Ecuador Hummingbird Series | August 5 - 16, 2026
Trip Report by Elissa Fazio

With guide Andrea Molina, Naturalist Journey's Host Elissa, and participants Bob, Kelly, David, Carol, Seth, and Mary



Ecuador is truly a unique gem amongst a bevy of gems in South America. The diversity of habitats, flora, fauna and culture is remarkable for such a small country. It is considered one of the seventeen most biodiverse places on earth; boasting nearly 1,700 birds, 372 mammals, 4,000 butterflies, 20,000 vascular plants, and more. Between the Western Andes, the Eastern Andes, the Napo River in the Amazon basin and the Galapagos Islands, there are a myriad of reasons to make repeat trips there. Of course, one of the biggest draws, is the 132 species of hummingbirds found in Ecuador. That was the focus of this tour, although certainly not the only attraction! During this trip we saw over 340 species of birds, including 67 species of hummingbirds – more than half of all the hummingbirds found here! We saw 11 mammal species including Mountain Tapir and Spectacled Bear twice, which added to our indelible memories.

Wed., Aug. 5 Arrivals and Welcome Dinner

Four participants arrived a couple of days early and enjoyed time at a Hacienda Jimenita, while three arrived later on August 4th and enjoyed a city tour of Quito during the day of August 5th before our full meetup at the Holiday Inn Quito Airport in the evening. The city tour was quite comprehensive bringing us to the Basilica of the National Vow with its unique gargoyles depicting the mammals and iconic birds of the land, a close-up view of the Virgen de Panecillo watching over the city, a delicious and informative visit to an artisan chocolate maker, and more. The whole group enjoyed a lovely buffet dinner while getting introduced to our local guide, Andrea Molina and driver, Luis Perez. Each separate group were introduced to the common local birds like the Great Thrush, Rufous-collared Sparrow, and Eared Dove. The Rufous-collared Sparrow became our ubiquitous

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companion throughout our 10 days – seeing it every day of the tour. We slept well and prepared for an early start to our birding adventure the next morning.





Thurs., Aug. 6 Zuro Loma | Guaycapi Restaurant | Guaycapi Lodge

Andrea and Luis picked us up early so we could head out and beat the Quito traffic as we wended our way from the eastern Andes over to the west. The road took us up and down and over and through some beautiful scenery as we saw Pichincha Volcano from all sides. We encountered our usual suspects of Great Thrush, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Eared Dove and added Cattle Egret and Variable Hawk during the drive. We pulled over to get a great look at Black-chested Buzzard Eagle, as well as a North American regular, the American Kestrel. Our destination was the spectacular Zuro Loma Reserve where we found Andean Lapwings near the parking area and, after a short walk to the feeders, we were greeted by Equatorial and Chestnut-naped Antpittas – adults and young were walking and perching right next to us! The feeders afforded quite a show with "plate feeders" thick with Masked, White-sided and Glossy Flowerpiercers and regular hummingbird feeders bringing in an array of specialties – the Sword-billed, Mountain Velvebreast, Buff-winged Startfrontlet, Collared Inca, Shining Sunbeam, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, Tyrian Metaltail, Purple-backed Thornbill, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Gorgeted Sunangel, White-bellied Woodstar, Buff-tailed Coronet and Sparkling Violet-ear! What a way to start a hummingbird focused tour! We also got great looks at Blue-capped Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers, Spectacled Redstarts and Yellow-breasted Brushfinch. We heard the call of the Plain-tailed Wren over and over and made a great effort to scan the bamboo for a look, but only a few got a fleeting look at this secretive bird.

