

ITINERARY  
***SOUTHEAST ECUADOR: ORANGE-THROATED TANAGER &  
FOOTHILL SPECIALTIES***  
*February 23 - March 4, 2019*



*We had an excellent experience with the Orange-throated Tanager on our inaugural tour in 2018. Yankuam Lodge is a perfect base for finding this species, plus many other specialties of the Andean foothills. Photograph by participant Tony Ward.*

We include here information for those interested in the 2019 Field Guides Southeast Ecuador: Orange-throated Tanager & Foothill Specialties 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 reference list
- a Field Guides checklist for preparing for, and keeping track of, the birds we see on the tour
- after the conclusion of the tour, an annotated list of birds seen on the tour

The foothills of Ecuador's far southeast are still among some of the least explored areas of the country, partly because of their remoteness and rugged terrain, but also because the area had been, up until the late 90's, a zone of conflict with the much mightier Peru. But not to worry, as these are all issues of the past! Nowadays, with decent access, getting there to bird is a relative breeze, and the fact that the two countries signed a peace treaty in 1999 rendered the zone a very safe place to visit. We will target two major areas: the deep southeast, along the western slope of the Cordillera del Condor right along the Peruvian border, and then the lower eastern slopes of the famous Podocarpus National Park, and areas nearby, including the birdy old Loja-Zamora road.

This weeklong tour's main goal is to come "face-to-face" with the Orange-throated Tanager in probably the most accessible area for it anywhere in its range - the upper Río Nangaritzza valley of Ecuador. Those interested in this trip may already know that this bird was a bomb that shocked the scientific world back in the early 60's, when Aguaruna natives practically landed a specimen right in the lap of legendary LSU ornithologist, John O'Neill, during one of those famous expeditions to the wilds of Peru. For decades, the Orange-throated Tanager was considered to be a Peruvian endemic, but in 1990 a population was discovered just over the border in Ecuador during surveys to this remote area.

We stand a very good chance of finding this range-restricted, beautiful, and legendary tanager of the forest canopy along some birdy roadsides, and we plan to get to ground-zero as soon as we can. For years, boat rides necessary to access the key spots made finding the tanager more of an adventure - and the upper Nangaritzza river banks are spectacular indeed, with steep rocky cliffs and waterfalls - but new roads have penetrated since, and now can get us on wheels right into where we need to be.



*White-necked Parakeets are another range-restricted species that we'll seek on this tour. These two are part of a group that was seen at Copalinga on last year's tour. Photograph by participant Tony Ward.*

Although we will be birding all the while, we will hope to land the tanager early on; this will then allow us to relax a bit and lend our attention to the extremely diverse avifauna that really makes the area come alive, and a blast to bird. Early morning and late afternoon roadside strolls should produce some exciting flocks, as well as numerous, more sedentary species lurking about away from flocks. Since we will be flying into and out of the Loja airport, which lies within a dry rain shadow valley, we will want to have a quick look around there as well (at either the beginning, or the end of the tour) for some of the common species of the zone. This area will not be a focus of our birding, though.

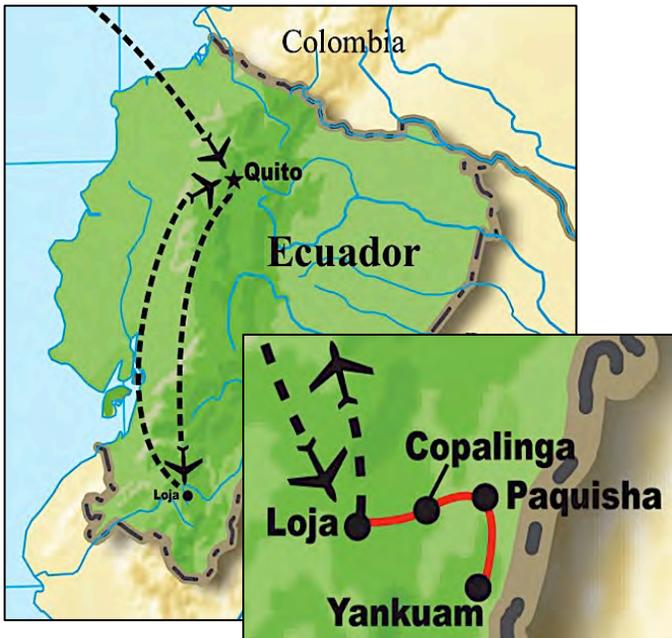
The first half of our trip will be based out of the well-appointed and comfortable, but rustic, Yankuam Lodge for three nights. We'll then stay at a more basic hotel in the small frontier town of Paquisha, which will allow for easier access to some birdy areas nearby. The vast majority of our birding in this area will be along easily walked roads and gravel trails, but our trip is Andean-based; even though most of the roads are relatively flat, do expect some hills. We also plan to explore a few steep trails that will be more challenging, with un-level footing, corduroy logs, and possibly muddy conditions, but this will always be outlined before any outing, and the rough trails will be minimal. In the Yankuam/ Paquisha area, we will be in the vicinity of a number of range-restricted, "tepui" endemics, but many of these, as of this writing, are still not easily accessible, as the trails up to them are still quite rugged and long, and these birds are best searched for on some of our northern Peru tours. We will, however, take advantage of any new developments as new inroads are made!

