ECUADORIAN HILLSTAR

"Ecuador: Birdlife Across the Andes"

Nov. 28 – Dec. 10, 2026

Ecuador is one of the most bird-rich countries on Earth, with more close to 1,700 species recorded. Its compact geography allows easy access to cloud forests, Andean páramo, and Amazonian foothills, each offering distinct bird communities. Few places provide such variety within short travel distances.

ANDEAN COCK-OF-THE ROCK

This WFO program combines outstanding birding with meaningful context. Participants will explore key reserves and national parks, meet local partners, and gain insight into how ecology and geography shape birdlife. The result is a journey that is both rewarding in the field and valuable in understanding conservation challenges.

TOUCAN BARBET

PRESENTED BY: WESTERN FIELD ORNITHOLOGISTS FLYWAY BIRDING TOURS EXPLORE · LEARN · CONNECT

Our journey begins in Quito with an orientation at Puembo Birding Garden before heading west into the famed cloud forests of Mindo. Along the way we pause at Zuro Loma Reserve and the Old Mindo Road, sites known for mixed flocks, hummingbirds, and unique Andean species.

Over several days based in Mindo, we explore reserves that have become landmarks in Neotropical birding: Mashpi Amagusa, Silanche road, Ángel Paz Refuge, and the Tandayapa Valley, each offering close encounters with iconic species and firsthand examples of how local communities safeguard their forests.

The route climbs eastward across Papallacta Pass, where high páramo landscapes reveal a distinctive set of species before continuing to Guango Lodge to focus on temperate forest hummingbirds. We then descend into the Napo foothills for two nights at Wildsumaco Lodge, with birding stops at Guacamayos Ridge, Loreto Road, and Cascada Hollín, plus a visit to Amarun Pakcha, a community reserve centered on an active Cock-of-the-rock lek.

The journey continues at San Isidro Lodge, a pioneer of Ecuadorian eco-tourism and forest protection, where trails through mature eastern Andean forest provide access to exceptional birdlife and a living model of conservation in action.

The program closes back in Quito with a full-day visit to Antisana Reserve, one of the most celebrated highland landscapes in the country. Snow-capped volcanoes and open páramo provide a dramatic contrast to the forests of earlier days, offering a fitting conclusion before our farewell dinner and departures.

This program is rated moderate. Birding follows a slow, steady pace with hilly terrain involved and extended periods of standing, especially at feeder stations. High-elevation field trips reach above 13,500 ft but involve only short walks and are limited to half-day visits. One overnight stay is at 9,000 ft, while the rest of the stays are at elevations below 7,000 ft. On some days, early starts will be necessary (4:30 - 5 am). Travel between locations involves bus rides of 1.5 to 4.5 hours on winding mountain gravel roads, with bathroom stops available; in remote areas, a "nature break" may be necessary. Several field packed lunches are included during the program.

GIANT ANTPITTA

Included in the Program

All accommodations from arrival to departure, meals, ground transportation, entrance fees to reserves and national parks, guided field activities with Flyway Birding Tours leaders, and presentations with local partners. Gratuities and conservation donations are also included, ensuring support for the communities and organizations we visit.

CONFIRMED DATES: NOVEMBER 28 - DECEMBER 10, 2026

PRICE: $4800 (10 BIRDERS MAX.) / SINGLE +$500*

**SINGLE ROOMS SUBJECT TO AVAILABILITY*

REGISTRATION: info@flywaybt.com

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