

ITINERARY

HOLIDAY AT ECUADOR'S WILDSUMACO LODGE

December 28, 2024 – January 7, 2025



Napo Sabrewing is just one of the almost 40 species of hummingbirds we'll see on this tour. These large hummers are found in a small range from southern Colombia to northern Peru, and the Wildsumaco area is one of the best places to see them. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

We include here information for those interested in the 2024 Field Guides Holiday at Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge 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

These additional materials will be made available to those who register for the tour:

- 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

The upper tropical zone along the eastern base of the Andes has long been recognized as one of the ornithologically richest ecosystems on earth. However, reaching this zone has been difficult at best for many years, usually involving camping and/or long drives from the nearest accommodations in order to bird mostly along a road. Great improvements in our ability to "stay in the habitat"—a perpetual pursuit of birders and bird-tour companies—have occurred in recent years. The several lodges on the lower Manu road in Peru have offered good birding for some time along the eastern flank of the Peruvian Andes, and the wonderful Copalinga Lodge, near the Rio Bombuscaro entrance to Podocarpus National Park, has helped to fill this void in southeastern Ecuador. But only with the opening of Wildsumaco Lodge, on an outlying ridge of the Andes near the base of Volcan Sumaco, have the riches of the eastern Andean foothills of northern

Ecuador become comfortably available to birders. We'll be staying right in the habitat we want to bird, while eating well and sleeping in the comfort of a beautifully designed lodge, with an incredible view of the Andes.

Field Guides first visited Wildsumaco in March of 2008, shortly after it opened. We realized immediately that this new lodge, at a perfect elevation (4600 feet or 1400m) and reachable from Quito in one day, was in a dreamy location. The panoramic view from the big deck, toward the main cordillera of the Andes, is truly awe-inspiring, and the quiet for sleeping is wonderful. Designed *for birders by birders* (Jonas Nilsson and Bonnie and Jim Olson), it offers all the amenities that birders appreciate, including well-lit, spacious rooms (with plenty of hooks and electric outlets), good beds, private baths with hot-water showers, boot jacks on the porches, and a great boot-washing station. The central lodge building, with a big, partially covered deck off the back, houses a clean, modern kitchen and a large, open (and beautifully appointed) dining area and a sitting area, complete with a bar and a fireplace. Delicious, home-style cooking, at whatever hours we want it, is included in the price of the lodging.



This view of Volcan Antisana from Wildsumaco shows the various habitats we'll visit in search of some spectacular Andean birds. Photograph by guide Willy Perez.

But it's the birds that are the greatest draw. A great mix of cloudforest species, foothill specialties, and upper-Amazonian species, the avifauna here offers not only an abundance of birds, but many species that are genuinely rare or very difficult to see elsewhere. The lodge list now stands over 600 species, with some fabulous birds among them, including Plain-backed and Ochre-breasted antpittas that are being fed earthworms almost daily! See below (About the Birding Areas) for more details on Wildsumaco and its birds.

We have designed this tour to combine almost a week at Wildsumaco with a short sampling of each major zone represented in the conservation corridor that various groups (e.g., Jocotoco Foundation and World Land Trust) have now pieced together around and between two Ecuadorian parks/reserves from Volcan Antisana down the east slope through the Cosanga Valley and the Cordillera de Guacamayo to Sumaco National Park and Napo-Galeras National Park. We'll spend our first morning in the uppermost section, at Reserva Antisana—condor-inhabited paramo at the base of the snow-capped peak. A brief stop at Guango (if time permits), in upper montane humid forest, will be followed by a two-night stopover at the Cabañas San Isidro, which serves as the major nexus in the Cosanga Valley linking the Antisana and Gran Sumaco reserves by way of a wide and splendid, flat, mid-level, montane humid forest. This mid-elevation forest harbors some difficult-to-see specialties that bear repeat searching—even if you've visited San Isidro before. (And that's not to mention the gourmet food!) But the focus of our tour will be the upper tropical foothill forest flanking Volcan Sumaco, near the lower end of the corridor. From here, on a clear day, we can see all the way back up to snow-capped Volcan Antisana.