The second phase of our trip will be based out of the birder-friendly, and very comfortable, Copalinga Lodge, a few hours northwest of Yankuam. From here, we will explore the lush forests on the lodge property a bit closer to the Andean chain, as well as in the lower sector of the diverse Podocarpus National Park (Río Bombuscaro), which protects some of the most accessible and well-preserved tracts of eastern foothill forests in Ecuador. Slight geographical changes can mean a lot in the tropics with respect to organismal distribution (especially when even slight elevation changes are involved), and birds are no exception, so we can expect to capitalize on our efforts up to this point, and really round out our eastern foothill list. On one full morning we will also want to explore the upper tropical and pre-montane zones along the old Loja-Zamora road, where the scenery is awesome, and the birding even better.

**About the Physical Requirements & Pace:** As with most trips to the tropics, we will undertake some trail birding to increase our chances of seeing more forest-based species. The difficulty level will vary from easier, wide trails with rolling hills at Bombuscaro (a few sections are steeper, but footing is generally good) to some steeper trails with uneven footing at Copalinga and around Yankuam. Most of our birding will take place between 800-1,100 meters, but we plan to spend some time in the pre-montane zones as well - up to about 1,600 m near the town of Zamora - in areas that can be great for frugivorous and insectivorous mixed flocks.

Over all temperatures on this trip can range from hot in the midday sun (high 80's-low 90's), to comfortably cool mornings, afternoons and nights (high 60's-70's). Up along the old Loja-Zamora road, it can get quite chilly if things cloud over or if it rains, but our time in this habitat will be minimal. The coolest temperatures we will experience will probably be near Quito around the hotel at San Jose de Puembo, but still nothing at all extreme. A good sweater or light jacket should suffice.

## About the Birding Areas



**Yankuam Lodge** is set on the banks of the Nangaritza River at the base of the west slope of the Cordillera del Condor. We will explore the bird-rich areas of the outlying foothills that are surrounded by gorgeous ridges and rugged, tepui-like geological formations. In the words of well-known botanist, David Neill (of the Missouri Botanical Gardens), who has done a great deal of research in the area, "The geology of the Cóndor region is known only in general terms. The entire region is composed of marine and continental sediments deposited during the Cretaceous and early Tertiary and uplifted from the Miocene onwards to its present elevations. The lowermost strata along the Nangaritza River are Cretaceous shales with abundant fossil ammonites. These strata are overlain by limestone, which in places has eroded into karst formations. The uppermost strata are sandstones, which form flat-topped ridges and table-mountains. Oligotrophic sandstone substrates are unusual in the Andes. We believe that the geological composition of the Cordillera del Cóndor is an important key to understanding its unique floristic composition and its putative biogeographic links to the Guayana Highlands." OK, a lot of tech-talk there, but it does

lay the foundation in order to try and understand the uniqueness and geological history of the zone.

This is where we'll spend time searching for the Orange-throated Tanager. Birding mostly along wide gravel roads, we will listen for the loud and odd calls of the tanager that are often the first clue to its presence. Other species that we will be on the lookout for include White Hawk, Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle, Spot-fronted and White-chinned Swifts, Purplish Jacamar, Rufous-winged Antwren, Black, Spot-backed, and White-browed Antbirds, with luck Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner, Speckled Spinetail, White-bellied Pygmy-Tyrant, Black-and-white and Golden-winged Tody-Flycatchers, Blackish Pewee, Cinnamon Manakin-Tyrant, Foothill Schiffornis, Sharpbill, Gray-tailed Piha, Flame-crested, Green-and-gold, and Yellow-backed Tanagers, and Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak.