It was hard to tear ourselves away but we were headed to Guaycapi Mirador Restaurant for lunch and along the way were startled to find a Baird's Sandpiper in a puddle on the side of a mountainous road at 6500'! It was hard to concentrate on enjoying the delicious meal at lunch due to the high activity at the hummer and fruit feeders off the veranda at the restaurant. We added White-necked Jacobin, White-whiskered Harmit, Brown Violetear, White-booted Racket-tail, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Fawn-breasted and Green-crowned Brilliants, Purple-throated Woodstar, Crowned Woodnymph, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird and Andean Emerald to our long tally of hummers. The tanagers were dazzling and included White-winged, White-lined, Lemon-rumped, Blue-gray, Palm, Black-capped, Blue-necked, Bay-headed, Golden and Silver-throated – wow! We rounded things out with a few more stars – the Red-headed Barbet, Montane Woodcreeper, Golden-bellied Flycatcher (nesting in the eaves), Thick-billed and Orange-bellied Euphonia, Three-striped Warbler and Buff-throated Saltator. This is a "must-see" stop and never fails to produce both great birds and yummy food.

Our day was already a "cup running over" when we made the short trip from the lunch spot to our home for the next 4 nights – Guaycapi Lodge. The veranda at the lodge is stunning, with hummingbird feeders literally "at the railing" and fruit feeders not far off the railing. Still more species of hummers appeared – the Brown Inca, the

Violet-tailed Sylph, the Speckled Hummingbird, Sparkling and Lesser Violetear. This brought us to 29 species of hummingbirds on our first day! The fruit feeder brought in one of our targets, the Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, as well as the charismatic Toucan Barbet and gorgeous Crimson-rumped Toucanet.

This newer lodge offers not only an array of special birds, but very comfortable rooms, a very capable of solicitous staff, delicious food, a full bar and astounding mountain views. We're happy to make this lodge our home for the next few days since it's also well situated to day outings and wonderful trails for those who decide to "stay at home", go at their own pace, and relax.



Fri., Aug. 7 Guaycapi Lodge | Bella Vista Lodge | Alambi Preserve

An early morning veranda watch brought good looks at both the Crested and Sickle-winged Guan along with Black and Turkey Vultures, Red-billed Parrots flying over, Blue and White Swallows, Golden-headed Quetzal and the full array of tanagers and hummers at the feeders and nearby trees.

Our after-breakfast outing took us to Bella Vista Lodge, one of the original ecolodges in this area where our guide, Andrea, started her guide/naturalist career. The lodge offers housing, feeder stations, trails, a restaurant and spectacular views. We were looking particularly for closer looks at the Gorgeted Sunangel, which we found soon after arrival. As we wandered the lodge paths and lookout areas, we came across Masked Trogon adults and juveniles perching very close to us. The Choco, White-winged and Chestnut-capped Brushfinches flitted all around and gave the photographers among us, perfect subjects. We walked one of the trails and clearly heard Spillman's Tapaculo, and some got fleeting glimpses of this skulker. We found Cinnamon and Golden-bellied Flycatchers, White-tailed and Black-capped Tyrannulet, Barred Becard, super looks at Green and Black Fruiteaters, Slaty Spinetails, Pearled Treerunner and Smoke-colored Pewee. We kept trying to leave and then getting pulled back by more and more amazing birds like the Chivi Vireo, Slate-throated Redstart and Russet-crowned Warbler. The sky brought Swallow-tailed Kites, Barred Hawk and both our vulture regulars. We went

back to Guaycapi for another tasty lunch and found the Beryl-spangled Tanager and Black-winged Saltator to add to our list.

The afternoon adventure took us to Alambi Reserve where the hummingbird and fruit feeders are dizzying with the level of activity. The White-throated Daggerbill and Andean Emerald were feeder "stars" and some of us held little cup feeders and enjoyed getting up close and personal with the hummers who weren't shy about coming in to handheld feeders. What a thrill to have these birds come so close and feel their little toenails grab onto your hand! Some of us ventured down a river trail and were lucky to find the Ornate Flycatcher. What a special place.