You must be among those who truly enjoy and appreciate forest birding, which can be tough, especially with varying weather. As you may have heard us say before: too much rain is worthless; too much sun can cause the forest to seem

totally dead; and even just the right amount of mist for maximum bird activity implies glary-gray skies, birding with an umbrella, and sometimes muddy trails. Exactly how we orchestrate our activities will depend in part on the weather. Indeed, the forest gives up its secrets slowly, but the rewards of patience, persistence, and flexibility in forest birding can be terrific! As always, we will move slowly through the forest, sometimes indeed at a snail's pace, walking quietly and listening, using playback to call in some fabulous skulkers that might otherwise go unseen. And, in the process, we'll do quite a bit of standing around just watching. For such occasions, we recognize the value of carrying a lightweight, folding stool; the opportunity to sit in comfort periodically can reduce fatigue substantially, and that particularly applies to a tour like this one.

HOLIDAY AT ECUADOR'S WILD SUMACO LODGE 2024, DECEMBER 28, 2024 – JANUARY 7, 2025, may be combined with AMAZONIAN ECUADOR: SACHA LODGE I 2025, January 7-16.

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 this and be sure to fully explain 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:** Good amounts of walking (up to 3-4 miles per day) along roadsides and trails, some of which will be on even ground, but most of which are challenging: steep, narrow, uneven, and often muddy, with abundant obstacles such as rocks or tree roots. Walking sticks can be useful, and a good sense of balance is important.
- **POTENTIAL CHALLENGES:** We drive for long periods twice on this tour. Participants should be able to step up (and step down) 10-12 inches to get into and out of our vehicles. Several roads are rough, and although we drive slowly, there is still a fair bit of bouncing around.
- **PACE:** After breakfast (usually at 5:30 a.m.), we bird until lunch time. We sometimes pack a picnic lunch, to extend our time in the field. Normally, weather permitting, we bird after lunch or travel to our next destination. On occasion, we take a siesta after lunch. We will offer several outings to look for nocturnal birds as well.
- **WEATHER:** Temperatures will range from the low 40s at night in higher elevations to the low 90s F in lower elevations during the day. Rain showers are likely, but weather is highly variable, even over short periods of time.
- **ELEVATION:** We reach elevations of up to 13,000 feet on this tour, but most of our days will be at 5,000 feet.
- **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:** Participants should be prepared to make comfort stops in nature, as there are simply no other options (away from our lodgings) on many sections of this tour's route.
- **OPTING OUT:** Where we are staying multiple days in the same lodging, participants can opt to sit out a day or sometimes a half-day. This will not be possible when we are changing locations.

If you are uncertain 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 will put you in touch with the guide.

About the Birding Areas

Antisana Ecological Reserve and Guango—Volcan Antisana is one of the spectacular snow-capped peaks of Ecuador's eastern cordillera, just 50 kms east of Quito. Rising to almost 19,000 feet (5,758m), the volcano is a spectacular backdrop (on a clear day) to the tracts of land recently acquired by the Jocotoco Foundation and the World Land Trust to secure the future of the existing Antisana Ecological Reserve and expand its boundary. We will have only a few hours to visit the first part of the 120,000-hectare (297,000-acre) reserve, but it is an area that most of you probably have not visited. It can be spectacular, and we should see a few species otherwise not possible on this trip, with the more exciting targets including Andean Condor (probably the best place in Ecuador for this species), Aplomado Falcon, the rare-in-Ecuador Andean (Black-faced) Ibis, and Ecuadorian (Chimborazo) Hillstar. More regular high-elevation species

include Carunculated Caracara, Andean Lapwing, Andean Gull, Black-winged Ground-Dove, Chestnut-winged and Stout-billed cinclodes, Many-striped Canastero, Tawny Antpitta, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant (nominata), Paramo Pipit, and the sneaky Andean Rabbit.