A trail across the road from the lodge climbs rather steeply up to a nearby "tepu". While we won't climb to the top, we will want to have a peek into the initial sections that can be productive for Zimmer's Antbird, Green Manakin, and Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater.

**Chinapintza** town and its surrounding slopes spill down from one of the central ridges of the Cordillera del Condor (right on the border with Peru) and allow access to some higher elevations that can be hard to get to in this region. While the forests are still mostly intact, gold mining has taken over right around the hamlet of Chinapintza and has ravaged some of the hillsides in what could be best characterized as a wild-west, frontier type setting. We will take advantage of this access and get as high in elevation as we can and hope for mid-elevation flocks that could yield Black-breasted Puffbird, Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, and Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager and Yellow-throated Tanager.

As of this writing, access up to the stunted forests on the ridges above (that are almost within grasp!) was not possible in our bus due to narrow roads, but we are working on setting up rental pickups - if available, but it looks good - that might allow us the chance to make it up that last climb for a shot at Bar-winged Wood-Wren and even Royal Sunangel. Keep those fingers crossed for this possible bonus, because we could even stumble across Cinnamon-faced Tody-Tyrant or Roraiman Flycatcher! If we can't make it up, there is still plenty of excellent forest to bird for a wonderful day of productive birding, with even some outrageous possibilities that include Black-chested Fruiteater and Jet Manakin.

**Copalinga** is a superb lodge situated on a beautiful hillside in the Bombuscaro River valley, right near the NE-most fringes of Podocarpus National Park. The lodge itself has private, very attractive, wooden cabins that extend up through the lush and birdy tropical gardens behind the open-air dining room. We have had some great birding here, with Ash-browed Spinetail, Strong-billed Woodcreeper (eastern foothill form), White-crowned Tapaculo, Mottle-backed Elaenia, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, and Yellow-bellied and Masked Tanagers, just for starters. Along some of the trails a little further in we can hope for Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper as they sneak about at stream edges. Fruit feeders right next to the dining area often attract a healthy selection of tanagers, saltators and sparrows throughout the day, while a corn feeder up along the lodge's trail system has been a hotspot of late for attracting Gray Tinamou... we had crippling studies on our 2018 trip and will hope it is around during our stay! The hummingbird feeders right at the dining room attract Violet-fronted and Black-throated Brilliants, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Many-spotted Hummingbird, and Golden-tailed Sapphire, while the Verbena flowers outside abound with Violet-headed Hummingbirds and Glittering-throated Emeralds. With luck we could even encounter a male Spangled Coquette or a Booted Racket-tail.



*The Lanceolated Monklet is another bird with a large range, but patchy distribution. We'll look for it in the Andean foothills of Podocarpus National Park. Photograph by participant Benedict de Laender.*

**The Rio Bombuscaro entrance to Podocarpus Park** is in the heart of the upper tropical zone at the eastern base of the Andes. This overwhelmingly beautiful, forested zone is full of rushing water and a terrific diversity of birds, many of them genuinely scarce. Foothill specialties we've seen here on past tours include Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Sickle-winged Guan, White-tipped Sicklebill, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Wire-crested Thorntail, Violet-fronted and Black-throated brilliants, Brown Violetear, Andean Motmot, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Black-streaked Puffbird, Lanceolated Monklet, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Equatorial Graytail, Ash-browed Spinetail, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper, Black-billed Treehunter, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Foothill and Yellow-breasted Antwrens, Scale-backed and Blackish antbirds, Plain-backed Antpitta (usually heard only), White-crowned Tapaculo, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Orange-crested and Lemon-browed flycatchers, Foothill Elaenia (a little *Myiopagis* flycatcher that was officially described after the Ecuador text went to press), Amazonian Umbrellabird, Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Blue-rumped Manakin (rare), White-crowned Manakin, Gray-mantled Wren, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Orange-billed Sparrow, Olive Finch, and dozens of glittering tanagers, including Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Orange-eared, Paradise, Golden, Golden-eared, Yellow-bellied, Spotted, and Blue-necked. The well-designed trails climb gradually upriver through absolutely glorious forest.