Sat., Aug. 8 Refugio Paz de Los Aves | Milpe Road

We had a particularly early start today because our aim was to get to the Cock of the Rock hide at Refugio Paz de Los Aves before sunrise. After a short drive and 15-minute walk along a trail, we arrived at the hide to the raspy, screechy calls of the male Cocks. As more light appeared, the bright, scarlet red Cocks of the Rock revealed themselves. There were at least 8 or so of these classic, odd-looking, Andean species. Such a thrill to see and hear them! As the sun rises higher, the Cocks quiet down and we were able to find Crested Guans, Brown-capped Vireo, Brown Inca, Tropical Parula, Slate-throated Redstart, Orange-bellied Euphonia and we heard an Andean Solitaire. Soon, Benecio Paz, Angel's son, came to fetch us so we could go to the feeding area of the Giant Antpitta. The worms were placed on the moss-covered bough and within a minute, the bird came out to feed. Antpittas' round, chunky bodies on top of those long-stilt legs always bring a smile. After a short drive, we got to see the Yellow-breasted Antpitta with those startling blue legs! This was Wilhelmina and quickly, her mate, Willie showed up too! Great photo opportunities here as we were able to get very close. The fruit feeders brought in the Crimson-rumped Toucanet as well as, Toucan and Red-headed Barbets while White-collared Swifts, Turkey, and Black Vultures soared above. Angel's brother, Rodrigo, beckoned us to another feeding area where he was able to coax a Rufous-breasted Antthrush to "Venga por un photo!" (Come out for a photograph!) We headed to the dining area at the refuge and took in the hummingbird feeders on the veranda as 15 species entertained us. We were served one of Ecuador's most popular dishes – the Bolon – a crispy ball of mashed green plantains stuffed with cheese and pork – yum! Then, the "piece de resistance" – the best cheese

empanadas ever, added to the yum! Before we left, Angel came to greet us and we were able to take a group photo to cap off an amazing morning at this very special slice of bird heaven.

As we drove back for another delicious lunch at Guaycapi Lodge, we heard that a Lyre-tailed Nightjar was seen nearby. All eyes were scanning the rocks along the river, but "Eagle-eyed Kelly" headed in the opposite direction and found an adult and chick camouflaged in a hillside rock outcrop. Great views through the scope were had by all and a Torrent Tyrannulet showed up as well, All the scanning of the river rocks eventually afforded a Fasciated Tiger-Heron and Black Phoebe.

After a little bit of rest time at the lodge, we decided to drive to Milpe Road, even though it was a bit drizzly out. We donned our rain gear and even though the light conditions were not ideal, we had found some great birds. Five hummers, including the Purple-crowned Fairy, Green Thorntail, and Green-crowned Brilliant were seen. With a number of eyes scanning the roadside trees, we realized there was quite a bit of activity "up there". One great find was the Yellow-throated Toucan and then the Bronze-winged Parrot. As we wandered slowly down the road, a Smoky-brown Woodpecker, two Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaners, Thick-billed and Orange-bellied Euphonias, and a Scarlet-rumped Cacique were spotted. With six amazing and experienced birders in our group, besides Andrea and Luis, we were able to tease out many tanager species – Ochre-breasted, Flame-rumped, Blue Gray, Palm, Blue-necked, Golden and the eye-popping Swallow. An Ornate flycatcher, Cinnamon Becard, Green Honeycreeper, Bananaquit, Black-winged Saltator and Red-faced Spinetail added to our delight and even with a light rain, we found a deceptively shy Choco Brushfinch in the shrubbery. For a roadside walk with low expectations, we were all very pleased with the effort and results.





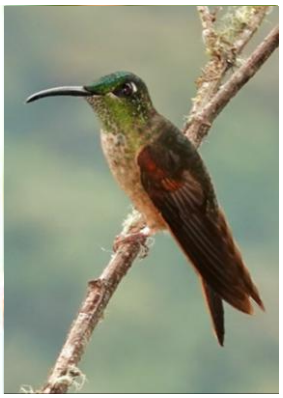
Sun., Aug. 9 Mashpi Amagusa | Mashpi Wasi