Although our route will zigzag, this stop also sets the stage for the elevational transect that we will visit over the next week. The Antisana Ecological Reserve descends to the Sumaco Napo-Galeras National Park, but the "conservation corridor" is not quite complete, and efforts of private entities (San Isidro through the Napo Andean Forest Foundation and Wildsumaco's Rio Pucuno Foundation) and small NGOs are filling in some of the holes in the swath started by large government reserves. A portion of our fees at Wildsumaco will contribute directly to this effort.

On our way down the east slope toward Baeza and San Isidro, we plan a birding stop/break at Guango, around 8900 feet (2700m). Well-established hummingbird feeders just outside the dining room attract fabulous Sword-billed Hummingbirds, lots of Tourmaline Sunangels, Collared Inca, Long-tailed Sylph, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, White-bellied Woodstar, an occasional Glowing Puffleg or Golden-breasted Puffleg, and, on rare occasion, a Mountain Avocetbill.



San Isidro Andean Cloudforest Reserve and the Cordillera de Guacamayos

—The Cordillera de Guacamayos and our cabins at San Isidro are situated right in the montane forest zone at 7000 feet (2100m). It's likely that some of you have already been there at some point, but you may not have enjoyed some of the most recent developments / discoveries. Beyond the fact that it would be a shame to drive past one of the most beautiful forests in the world without having time to go for a walk, new discoveries continue to be made as to what wonders occur and how to show them to others. For instance, you may not have birded San Isidro since the development of the "art of earthworming." Nowadays, White-bellied Antpittas have been "trained" to emerge on call from their normal cover on the forest floor for earthworms once a day. While not 100% reliable, most of the time one shows up. On occasion, a rare Mountain Tapir is seen at a new salt lick near the carport! The San Isidro mystery owl, a high-elevation intermediate between Black-banded and Black-and-white (shown by initial DNA sequencing to be closer to Black-banded), continues to show up on many evenings along the driveway as well. The hummingbirds at San Isidro were a little slow on the uptake in the beginning, but they have figured out feeders now, and a fine display can be expected year round. The driveway

lights attract many moths—easy candy for a variety of birds for which "the early bird gets the moth" has become a truism (and a much coveted opportunity for bird photographers).

Out on the trails are many rare but alluring possibilities, including Bicolored Antvireo, and Black-chested Fruiteater. Encountering just the right flock along the nearby Guacamayos Ridge Trail can still mean such specialties as Greater Scythebill, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, or Dusky Piha. And on very rare occasions a pair of White-faced Nunbirds appears for a few days near the beginning of the trail. Based for two nights at San Isidro, we'll have but a tiny sampling of its riches, but, whatever we see, we will have fun birding and enjoy what comes out of the kitchen.

Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary—Now to the centerpiece of our tour: Wildsumaco is located on the Amazonian slope of a ridge that projects from the main Andes (for those who have birded near San Isidro, it is the northeastern continuation of the Guacamayos Ridge, which the north/south Baeza-to-Tena road crosses). It is reached by a side road off of what birders call the "Loreto Road" (which does go to Loreto and Coca), a regular destination for daytrips on our past tours. In an effort to preserve the threatened foothill forest of the area, the owners of Wildsumaco have purchased several tracts of prime forest as well as some tracts that were cleared or cultivated; some adjoin areas that are still in cultivation. The hope is that their acquisitions (Wildsumaco Wildlife Sanctuary), along with those of others, will help conserve important foothill habitat connecting to the grand corridor from Antisana Reserve through the Cosanga Valley and the Guacamayos massif to nearby Sumaco National Park, which preserves much middle and upper elevation forest and stretches toward the next ridge out, Napo-Galeras National Park.