**Old Loja-Zamora road.** The city of Loja is in a dry intermontane valley at 6800 feet (2070 m), still in the Pacific drainage. The road to Zamora climbs eastward from Loja, cresting the eastern Andes at a rather low 9000 feet (2700 m) pass and winding down through still relatively undisturbed temperate and subtropical forest. Middle-elevation subtropical forest lines much of the road. On a cloudy day—especially with mist—this forest can teem with activity, from Long-tailed Sylphs and Andean Cocks-of-the-rock feeding at the roadside to mixed flocks of brilliant tanagers, with as many as twenty species possible (including Yellow-throated, Rufous-crested, Saffron-crowned, Flame-faced, Blue-necked, Blue-browed, Golden, Golden-eared, Orange-eared, Vermilion, and Blue-winged Mountain-). And there's always a chance we'll encounter a noisy flock of wide-ranging White-capped Tanagers, an anomalous species that behaves more like a jay or a blackbird than a tanager! Near 5000 feet, mixed flocks could include numerous tanagers as well as such rarities as

Equatorial Graytail and Fulvous-breasted Flatbill. One of our main targets in the lower subtropical/upper tropical forest zone is the lovely White-necked Parakeet, an Ecuadorian near-endemic known from only four specimens until 1981 when it was rediscovered above Zamora. It has now been found in the Cordillera del Condor on the Peruvian side of the border as well. On our 2018 trip we had them daily right at Copalinga where they came to gorge on guava fruits right next to the parking lot... let's hope for this luck in 2019!



*A view of Podocarpus National Park shows the type of habitat we will be birding in.  
Photograph by participant Daphne Gemmill.*

## Itinerary for Southeast Ecuador Foothill Specialties

**Day 1, Sat, 23 Feb. Arrival in Quito.** Most flights originate from Miami, usually arriving between 9:00 and 11:00 p.m.; our office staff can help find the schedule best for you. Once you have passed through baggage claim and cleared customs, watch for a San Jose de Puenbo Garden Hotel sign with your name on it near the exit to the outside; our representative will meet you for transfer to our modern hotel, some twenty minutes away in the suburbs outside of Quito. If arriving late to the hotel, be sure to ask at the desk for a note from your guide detailing plans for tomorrow.

We encourage you to come a day early to rest up before the tour starts—with an early flight to the city of Loja tomorrow, you will have a short night if you get in at midnight or later. The San Jose Garden Hotel offers wonderful central valley birding right on the grounds, modern and cozy (to even luxurious) rooms, a swimming pool, free WIFI, and a full service restaurant. If you would like to do some shopping in Ecuador (there will be virtually no opportunity during the tour), we recommend coming a day early; there are excellent shops and markets in Quito, and we can help you make arrangements for an English-speaking guide if you like. Quito's colonial old-town is one of the most beautiful and well preserved in all of Latin America, and is more than worth the visit. While relatively safe, you should, however, be cautious while strolling the streets, especially if alone and sporting cameras or jewelry. Night at San Jose de Puenbo Garden Hotel.

**Day 2, Sun, 24 Feb. Flight to Loja and travel by bus to Yankuam.** We will likely have to rise very early for our flight to Loja - our flight on the 2018 tour took off at 5:45 A.M. - but luckily our hotel is close to the airport. The early flight is a blessing in disguise because it essentially affords us a full day of birding and relaxes the land travel pace a bit. After an early breakfast, we will transfer to the Quito airport for the 50-minute flight to the south of Ecuador. Upon arriving to the Loja airport we'll gather our bags, meet up with our bus and driver, and load up for the trip east. This will be our longest travel day, crossing the continental divide, but we plan to break it up with birding stops along the way.

The temptation to bird right out of the blocks will certainly overwhelm us, so we will take some time to land a few of the species typical of the area before getting on the road. The immediate habitat near Loja will be dominated by central valley scrub, heavily influenced by the drier Tumbesian zone (shared with NW Peru), so it should yield numerous species that we will not encounter on the rest of our route, such as Croaking Ground-Dove, Pacific Parrotlet, Fasciated Wren, Peruvian Meadowlark, and maybe even Peruvian Pygmy-Owl. We won't linger too long in this habitat though, as this is very well covered in our *Jewels of Ecuador* and *SW Ecuador* tours.

