Incredible Ecuador: Choco Galore Species List | October 2-11, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys

Compiled by guide Peg Abbott with expert local guide Jorge Luna and driver/guide Luis Perez. Travelers included Janine, Terry, Carol, Julie, and Philip.

This journey was designed to spend focused time in one of Ecuador's richest regions, the mountainous area around Mindo in the Choco Bioregion, crossing a bit into a neighboring area with Tumbesian specialties. We had fewer hours in the vehicle, more time in the field, tallied 342 bird species in a short trip including the bonus of an in-depth look at hummingbirds (45 species), tanagers, and more. Some of our highlight species was widespread but such fun to see, the Pacific Hornero singing in its nest and White-capped Dipper in a rushing stream, almost next to a mammal highlight of the trip – Neotropical River Otter! Philip recorded his 1000th year bird about ¾ of the way through the trip, Julie survived a tough fall with amazing stamina, returning to take top-rate photos of Flame-faced Tanagers and other species. We loved visiting Angel Paz, his brother, and a host of local land-owners that they inspired to use their land for conservation and in turn benefit from ecotourism. We climbed a canopy tower to marvel at mixed flocks of differing composition above and below. Carol was able to bring down some Spanish-language educational materials on migration from her work with Partner's in Flight. At Tutti Fruiti gardens we were able to identify and photograph Ecuador's second record of Black-whiskered Vireo (way to go Jorge!)

We enjoyed some exquisite local food and toured a bird-friendly chocolate farm. We stood inside an Oilbird Cave, looking into their gigantic eyes made for night-flying as they search for seeds. Janine and Terry added so much, reminding us to look at the beauty and fascination of flowers. Jaunty Masked Water Tyrants watched us swim mid-day in the pool, a Swordbill hummingbird sat in photo range showing off its impossibly long bill, and one of our final bird sightings was a show-stopper, the Plate-billed Mountain Toucan. Peg loved seeing a pair of Powerful Woodpecker and experiencing all the new opportunities for bird viewing at close range, including two moth lamp traps that drew in such secretive species – once found only with luck walking in mature forests. It is hard to beat any trip to Ecuador, but this one felt so personal, like we had made good friends and dropped into a magic corner of the planet where the commitment to conservation runs deep – a way of life!

BIRDS: 342 species were recorded. Details are included below.

The eBird link below details the 342 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

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Following is a list of the mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

MAMMALS: (6) — (# of days seen))
Red-tailed Squirrel *Sciurus granatensis*— (4) Common and widespread, often seen alongside birds at feeder areas.
Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctata*— (4) Seen on the grounds of Sachatamia Lodge and at some of the other feeder sites.
Neotropical Otter *Lontra longicaudis*— (1) Carol gasped when she saw this often difficult to find mammal and was able to get us all on it, a treat. In the pure clear waters of the stream leading into the Mashpi Chocolate Farm.
Long-tailed Weasel *Neogale frenata*— (1) A lucky find early on in the trip.
Mountain Coatimundi *Nasuella olivacea*— (1) An acclimated individual coming into the feeder area at Mashpi Amagusa Reserve, so great to get good views!
Brown-throated (Three-toed) Sloth— (1) Seen in the scope on a jaunt we made into a lower elevation site, a great spot by our keen-eyed driver Luis.

AMPHIBIANS: (1)
Labiated Rainfrog *Pristimantis labiosus*— (HO-1) Very loud one night after a rain.

NOTABLE INVERTEBRATES:
Giant Worm *Martiodrilus ceassus* — (1) Found in the road near Bella Vista, almost a foot long, we were told it was a baby!
Butterflies – numerous and stunning, we need to return to study them!

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