The Lodge is located on the edge of a deep valley, and from the deck there is a fabulous view of both forest and clearings (with, we will admit, the sound of chainsaws intruding from time to time and reminding us of the current threatened status of much of the accessible foothill forest). Hummingbird feeders at the edge of the deck buzz with activity (often including Napo Sabrewing, Lazuline Sabrewing, Black-throated Brilliant, and Gould's Jewelfront!), and the purple-flowered vervain hedge attracts Gorgeted Woodstars, Wire-crested Thorntails, and Violet-headed Hummingbirds. It is a great place from which to watch swifts and raptors, mixed flocks moving through the patches of trees below, and birds that "sit out" in the late afternoon, ranging from flycatchers to frugivores. On the occasional "really clear day," Volcan Antisana is visible from the deck and Volcan Sumaco looms at close range from the road; and views out over forested valleys and ridges (a series of smaller ridges lie between Sumaco and the Amazonian lowlands) are also inspiring. The main lodge building is one large, open room that includes the bar, living room, and dining area. Beside/behind the main lodge building are two detached wings, each with five private rooms. Several trails enter the forest beside the lodge, while another enters forest across the road.



The Chestnut-crowned Gnateater is another species confined to the Andes. While these tiny birds are generally uncommon, we've had good luck finding them at Wildsumaco. Photograph by guide Richard Webster.

The property is essentially divided into two tracts, about a kilometer apart. The lower section, to be visited multiple times, has the best tall roadside forest, the best forest-interior trails, and a clearing with some dynamite hummingbird feeders around the cabin. Regarding the trails, most of them are steep to very steep. The distances involved are modest, both vertically and horizontally, but what goes down must come up, albeit slowly, especially to get to lunch and dinner. Although short on escalators, these are some of the best-constructed trails we have seen, with much added gravel to reduce slipperiness, handrails to provide support along many sections, and numerous cut steps to break up the grade. Still, many may want a walking stick, and anyone with balance problems will find birding opportunities to be limited (although still good at the Lodge, along the road, at the feeders, and on some of the more level trails).

So far, we've made little mention of specific birds. (How did we get you to this point without more?) Biologists study "outlying ridges" because they seem to have a flora and fauna that is different in subtle ways from the slopes of the main Andes. The Wildsumaco ridge is not detached from the Andes, but it extends well to the east from the main north-south cordillera. It offers many of the same specialties that are available, if rarer, along the main chain. Some of Wildsumaco's prizes include Foothill Screech-Owl; Napo and Lazuline sabrewings, Rufous-vented Whitetip, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Black-throated Brilliant, and Gould's Jewelfront (all of which attend the feeders!), Blue-fronted Lancebill, and Gorgeted Woodstar; White-streaked Antwren, Plain-winged Antwren, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater (which seems fairly common); Yellow-throated Spadebill, White-fronted, (recently split from Rough-legged) Red-billed, and Plumbeous-crowned tyrannulets, Foothill Elaenia, and Buff-throated Tody-Tyrant; Scarlet-breasted and Fiery-throated fruiteaters, Andean Laniisoma, and Gray-tailed Piha; Blue-rumped Manakin (in a general display area), Wing-banded Wren, and Rufous-naped Greenlet (with mixed flocks, often along the road).

The line between specialties of "outlying ridges" and simply special foothill species is largely one of relative abundance. Other notable foothill species we seek include Sickie-winged Guan, Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail, Spot-winged Parrotlet, Military Macaw, Rufescent Screech-Owl, Band-bellied Owl, Many-spotted Hummingbird, Wire-crested Thorntail, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Black-streaked Puffbird, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, Yellow-throated Toucan, Dusky Spinetail, Black-billed Treehunter, Lined Antshrike, Foothill and Ornate Stipplethroat, Yellow-breasted, Rufous-winged and Rufous-rumped Antwrens, Black, Spot-backed (*terra firme*) and Common Scale-backed (foothills) antbirds, Rufous-breasted and Short-tailed antthrushes, Plain-backed Antpitta, White-crowned Tapaculo, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Lemon-browed Flycatcher, Green-backed (Yellow-cheeked) Becard, White-crowned (*D. p. coracina*) and Golden-winged manakins, Foothill Schiffornis (*S. aenea*), Gray-mantled and Musician wrens, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Olivaceous Greenlet, Gray-mantled Wren, Speckled Nightingale-Thrush, Blue-browed Tanager, Ashy-throated and Yellow-throated Chlorospingus, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, and Deep-blue (Golden-eyed) Flowerpiercer. Only a few tanagers have been mentioned, but this zone is a superb one for tanagers, many of them widespread and many of them jaw-dropping, including 13 species of *Tangara* (think Orange-eared, Golden, Golden-eared, ...Paradise)!