The drive up and over the mighty Andes will take us through the northern fringes of Ecuador's fourth largest city, Loja, en route to the humid foothills around Yankuam lodge. It will be a long drive, but the scenery is amazing as we pass by almost the entire northern edge of Podocarpus National Park. The weather and specific road conditions will dictate exactly how we orchestrate our birding, but we do plan to make some key stops. Ideally we would want to bird our way down the humid east slope along the old Loja-Zamora road for a first go at mixed flocks; hitting things right can yield an amazing array of colorful tanagers and insectivores, but road conditions and weather are factors that we will have to deal with. A stop next to the various bridges along the way could yield Oilbirds on a day roost, or a Fasciated Tiger-Heron fishing from the boulders of the Zamora River. Depending on our progress - birding time will be limited - we will try and fit in a few more birding stops along the way as we make our way closer to Yankuam, where we could turn up the newly discovered (for Ecuador) Bluish-fronted Jacamar, or even Speckled Spinetail with a flock. We will aim to get into our lodge before nightfall to get settled in. Dinner and night at Yankuam Lodge.

**Days 3-4, Mon-Tue, 25-26 Feb. Days birding out of Yankuam lodge.** Yankuam Lodge is set right on the banks of the Nangaritzza River at the base of the west slope of the Cordillera del Condor, and surrounded by beautiful and towering ridges and hills. While on the rustic side, the lodge is comfortable, and has hot showers and very tasty food. Several buildings with private rooms are set about in a garden setting; the birding right around the lodge can be great for Yellow-bellied and Blue Dacnis, Turquoise Tanager, and other tree-top species; sometimes Black-and-white Hawk-Eagle can be seen soaring over. With luck we might even encounter the rare and furtive Uniform Crakes that inhabit the wet areas next to the lodge, but we will need some luck here.



*Yankuam Lodge is our home for several nights as we search for the Orange-throated Tanager. Photograph by guide Mitch Lysinger.*

Two full days (and another full morning if needed) are at our disposal to explore the bird-rich areas of the outlying foothills that are surrounded by the gorgeous ridges and rugged, tepui-like geological formations. We will want to get out early each day to take advantage of the early morning activity that is so important in the tropics, before the sun starts to beat down, or if the rains decide to set in.

To get to the best Orange-throated Tanager territories, it used to have to be necessary to rent rudimentary, motorized canoes to make ones way up the rapids of the Nangaritzza River, but a "relatively" new bridge right next to the lodge has changed all of this, making vehicular access across the river a breeze to get into the best spots in only minutes. Other species that we will watch for include White Hawk, Spot-fronted and White-chinned Swifts, Purplish Jacamar, Black and White-browed Antbirds, Ocellated Woodcreeper, with luck Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner, Speckled Spinetail, White-bellied Pygmy-Tyrant, Black-and-white and Golden-winged Tody-Flycatchers, Blackish Pewee, Cinnamon Manakin-Tyrant, Wing-barred Piprites, Sharpbill, Gray-tailed Piha, Flame-crested, Green-and-gold, and Yellow-backed Tanagers, and Yellow-shouldered Grosbeak.

A trail across the road from the lodge climbs rather steeply up to a nearby "tepu". While this climb in its entirety is a three-hour, hard jaunt fit for hardcore trekkers (which we won't undertake), we will check the lower sections for Zimmer's Antbird, Green Manakin, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, and Yellow-throated Tanager.

We will return for a relaxing, sit-down lunch at the lodge on these days since the lodge will be close, and is the perfect spot to take a midday break during the hotter, non-productive hours. Nights at Yankuam.

**Day 5, Wed, 27 Feb. Early morning exit from Yankuam to the Chinapintza area; afternoon to Paquisha.** If we feel it necessary to spend one last morning in the Yankuam area for any major last cleanups, we have this luxury, especially on the outside chance that we are still in need of looks at the coveted Orange-throated Tanager! Most likely though, we will leave the lodge early after breakfast, bags loaded on the bus, to head north to get to the Chinapintza area higher up (to about 7,000 ft.) on the slopes of the west slope of the Cordillera del Condor, and about an hour-and-a-half drive from Yankuam. With a packed lunch from the lodge, we will plan to spend the majority of the day birding the humid slopes at higher elevations where the temperatures should be cooler, so a light jacket can come in handy. By mid/late afternoon, we plan to roll into the small town of Paquisha further north.