Two of our group decided to hang back at Guaycapi today and walk the interesting property trails, while having a relaxing time. Five of us ventured out to Mashpi Amagusa Refuge and along the way, we saw Choco Toucan, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Pacific Hornero and a Spotted Sandpiper! The Mashpi property is dedicated to preserving native flora and fauna, attracting the area specialties and creating a viewing-friendly environment. All goals achieved! We got to the deck to find the very close-by (3-4 feet away) tree adorned with banana bunches which were covered in Rose-faced Parrots. They were feasting away and a delight to watch as they interacted with each other and the banana bunch! Our attention was soon drawn to the moth sheet, corn feeder and fruit feeder areas. This is one of those places where you need a "swivel head" since you're constantly hearing species names and locations being called out from one area to another and back! The corn area brought the much-anticipated White-throated Quail-Dove – what a beauty! The trees above and near the moth sheet and

surrounding the fruit feeder brought in Maroon-tailed (Choco) Parakeets, Wedge-billed and Spotted Woodcreepers, Scaly-throated and Lineated Foliage-gleaners, Streak-capped Treehunter, Cinnamon and Barred Becard. The side garden shrubs brought in Smoke-colored Pewee, Ornate, Dusky-capped, Social and Rusty-margined Flycatchers, the Southern House and Bay Wrens, along with Brown-capped and Chivi Vireos. As we checked the fruit feeder, we were rewarded with one of our target birds for the day, the Moss-backed Tanager! But he wasn't alone – the White-winged, Lemon-rumped, Glistening Green, Blue Gray, Rufous-throated, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Flame-faced, Golden, and Palm were joined by the Black-chinned Mountain Tanager. Then the Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Zeledon's Antbird, Rufous-rumped Antwren, along with a Collared Trogon showed up! Three-striped, Buff-rumped and Choco Warblers also made appearances. We headed to the upper deck and were thrilled to find an Orange-breasted Fruiteater pair. Whew! That was intense! We headed down to the hummingbird feeders and were signaled that a Black Solitaire was nearby. We ran to the road and there it was, perched atop the tree! Back to the hummer feeders and two areas where we were searching for specific hummingbirds. We found the White-tipped Sicklebill, the White-whiskered Harmit and the White-throated Daggerbill. Seventy-four species observed at this one amazing location.

We drove a bit to have lunch at Xavier Munoz' home at Mashpi Wasi. Xavier is the owner of Neblina Forest and our Naturalist Journey's main operator in South America. His graciousness in opening his home, while he's off guiding somewhere, was so appreciated. His outdoor patio offers a lovely seating area with hummer feeders and fruit feeders. Guaycapi Lodge packed us a delicious lunch, which we devoured while watching nine species of hummingbirds, six species of tanagers, two kinds of honeycreepers, a toucanet and quail-doves. Yum and wow! Thank you, Xavier, for your hospitality.



Mon., Aug. 10 Sachatamia Hide | Frutti Tour | Sachatamia Lodge

Today was another early start because we were driving to Sachatamia Lodge to be in position at their moth sheet pre-dawn. We had gotten word that Umbrellabirds had been showing up so we were excited! The hide is quite comfortable and as we were contemplating sunrise, a female Long-wattled Umbrellabird and a Rufous Motmot were the first to land on the moss-covered rope where grape clusters were strategically placed. Wow! When the first bird of the day is the "most-hoped for", you know you're going to have a good one! A cute Agouti family – mom, dad and two pups – were getting in on the moth grabs and the pups' cavorting was quite fun to watch. The Strong-billed and Plain-brown Woodcreepers were nabbing pretty good-sized moths and soon the Lineated Foliage-gleaner, Streak-capped Treehunter, Spotted Barbtail, and Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant were joining in. The Mountain Wren, Gray-breasted (Choco) Wood-Wren, two types of Euphonias, Dusky and Yellow-throated Chlorospingus were flitting about and joined by Chestnut-capped Brushfinch and our ubiquitous friend, the Rufous-collared Sparrow. Soon, we were amazed to see another female, an adult male and a juvenile male Umbrellabird come in to the rope and hang around in the trees above. Couldn't ask for better views.

As we left the hide, to Seth's delight, we found Scrub Blackbirds! The fruit feeder afforded all the tanager "usual suspects" and the corn feeder below brought out at least 8 Agoutis. The hummingbird feeder patio attracted White-throated Daggerbill, White-booted Racket-tail, Velvet-purple Coronet and the gorgeous, Violet-tailed Sylph. We were about to load into the van when the ground beneath our feet began to undulate and when we looked at the van and four cars parked next to it, we were shocked to see all the vehicles quickly moving back and forth – not something you feel or see every day! It lasted about 10 seconds and then a little rumble. We found out that we were feeling the 7.6 earthquake that hit western Colombia.

