

Birding program – Manu National Park 5 days private service

Day 01: Cusco – Huacarpay – Acjanacu – Pillahuata – San Pedro

We depart from Cusco around 04:30 a.m. arriving at Lake Huacarpay 30 minutes later. Here we take time and spend the entire day observing highland lake and marsh birds. The best is to follow the road that goes around the lake and start seeing most of the waterfowl typical of Andean wetlands including grebes, ducks, gallinules and coots. The wet grasslands in front of the marsh are good for shorebirds and Andean Negrito. We can look for occasional migrants such as the Hudsonian Godwit (rare) and Baird's Sandpiper. The many- coloured Rush- Tyrant and two endemic, the Rusty-fronted Canastero that can be seen around the ruins on the hillside above the Lake and a spectacular hummingbird, the Bearded Mountaineer.

We continue to the interesting tombs of Ninamarca, commonly known as "Chullpas". We continue to Paucartambo, a picturesque Spanish colonial town and walk the surrounding area and semi-humid montane scrub where a Taczanowski's Tinamou has been reported here. Common to see around are: White-ruffed Sunbeam, Creamy-crested Spintail, Cinereous Conebill, Torrent Duck. Our vehicle will take us up to Acjanacu pass with its elfin forest marks the beginning of the Cultural Zone of Manu Biosphere Reserve. Birders stay the night here because it is possible to see White-browed chat-tyrant, the Chestnut-breasted mountain-finch, Puna Thistle tail, Paramo Pipit, Diademed Tapaculo, Puna Tapaculo, Masked flowerpiercer, Golden-colored Tanager, Drab hemispingus and small mixed flocks with among others.

Then walk down to Pillahuata site located in upper montane humid forest also known as the Coshñipata Valley where the bird species are quite different from Acjanacu. It's possible to see many different species of birds such as the Hooded Tinamou, Stripe-faced Wood-Quail, Golden plumed parakeet, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Gould's Inca, Blue-banded Toucanet, Crimson –mantled Woodpecker, Sierran Elaenia, White-collared Jay, Mountain Cacique. It is the best simply to bird your way slowly along the road. There will be plenty of activity, specially at dawn, with several specialities to look for. After the first tunnel, we stop at the mixed bamboo patch on the left and try for Rusty-breasted Antpitta, and the endemic Red-and White Antpitta, which is often quite vocal in the morning. At the second tunnel the vegetation becomes more luxuriant, look for the Chestnut-bellied Mountain Tanager, Tawny-rumped tyrannulet, Band-tailed Fruiteater and the barred Fruiteater in the mixed flocks, as well as Gray-breasted Mountain Toucan.

One bird to look out for in mixed flocks is the vividly-colored Ochraceous-breasted Flycatcher and the same thing for the spectacular Greater Scythebill. Overnight in Orquideas de San Pedro Lodge.

Day 02: San Pedro

Here, a thick cloak of clouds provides perpetual humidity and makes an ideal habitat for epiphytic plants such as bromeliads. This varied and fascinating world is home of the Cock of the Rock, Spectacled Bear, Orchids, Tree Ferns (one of the oldest living plants), mosses and lichens. This cloud forest exists between 2,000 and 3,500 m.a.s.l., and at least 50% of the plant species found here are endemic to this region. Today we wake up very early to observe the Cock of the Rock (*Rupicola peruviana*), Peru's national bird from a platform. The male birds are a vibrant reddish orange, and as many as several dozen come together for an exhibition of a mating ritual dance in a place called Lek. The males display their crest, showing off and posturing for the females. The females, fewer in number, watch to select the most suitable males. After breakfast spend the entire day birding walking on the road. The Manu road provides one of the best opportunities in Peru to bird upper tropical forest. Many of the most interesting and sought-after birds in the Manu road occur in this zone from about 900 – 1,700m.a.s.l. We have to concentrate on the good lower montane forest along the road, looking for mixed flocks of brilliant-spotted Hummingbirds. The Peruvian Piedtail is common to see.

This day we spend all day birding and we hope to see Andean and White-eared solitaires, the Green Jay, the Blue-banded Toucanet, the Yungas Manakin, the astonishing Versicolored Barbet and arrange of tanager species. Overnight at Orquideas de San Pedro Lodge.

Day 03: San Pedro – Erika Lodge

As we continue our journey to lowlands, we stop in Patria where the cattle pastures and secondary forest are good for seedeaters and other open habitat species of birds as the Orange-breasted Falcon, Military macaw, green-fronted lancebill, golden-collared honeycreeper and others.

Atalaya overlooks is outstanding for viewing macaws. From Atalaya port, we board our covered, motorized canoe and head down the Alto Madre de Dios River until Erika Lodge, where we will have the opportunity to walk through the interesting trails. This lodge is situated in the transition zone of the Andean foothills and the lowland rainforest. It has many more species of hummingbirds than is normally present in a rainforest lodge.

Among 30 species of hummingbirds on their list is the endemic Rufus-webbed Brilliant. Here we find the Rufus-vented Ground Cuckoo, the gray-necked woodrail, Blackish rail and Rufus-sided cracked. Close to a small lake there are Purple Gallinules, Hoatzins, Lesser kiskades and occasionally Pygmy Kingfishers and sun grebes. After lunch we follow an interesting trail, going up to the ridge at 1000 m.a.s.l. where we encounter mixed bird flocks. This higher area is also home of the emerald toucanet, ornate flycatcher, orange fronted

plush crown and the uncommon tawny-faced gnat wren, umbrella bird among others.

Day 04: Erika lodge

This day we will get up very early to board our boat, and after five minutes, we will arrive to a Parrot Lick "Collpa", which is a wall of clay in the riverbanks, where many species of parrots such as the blue headed parrot, white-eyed parakeet, feed for mineral and salt supplements to their diet of seeds and fruits. We take a short walk to see a large and impressive ceiba butress tree. After breakfast we take our boat down the Alto Madre de Dios River for 90 minutes for an interesting and exciting trip to the hot springs of Aguas Calientes surrounded by our beautiful forest. After relaxing in the water and a refreshing cold lunch, we return to Erika Lodge and bird the trails, remember that this site gets birds from the lowlands like the Amazonian Streaked-Antwren, as well as some species typical of high elevations. Overnight at the lodge.

Day 05: Erika – Cusco

After have breakfast immediately we board our boat to Atalaya Port where the bus will drive us back to Cusco city; we have lunch on the way, arriving late in the evening. Transfer to the hotel in Cusco. END OF OUR SERVICES.

Early morning we board our boat and continue downstream the Alto Madre de Dios River and observe rives species of bird life such as the Rosette Spoonbill, Egrets, etc. toward Yanayacu Reserve strategically placed at the last Andean foothills has a great diversity of habitats. The rarely seen Peruvian Recurvebill and Dusky-tailed Flatbill are seasonal and August and September seems to be a good time to see them. Overnight at the lodge.