Paquisha is like taking a step back in time, the way much of eastern Ecuador was like decades ago, although recent roadwork has modernized things a bit. Our accommodations will be a very simple hotel along the main "drag" of this small town. We have chosen this option in order to allow for easier and quicker access to some different habitats that will get us to prime habitats for the early morning round. Our hotel at Paquisha has some simple, but tasty diners nearby... our experience is that the chicken skewers are awesome and fresh! Night in Paquisha.

**Day 6, Thu, 28 Feb. Foothills around Paquisha; afternoon to Copalinga.** The side roads out of Paquisha harbor some great birding, and we'll spend a full morning working the flocks and other birds of the area. Interesting possibilities include Greenish Puffleg, Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner, Spectacled Prickletail, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet, Black-chested Fruiteater, and Metallic-green Tanager.

After lunch we will set our sights on getting to Copalinga. Once there, we will want to have a first go at the purple verbena flowers that line the gardens; the hummingbird activity here can be thrilling, with Spangled Coquette, Booted Racket-tail, Blue-tailed Emerald, Violet-headed Hummingbird, Glittering-throated Emerald, and Golden-headed Sapphire, while the actual feeders tend to be dominated by Violet-fronted Brilliants and Fork-tailed Woodnymphs, but Black-throated Brilliant does sneak in from time to time.

Copalinga is a superb lodge situated on a beautiful hillside in the Bombuscaro River valley, right near the NE-most fringes of Podocarpus National Park. We have had some great birding here, with Ash-browed Spinetail, Strong-billed Woodcreeper (distinctively vocal foothill race), White-crowned Tapaculo, Mottle-backed Elaenia, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, and Yellow-bellied and Masked Tanagers, just for starters. Along some of the trails a little further in we can hope for Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper as they sneak about at stream edges. Fruit feeders right next to the dining often attract a healthy selection of tanagers, saltators and sparrows throughout the day, while a corn feeder up along the lodge's trail system has been a hotspot of late for attracting Gray Tinamou... we will hope it is around during our stay! Dinner and night Copalinga.



*We'll see some amazing hummingbirds, such as this Violet-fronted Brilliant. Photograph by participant Steve Wakeham.*

**Day 7, Fri, 1 Mar. Day birding Bombuscaro sector of Podocarpus National Park and Copalinga grounds.** Today we will spend the bulk of the day birding along the trails at the Bombuscaro sector of Podocarpus National Park, only a short drive from Copalinga. This will get us into some of the finest tall foothill forest habitats of the trip; the forest is simply breathtaking, and the birding fabulous. The main track into the park headquarters can be very productive for Ecuadorian Piedtail, Andean Motmot, Copper-chested Jacamar, Black-streaked Puffbird, Blackish Antbird, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Amazonian Umbrellabird, and Blue-rumped Manakin.

To maximize our time in the field, we will want to pack in lunches (bring plenty of water!) prepared by the lodge; since we will be hiking up to 5-6 kms (round trip) we won't want to have to come rushing back for lunch outside of the park. We will be away from our vehicle for much of the day, so this will be one of the most important days to have along raingear. A slightly overcast day would be ideal, but even if we get some rainy spells, the headquarter houses are there to give us some shelter, and since they are in a clearing surrounded by beautiful forest, they can be a great place from which to bird; here we frequently nab Foothill Elaenia, Lemon-browed Flycatcher, Golden-eared and Orange-eared Tanagers. We will be on the look-out for the very range-restricted White-necked Parakeet which move up and down the valley in screeching groups in search of fruiting trees; one never knows where they will turn up, but the headquarters clearing, and even the lodge at Copalinga, are common haunts for them.

The canopy flocks here can be particularly rewarding, if somewhat challenging, but if we can get one at a birdable angle - meaning, not neck-breaking! - we will have excellent shots at finding (in addition to many aforementioned species) Russet Antshrike, Yellow-breasted Antwren, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Streaked Xenops, Equatorial Graytail, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Gray-mantled Wren, Flame-crested Tanager, and Deep-blue Flowerpiercer.

The understory will also deserve its due attention, with denizens including Foothill Antwren, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Black-billed Treehunter, Dusky Spinetail, Orange-crested Flycatcher, and many others. Sometimes Blue-fronted Lancebill can be found in the small, shaded waterfalls along the trails.