Our next destination is the wonderfully named, Sendero Frutti Tour. Marcello, the owner, has worked hard to attract some very special hummingbirds, as well as other "hard-to-see" species. The Bronzy Hermit, the Long-billed Starthroat, the Purple-chested and Violet-bellied Hummingbirds along with the spectacular Crowned Woodnymph and Andean Emerald were a joy to get close looks at. Marcello has now added an area that attracts Little Tinamou – such a cute, round, secretive bird to get a good look at. Two species of woodpeckers were showing up – the Golden-olive and the Black-cheeked. We were happy to see the Orange-billed Sparrow and Saffron Finches feeding on the ground along with White-tipped Doves and Pale-vented Pigeons. We were lucky to find Cryptic Becard and White-browed Gnatcatcher before heading back to Sachatamia for a delicious lunch in their lovely dining room.

We were sad to say goodbye to the lovely staff and wonderful accommodations at Gauycapi Lodge but it was time to move over to the Eastern Andes. We made an overnight stop at San Juan de Puembo hotel where, even though we arrived late in the afternoon, we saw Vermilion Flycatchers, Eared Doves, Great Thrushes and of course, being in a more urban setting, the Rock Pigeon. Tomorrow, we head high!







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Tues., Aug. 11 Tambo Condor | Antisana Ecological Reserve | La Mica Lake | Rte 35

We left Quito fairly early since we were driving to Antisana Ecological Reserve with a stop at Tambo Condor along the way. As we were driving up the volcano, we encountered very windy conditions and were hoping this type of weather would not negatively impact our chances to see today's targets – Andean Condor, Giant Hummingbird, Great Sapphirewing and the impressive Ecuadorian Hillstar. At the feeder platform we were greeted by many Shining Sunbeams, the Giant and Great Sapphirewing, and the Tyrian Metaltail along with a few Black Flowerpiercers – hopes were raised! As we scanned the cliffside, we found some roosting Condors that were at a distance but the scope helped get decent looks. We headed higher up the road and soon saw Turkey Vultures and a Black-chested Buzzard Eagle. We stopped to examine the roadside trees, shrubs and grassy areas and were rewarded with quite a trove – Stout-billed and Chestnut-winged Cinclodes, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Many-striped Canestero, White-chinned Thistletail, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Plumbeous Sierra Finch, Plain-colored Seedeaters and Brown-bellied Swallows. Before we knew it, we saw many Andean Condors soaring above us, at a fairly close height. As we watched, we saw a gathering of about 10 or 11 Condors that were feasting on a cow carcass! What an amazing sight to see! We tore ourselves away and got to an area with a lot of Chuquiraga shrubs, a high elevation evergreen shrub featuring distinctive, bright orange flowers shaped like small pinecones – the favorite food of the Ecuadorian Hillstar. We searched and searched to no avail then moved further up the road and finally – a female Hillstar appeared. We kept at it, all eyes scanning and then Luis saw a male and it followed along, feeding on the flowers and giving us an amazing look as it perched atop the plant, turning its head to oohs and aahs as the head and gorget feathers changed from iridescent blue to purple and all the colors in between! As we walked a bit further, we found 4 or 5 females that were apparently nesting inside an abandoned, roofless building (!) and in the short cliffside under hanging plants.

We decided to drive all the way to the end of the road to take a look at La Mica Lake. As we availed ourselves of the facilities at the Ranger Station, a very confident and photogenic Tawny Antpitta came walking out from the underbrush. The short walk along the lake path took some fortitude as the wind and icy drizzle greeted us. It was well worth the effort as we found Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Duck, Andean Teal, Andean Gull, Slate-colored Coot and Silvery Grebe. While driving back to Tambo Condor for a warm lunch made of interesting Ecuadorian specialties, we saw Andean Lapwings, Carunculated Caracara, Black-winged Ground Dove and Andean Ibis.