We'll see many tanagers, including the amazing Paradise Tanager. Photograph by participant Gerry Hoekstra.

Mention of Paradise Tanager reminds us that Wildsumaco, a foothill location, also incorporates some typically Amazonian species. Some have colonized upwards with clearing, such as Long-tailed Tyrant and Magpie Tanager. Others are forest species reaching their upper limits, including Buckley's Forest-Falcon, Black-throated Brilliant, Western Striolated Puffbird, Gilded Barbet, Rufous-breasted and Lafresnaye's piculets, Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner, White-breasted Wood-Wren and Fulvous Shrike-Tanager.

The hummingbird feeders are not in the legendary category, but they are great; they are special because some birds that we think of as forest-interior hummers emerge to visit the feeders here, including those listed above, plus Green and Gray-chinned hermits, Brown Violetear, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Violet-fronted Brilliant, and Peruvian Racket-tail. And we will keep an eye on natural feeders, such as flowering *Heliconias*, for hummingbirds "earning an honest living," such as the White-tipped Sickiebill.

There are still mysteries in the forest and new discoveries to be made. For instance, during few visits we have heard Black Tinamou, its vocalization characterized by a very distinctive ending. In 2008 former FGI guide John Arvin sent us an excited e-mail about adding a Straw-backed Tanager to the list. On the 2011 tours we added yet more species, and we found and documented the first male Lazuline Sabrewing for Ecuador at the feeders off the deck of the lodge.

While most of the cleared areas are being allowed to regenerate—and second growth seems most unlikely to disappear from the region—at the moment they are a productive habitat for some special birds, including Golden-winged

Tody-Flycatcher, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Olive-chested Flycatcher, and Wing-banded Wren. The clearings and the road also provide opportunities to view the edge of the canopy, sometimes more easily than from inside; and some birds, such as Channel-billed Toucan, Red-billed Tyrannulet, and Green-backed (Yellow-cheeked) Becard, actually prefer an edge.

It's a fascinating area for boreal migrants as well. If you do not wish to wait until May to see your next Canada Warbler, you can visit them here, on their wintering grounds. Indeed, you, too, can avoid the boreal winter for a while, and enjoy old friends such as Olive-sided Flycatcher, Western Wood-Pewee, Swainson's Thrush, Blackburnian and Cerulean warblers, and Scarlet and Summer tanagers, prior to their return through your local patch next May.

As we look for all these specialties, additional good things will happen, like being shown a Great Potoo on a dayroost or seeing a Solitary Eagle circling overhead. We're excited about the prospect of sharing this wonderful site.



The tiny Ochre-breasted Antpitta can be difficult to see, even though it has a wide distribution in the Andes. Wildsumaco has solved the problem by "training" these adorable little birds to come to worm-feeding stations, making them much easier to observe. Photograph by participant Robert McNab.

Itinerary for Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge

Day 1, Sat, 28 Dec. Arrival in Quito. It is possible to arrange flights from Miami, Atlanta, or Houston, and our office staff can help you arrange the schedule best for you. Whenever you arrive (usually between 9:00 p.m. and 11:00 p.m.), our representative will meet you just outside the baggage claim. You will be transferred to the Hotel San Jose de Puenbo, about 20 minutes away, where you'll check into your room. If you are arriving tonight, be sure to check for a message from your guides with any additional information you may need for tomorrow. There is a glass jar in your room that you can fill it with bottle water from the hotel hall. If you have the time, we suggest arriving a day early. There are good shops in Quito (45 minutes from our hotel), and great birding opportunities within a few hours drive from Quito. We can help you make arrangements for an English-speaking guide if you like. Please contact Nicole in our office if you would like to fly to Quito a day early (which we highly recommend) and rest up or plan activities for Day 1. Night at the Hotel San Jose de Puenbo in Quito.