After a long day in the field we will make our way back to Copalinga and spend the rest of the afternoon around the lodge for any last knockings! A road cut nearby is often a great place for Blackish Nightjar, so weather permitting, we will give this a try at dusk when they become active and sometimes sit right on the road. We will also want to give the resident Band-bellied Owls a try as they sometimes swoop in and perch in the Cecropias right over the dining room; the song of this species is memorable and haunting. Dinner and night Copalinga.

**Day 8, Sat, 2 Mar. All day birding out of Copalinga.** The way we structure today's birding will depend largely on our luck to date, but we will almost certainly want to head up to bird the lower and middle stretches of the old Loja-Zamora (up to about 1,500-1,600 m in elevation) for a shot at some of the birds of these slightly higher elevations, such as Blue-browed and Vermilion Tanagers, and Short-billed Chlorospingus; we have also had decent luck with Lanceolated Monklet and Chestnut-tipped Toucanet at a few spots along here. At this point we will very likely be in target birding mode in order to try and fill in any holes, and this area is a great place to hope to cleanup a number of the birds we might have missed. We may do a field lunch or return to Copalinga for a sit-down meal at the dining room, but this will be programed from Copalinga once we have a better idea of where we want to spend our last afternoon of birding. Dinner and night Copalinga.

**Day 9, Sun, 3 Mar.** Today we will need to make our way to the Loja airport for our flight to Quito, and flight times will dictate the amount of birding that we can fit in. Ideally we shoot for a mid-afternoon flight to allow for maximum birding with time still to get into the San Jose de Puenbo to clean up and enjoy our farewell meal at the hotel. If you have to take an international flight out this evening we recommend it be for later hours as the flights from Loja to Quito can vary; it is best to avoid cutting it too close. Dinner and night San Jose de Puenbo.

**Day 10, Mon, 4 Mar.** International flights out... Buen Viaje!

## About Your Guide

**Mitch Lysinger**, a native of Florida, grew up birding the southern part of the state as well as other parts of the US before moving to Ecuador to work at La Selva Lodge (for two years) and then with Field Guides since 1997. Mitch is fascinated by bird sounds and has spent many years intensively birding and tape-recording the birds of Ecuador and other Neotropical countries on tours and in his free time. As a result (and hundreds of field-recorded cassettes later!), Mitch and John Moore teamed up and published the two-volume cassette, *The Birds of Cabanas San Isidro*, and then went on to tackle (with other co-authors) the multi-volume CD set—with four published and more to come—of the birds of Ecuador. An updated CD of *The Birds of San Isidro* by Mitch, John Moore, & Niels Krabbe was published in 2011.

Mitch has more recently become involved in the conservation scene in Ecuador, working closely with the Jocotoco Foundation on land purchase for the purpose of setting up new reserves in areas critically in need of protection. When not on tour, Mitch can often be found with his wife Carmen and their two children (Martin and Sara) at Cabanas San Isidro—their cloudforest lodge on the east slope of the Andes—where they see to the needs of their guests and continue to expand the lodge's already vast 1200-hectare reserve with the hopes of widening the existing forest corridor that bridges the gap between two large national parks.

Visit <https://fieldguides.com/guides> for Mitch's complete tour schedule; just click on his photo.

*"Mitch Lysinger! He is amazing in his ability to spot and hear birds, to call them in, to accommodate to each individual, and to stay cheerful, patient, and energetic." D.S., Montane Ecuador*

## Financial Information

**FEE:** \$3,550 from Quito

**DEPOSIT:** \$350

**FINAL PAYMENT DUE:** October 26, 2018

**SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional):** \$450

**LIMIT:** 8

## Other Things You Need to Know

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

**ACCOMMODATIONS:** Accommodations are generally good, varying from a very good hotel near Quito, two comfortable lodges in the southeast, to a very basic hotel in the remote, small town of Paquisha. All accommodations have private baths and hot-water showers. Overall, we stay in comfort, eat good food, and have good, quiet conditions for sleeping.

**DOCUMENTS:** A **passport** valid for six months beyond the date of your return is necessary for US citizens to enter Ecuador. We recommend that your passport be valid for at least 6 months beyond the dates of your visit, as regulations vary from country to country, and are subject to change. You will be issued a **tourist card** upon arrival; please keep this in your passport, in a safe place, as you will need the tourist card to depart Ecuador.

