CONDITIONS. EACH TOUR PARTICIPANT AND EACH PARENT OR LEGAL GUARDIAN OF A TOUR PARTICIPANT WHO IS UNDER 18 SHALL SIGN AND DELIVER THE RELEASE AND INDEMNITY AGREEMENT AT THE TIME OF REGISTRATION.

Updated 9/24peg; 4/25 JFF, CB, peg; 4/26 JFF; 5/26peg