As we were heading to San Isidro, we drove through Quito again and along the main highway, Luis and Andrea decided to stop and scan the distant hillside, as they said this was a good place to possibly see Spectacled Bear. The 7 of us were quite skeptical as the mountainside was HUGE and we couldn't imagine that anyone would be able to spot a bear. But, 5 minutes later, we see Luis pointing and Andrea bringing out the scope. Lo and behold,

a large Spectacled Bear was having an afternoon bromeliad feast! We got some great "scope videos" and all chided each other for not believing in our amazing driver and guide. A day of low expectations turned into one of the most fun and rewarding days of the tour so far.





Wed., Aug. 12 San Isidro Lodge | El Quetzal Reserve | Cosanga River | S.I. South Caucheras Rd

After arriving at San Isidro Lodge late yesterday afternoon, we were excited to get up early to see who was visiting the moth sheet and veranda at the lodge. The Russet-backed Oropendolas were joined by Green Jays (Inca), Scarlet-rumped Caciques, Andean Motmot and a number of flycatchers – Cinnamon, Golden-bellied, Flavescent and Pale-edged. Soon, the undergrowth revealed Southern House Wren, Mountain Wren and Gray-breasted Wood-Wren. The tree trunks attracted the Montane and Olive-backed Woodcreepers and shortly the Common Chlorospingus and Black-eared Hemispingus made appearances. A Masked Trogon and Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher added to the mix. As sunrise brightened the day, the hummer feeders were buzzing with Chestnut-breasted Coronets, Fawn-breasted Brilliants, Long-tailed Sylphs, Speckled Hummingbirds and Collared and Bronzy Incas. What a pre-breakfast start to the day!

After breakfast, a few of us took a short drive to the Cosanga River and after a bit of searching and walking, we found what we were looking for – a very active pair of Torrent Ducks. It's hard to decide which is prettier – the male or the female. Both were quite entertaining as they ducked and dove between and above the rocks in the roaring river. Then we spotted a Torrent Tyrannulet as Blue and White Swallows were bug catching above the river.

Our afternoon jaunt took us along the road that parallels the lodge property. It was pretty quiet at first but soon the roadside trees and shrubs revealed some lovely inhabitants. We got an amazing look as a Golden-headed Quetzal perched in the open for all to see. We heard White-faced Parrots overhead and Long-tailed Tapaculo in undergrowth below but they were elusive. With all eyes scanning we found three types of flowerpiercers – the White-sided, Bluish and Masked. We added to our tanager count by seeing Blue-necked, Beryl-spangled and Saffron-crowned. A Smoke-colored Pewee and Black-billed Peppershrike were located and as we headed back to the lodge, both Glossy-black and Pale-eyed Thrushes and a Sickle-winged Guan rounded out the day.

We enjoyed another world-class dinner at San Isidro and while we, and the other lodge guests, were getting ready for dessert, we heard someone proclaim, "Tapir at the feeder!" What?? There was a salt feeder below the veranda and as we all "flew" to the railing, we all were able to watch this unique-looking creature, that seems to

be a mix of pig, anteater and elephant all rolled together, lazily lick from the salt block. Then, within about 10 minutes, the Black-banded (San Isidro) Owl landed in the tree just feet from the veranda! Wow! Hard to beat a gourmet dinner and two surprisingly beautiful sights.





Thurs., Aug. 13 Guacamayos Overlook | San Isidro Lodge Rd. to Caucheras Rio Aliso | Wild Sumaco

Four hardy souls joined Andrea and Luis for a very early morning drive to Guacamayos Overlook – kind of a truck rest area with quite spectacular views of the mountains and a small shrine-building to the Virgin Mary. Seems like an atypical place to go birding but it was quite productive, even for the short, hour and a bit, that we stayed there. A Plain-capped Wren, was once again heard very distinctly, but never seen. Ashy-throated and Common Chlorospingus were flitting about, along with a Black-capped Hemispingus. We were delighted to find a very cooperative Black-crested Warbler, Turquoise Jay, Spectacled and Slate-throated Redstarts when a few "stars" appeared – the Hooded Mountain Tanager, Grass-green Tanager and Saffron-crowned Tanager! A Mountain Cacique was large and loud while we searched for, and finally found, a Streaked Tuftedcheek and Rufous Spinetail.