If you are not a US citizen, please check with the Ecuadorian consulate nearest you for entry requirements. Information about consulates and entry requirements is generally available online or you can contact us and we will be happy to look this up for you. Passports should have an adequate number of blank pages for the entire journey. Some countries require a blank page for their stamp and as a precaution it is best to have one blank page per country you will visit or transit.

**AIR ARRANGEMENTS:** **Please note that the tour begins and ends in Quito.** Field Guides is a full-service travel agency and your tour manager will be happy to assist you with flights to join this tour. Field Guides does not charge a service fee for these services to clients booking a tour. However, we understand that tech-savvy clients often prefer to shop online or that you may wish to use mileage to purchase tickets. Regardless of which method you choose, your tour manager will be happy to provide assistance regarding ticket prices and schedules, along with rental cars and extra hotel nights as needed.

Please be sure to check with your tour manager prior to purchasing your ticket to make sure the flights you have chosen will work well with the tour itinerary and that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. Once purchased, most airline tickets are non-refundable and carry a penalty to change. Field Guides cannot be responsible for these fees.

**Also, it is imperative that we receive a copy of your comprehensive flight itinerary—including any and all flights not covered in the tour fee—so that we may track you in the event of missed connections, delays, or other mishaps.**

**LUGGAGE:** Please be aware that many airlines have recently modified their luggage policies and are charging additional fees for checked bags. Updates could easily occur before your departure, so you may wish to contact your airline to verify the policy. Additional charges for bags on any flights, whether these are covered by the tour fee or not, will be the client's responsibility. Internal flights in Ecuador are usually on either an airbus A-319 or A-320, or an Embraer, so normal baggage constraints comply.

**TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS:** The **tour fee** is \$3,550 for one person in double occupancy from Quito. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 9, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 9, the flight from Quito to Loja, and Loja to Quito, all ground transportation, entrance fees, and the guide services of your tour leader. 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 Ecuador, airport taxes, visa fees, any checked or carry-on baggage charges imposed by the airlines, any alcoholic beverages, optional additional tips, phone calls, laundry, or other items of a personal nature.

The **single supplement** for the tour is \$450. 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, complete the Registration/Release and Indemnity form and return it with a **deposit of \$350** per person. If registering by phone, a deposit must be received within fourteen days, or the space will be released. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to departure, or **by October 26, 2018. We will bill you for the final payment at either 120 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.

**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 payment, less \$100 handling fee, will be made if cancellation is received up to 120 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 119 and 70 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. Thereafter, all deposits and payments are not refundable.

This policy only applies to payments made to Field Guides for tour fees (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 the 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 airlines restrictions.

The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute in case of emergency another guide for the original one.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EMERGENCY INSURANCE:** We strongly recommend you consider purchasing trip cancellation (including medical emergency) insurance to cover your investment in case of injury or illness to you or your family prior to or during a trip. Because we must remit early (and substantial) tour deposits to our suppliers, we cannot offer any refund when cancellation occurs within 70 days of departure, and only a partial refund from 70 to 119 days prior to departure (see CANCELLATION POLICY). In addition, the Department of State strongly urges Americans to consult with their medical insurance company prior to traveling abroad to confirm whether their policy applies overseas and if it will cover emergency expenses such as a medical evacuation. U.S. medical insurance plans seldom cover health costs incurred outside the United States unless supplemental coverage is purchased. Furthermore, US Medicare and Medicaid programs do not provide payment for medical services outside the United States.

When making a decision regarding health insurance, Americans should consider that many foreign doctors and hospitals require payment in cash prior to providing service and that a medical evacuation to the United States may cost well in excess of \$50,000. Uninsured travelers who require medical care overseas often face extreme difficulties. When consulting with your insurer prior to your trip, please ascertain whether payment will be made to the overseas healthcare provider or whether you will be reimbursed later for expenses that you incur.

US citizens will receive from us a brochure regarding optional tour cancellation/emergency medical insurance. Our agent, CSA, will insure for trip cancellation and interruption, medical coverage, travel delay, baggage loss and delay, 24-hour accident protection, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance when making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights), pre-existing conditions are covered. The CSA brochure includes a contact number; you may also purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/travelinsurance.html> and clicking the link to CSA. Please note, once the insurance is purchased it is non-refundable, so please check with your tour manager prior to making the purchase to assure the tour will operate as scheduled. Citizens of other countries are urged to consult their insurance broker.

**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 reverse side of 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. Field Guides Incorporated accepts no responsibility 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.

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