Day 2, Sun, 29 Dec. Antisana Reserve; to San Isidro. We'll start with an early buffet breakfast with a departure from the hotel shortly after. (Bags should be outside your room before you arrive for breakfast.) We'll take a box lunch with us to eat during our travels. We'll head straight for Antisana Reserve, where we'll be birding mostly above treeline, from the road edge near the bus, for several hours. We'll be moving *slowly* at these high elevations, where the weather can vary from cloudy and cold to sunny and warm, so layer up and bring raingear just in case. Chances are that it will be warming up some by the time we reach the birding areas, and you'll want to peel a layer; but a wind or a cold mist can reverse that.

We'll have water on the bus, but you'll need your own water bottle with you (to sip frequently), as one dehydrates easily in these high climes. After our picnic lunch en route, we'll plan to stop at Guango Lodge for a short break (if time permits). We can sort through the hummingbirds at the feeders, watching especially for any interesting puffleg, the Sword-bill, and the scarce Mountain Avocetbill. Then we'll continue to San Isidro for the night. We'll hope to meet the San Isidro Owl after dinner. Night at the Cabañas San Isidro near Cosanga.



The Cinnamon Flycatcher is a common resident of the cloudforests, and we'll get some good views of these lively little birds at San Isidro. Photograph by participant Robert McNab.

Day 3, Mon, 30 Dec. San Isidro. This morning and tomorrow morning we plan to bird near the lodge and possibly on the nearby Guacamayos Ridge trail. For any trails, you'll want raingear and probably your rubber boots. Photographers may find it impossible to leave the driveway at San Isidro, where gorgeous motmots, trogons, and tanagers seek the moths attracted by the lights during the night. You are certainly welcome to stay and photograph. But you may want to pursue Slate-crowned Antpittas or Greater Scythebills one morning.

At 7:30 a.m., we'll plan to attend the feeding of habituated antpittas before trying some of the trails. In the afternoon, we'll decide among watching the hummingbird feeders, walking along the road above the lodge, taking a nap (an especially easy choice if it is raining, which it is very good at doing here), or all of the above. And we may want to gather to watch for displaying Wattled Guans around sunset. Night at Cabañas San Isidro.

Day 4, Tue, 31 Dec. San Isidro to Wildsumaco. We'll have this morning at San Isidro. After lunch, we will drive down to Wildsumaco, which will take about three hours (with a birding stop or two). We should arrive in time to enjoy the evening activity off of the deck and to check out our home for the next six nights. Night at Wildsumaco Lodge.

Days 5-9, Wed-Sun, 1-5 Jan. Wildsumaco. We have five full days here, during which time everyone should manage to visit every trail and hummingbird feeder (perhaps a rash promise at the rate at which this lodge is expanding its options, but we will have a very nice amount of time to explore). One day we will visit a Cock-of-the-Rock Lek with many males in full display. It should be very relaxing, because while it's more efficient to drive to some of the trailheads, as the drives are a kilometer or three, we're staying right in the midst of great birding! Nights at Wildsumaco Lodge.

Day 10, Mon, 6 Jan. Wildsumaco to Quito. After having breakfast and taking advantage of the early morning activity, we will head back to Quito via bus. The drive is five hours plus we will make stops along the way for good birding opportunities, so we will bring a box lunch and take most of the day getting back. We plan to stay at the hotel near the airport to allow folks leaving late tonight enough time to clean up and repack before our final dinner. Night in Puenbo or on flights home.

Day 11, Tue, 7 Jan. Departure/Arrival home. Anyone flying out a little later this morning can enjoy a quick breakfast at the hotel before transferring to the airport. Vayan bien!

About Your Guide

Willy Perez has been leading birding tours for more than 20 years. He has also worked as a resident guide at Maquipucuna Reserve on the west slopes of the Andes, on a project protecting marine turtles in Costa Rica, and on bird conservation in northwestern Ecuador. He was a resident guide at Kapawi Lodge in the Ecuadorian Amazon for three years, mastering the art of finding and identifying the many secretive birds of the lowland rainforest. He has since guided throughout Ecuador, including the East and West slopes of the Andes, the Amazon Basin, the Galapagos Islands, and southern Ecuador. During the last few years he has also guided birding groups in Bolivia, Chile, and Argentina.