Since we were heading out after lunch, we made a couple of short forays near to the lodge which added a few species to our list like the Tawny-bellied Hermit, Roadside Hawk, Pearled Treerunner, Barred Becard and Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia.

As we left San Isidro behind, we drove to Wild Sumaco Lodge and encountered some sought after species. When we stopped to gas up the van, there's was an overlook area where we found Social Flycatchers, Yellow-browed Sparrows, Tropical Kingbird and White-banded Swallows. Just as we were getting ready to load up, we found the very beautiful Chestnut-bellied Seedeater. Who knew a gas and snack stop would bring such treasures?

Further down the road, we pulled over to get good looks at the Cliff Flycatcher, Smooth-billed Ani, Silver-beaked and Blue-necked Tanager.

We arrived at Wild Sumaco Lodge in the late afternoon and were greeted by a flurry of activity at the hummingbird feeders. Fifteen species of hummers were tanking up for the night, making it hard to focus! We were all so awestruck by some of these familiar faces and even more, "new-to-us" marvels. We soon numbered

the feeders so we could point out "who is where" more efficiently. It was really hard to contain ourselves since it really was a frenzy of iridescence surrounding our senses. White-necked Jacobin, Green Hermit, Sparkling, Brown and Lesser Violetears, Black-throated Mango male and female, Peruvian Racket-tails, Green-backed Hillstars, Black-throated Brilliants, Gray-breasted and Napo Sabrewings, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Many-spotted Hummingbird, and the two stunners – Golden-tailed Saphhires and Gould's Jewelfronts, both males and females. What a show and what an introduction to Wild Sumaco Lodge!

Fri., Aug. 14 Wild Sumaco Hides, Coopman's Trail | Hill House Veranda | Wawa Sumaco

There are two moth sheets at Wild Sumaco – both easy to get to. After a quick coffee, we headed to the hide at one moth sheet and were greeted by Plain-brown, Olive-backed and Wedge-billed Woodcreepers. Within a short time, three "Ant" birds arrived – the Plain Antvireo, Black-faced Antbird and Short-tailed Antthrush. This was a photographer's dream. We rounded out the offerings at these hides with the Black-billed Treehunter.

After a hearty breakfast, our Wild Sumaco guide, took us down Coopman's Trail to the feeding area for two more Antpittas – the Ochre-breasted and Plain-backed. But, along the way, the guide heard a Blue-rumped Manakin calling. With a bit of effort, we were treated to a great look at this stunning bird. And then, with just a little bit of a wait, both Antpittas appeared. Never get tired of seeing Antpittas. We took our time returning to the lodge and were lucky to get into a few mixed flocks, revealing Slaty-capped and Ornate Flycatchers, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Deep Blue Flowerpiercer (ooh!), and a very beautiful Slate-colored Grosbeak. A host of tanagers joined in – Flame-crested, Blue-gray, Palm, Spotted, Blue-necked, and Golden.

The owners of the lodge were kind enough to grant us access to their home, just a short walk from the lodge, where we sat on their deck which was surrounded by fruiting trees. All good things come to fruiting trees in Ecuador. As we walked over, we saw a Short-tailed Hawk but the sights in the trees were something to behold – White-lined, Silver-beaked, Blue-gray, Palm, Spotted, Blue-necked, Bay-headed, Golden-eared, Green-and-gold, Golden, and Swallow Tanagers were having a time. Moving to all sides of the house, we found Montane and Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners, Streaked Xenops, Masked Tityra, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Golden-faced Tyrannulet, Black-billed and White-necked Thrush, Green and Golden-collared Honeycreeper. Before we headed out, Luis found us a Lined Antshrike. What an A+ morning!

We spent a lot of the afternoon relaxing and watching the hummingbird feeders, where a number of us were treated to the much-awaited appearance of the Wire-crested Thorntail. What a bird! Some of the group found a Crimson-crested Woodpecker and then, as Luis was returning to his room, he spotted a Lafresnaye's Piculet and quickly rounded us up so we could all have a look. When we returned to the veranda, we saw the banana feeder which was high in a tree, had attracted a South American Coati along with some Napo (Black-mantled) Tamarin and then a Tayra showed up to grab the leftovers.