In his free time Willy trains local guides and is a frequent lecturer, in English and in Spanish, on birding and conservation issues in the Neotropics. His wife, Fiona, is British and Willy and his family live now in England. He speaks excellent English and has an engaging and outgoing personality that makes every tour he leads enjoyable and fun.

“Willy is an exceptionally competent guide, not only in his knowledge of the birds, but he also brings exceptional optimism and positive energy, with careful attention to the experience of every participant. He is an outstanding ambassador for his country's culture, environment and history. And he's also a lot of FUN! He's one of my favorite FG Guides.” W. M.; Ecuador's Wildsumaco Lodge

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

Financial Information

FEE: \$4450 from Quito

DEPOSIT: \$450 per person

FINAL PAYMENT DUE: July 1, 2024

SINGLE SUPPLEMENT (Optional): \$450

LIMIT: 8

All participants will be required to confirm they will have completed a full COVID vaccination course at least two weeks prior to the tour (which includes a booster for those eligible to have one). Note too, that many travel destinations may still require proof of vaccination for entry to bypass testing delays or quarantine, and that entry requirements for a destination can change at any time. Proof of a booster shot, too, may be a requirement for some travel destinations.

Other Things You Need to Know

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

ACCOMMODATIONS: Our accommodations in Quito and at Wildsumaco are excellent. The Cabanas San Isidro are a bit simpler but extremely comfortable, and the gourmet food there is sensational. All of our accommodations are clean with comfortable beds and private baths with hot water. The hospitality of our Ecuadorian hosts in each of our lodges is extraordinary.

A NOTE ON ALTITUDE: We plan to spend the morning of our first tour day at elevations in excess of 10,000 feet, reaching 13,000+ feet near Papallacta Pass. We will take our time at the higher elevations, doing very little walking, and most of that will be level or downhill.

DOCUMENTS: A current passport, valid beyond the date of your return, is necessary for US citizens to enter Ecuador. You will be issued a disembarkation card by the airline, to be filled out before arrival; please keep this in a safe place as you will need to submit it when you depart the country.

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: 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.

TOUR INCLUSIONS/EXCLUSIONS: The **tour fee** is **\$4450** for one person in double occupancy from Quito. It includes all lodging from Day 1 through Day 10, all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through dinner on Day 10, (breakfast on Day 11 for anyone staying overnight), 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 Ecuador, airport taxes, visa fees, 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** 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, 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 new electronic registration form and medical questionnaire. (We are no longer accepting the paper version.)

Please mail your **deposit of \$450** per person, or see <https://fieldguides.com/payment-options/> for our Payment Options. **Full payment** of the tour fee is due 180 days prior to departure, or **by July 1, 2024**. **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.

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 180 days before departure. If cancellation occurs between 179 and 90 days before the departure date, 50% of the tour fee is refundable. 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 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, you acknowledge and agree that we will not issue a refund when cancellation occurs outside of our cancellation policy as published in the itinerary (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. US 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 information from us 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, and emergency medical transportation. If you purchase the insurance prior to, or within 24 hours of making final payment for the tour, and cover all non-refundable parts of the trip (including any non-refundable flights and in some cases, other arrangements), pre-existing conditions are covered. You may purchase your CSA policy on-line by visiting our website at <https://fieldguides.com/trip-cancellation-insurance/> and clicking the link to CSA. The CSA webpage also includes a contact number.

Currently we are unable to offer CSA insurance policies to residents of New York and Hawaii. We have had clients provide positive feedback after acquiring insurance thru InsureMyTrip (<https://www.insuremytrip.com/>) in the past, and would suggest that company as an alternative. When purchasing insurance with a company other than CSA, you will want to understand whether the timing of your purchase will affect coverage before paying your first deposit. Insurance purchase requirements can vary from company to company, and such requirements could limit your options if you do not look into this until making your final payment for your tour. Please let us know if you have any questions about this.

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 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.

NCP 7/2020

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