Later this afternoon, some of us took the ride down Wild Sumaco Road with a guide, to go to a spot where they are feeding Blackish Rails. We made a few stops along the way to and from, and were happy to find Speckled Chachalaca, White-throated Toucan, Squirrel Cuckoo, Plumbeous Pigeon and a flyby of Chestnut-fronted

Macaws. Very quickly after the worms were in place, the Blackish Rail showed up. A very elegant bird with a cool combo of blue feathers, yellowish bill and orange legs.



Sat., Aug. 15 Amarun Pacha, Guango Lodge | Papallacta Hot Springs

Four of us ventured out very early, on a rainy morning, to go to Amarun Pacha, a relatively new conservation area that is swiftly turning into a "must-see" location due to its variety of habitats, trails, hides and feeding areas. We arrived before sunrise and with the guidance of Andrea and our local guide, we headed down the trail to the Cock of the Rock hide. This is a much bigger and 3-sides-open hide than the one at Angel Paz Refugio. The raucous calling began and it only got louder and louder as the morning light shown. At least 10 males were all vying for attention and location within the trees and these are the very orange-feathered, eastern Andes species, as compared to the scarlet-red western Andes version. So neat to see both types.

We moved to another hide and pretty much as soon as we got situated, five Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail showed up. We enjoyed watching them feed for quite a while. Our guide then took us to a ramada where the hummingbird feeders were located and we had coffee or tea while we added to our hummingbird tally. The Blue-fronted Lancebill, Green-backed Hillstar and Glittering-throated Emerald were the "newcomers". The shrubbery behind the feeders brought in a Chestnut-eared Aracari. As we scanned the trees on the opposite side of the ramada, we finally found a few Paradise Tanagers. We were wondering where they'd been and now, we know! Soon we were summoned to take another walk, which included an interesting suspension bridge segment. We took turns walking across the bridge and then watched and waited as a Chestnut-headed Crake came out to munch on the worm feast. Such a beauty!

The group that stayed back at Wild Sumaco got to see a Common Parauque, Western Fire-eye, Black-faced Antbird, Crested Oropendola and the two Woodcreepers – Olive-backed and Wedge-billed.

Before we knew it, it was time to say goodbye to Wild Sumaco and head over to Guango Lodge. It was still a bit of a drizzly, on-and-off rainy day but the front courtyard of the lodge brought us close looks at our target bird – the Tourmaline Sunangel, both male and female. While we were admiring these gems, we looked up to see a male and female Masked Trogon peering down at us. Chestnut-breasted Coronets, White-bellied Woodstars and

Collared Incas frequented the feeders while Green Jays, Turquoise Jays and Mountain Caciques flitted around in the nearby trees. David and Carol walked the river trail and scored the White-capped Dipper.

After a delicious and warming lunch, a few of us took to the trail on the upside of the lodge. It was quiet with beautiful views of the surrounding mountains but as we were making our way back, some movement caught our eyes and we found the Lacrimose Tanager and Blue-backed Conebill.

We now had to make our way to Termas de Papallacta Resort for our final day of the tour. This hot spring resort is a sight to behold at almost 11,000 feet in elevation. The architecture, décor, landscaping and, of course, steaming hot springs are interesting, welcoming and quite exquisite. As we made our way to our rooms, the layout of the resort is such that, no more than 5 feet outside of every room, there's easy access into pools of hot springs at just the right temperature. Even the floors of the rooms are warm because of the hot springs running underneath. Shining Sunbeams were taking advantage of the nearby blooms and a short walk near the entrance of the resort had Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Pale-naped Brushfinch, Great Thrush, Spectacled Redstart and Black Flowerpiercers out and about. A pre-dinner soak in the springs was just what the doctor ordered - can't say enough about how wonderful this felt!



Sun., Aug. 16 Papallacta Bridge | Cayambe-Coca Reserve Antennas and Road

We wanted to make the most of our last day so we headed out early to a nearby bridge just outside of town. We heard the Buff-banded Mountain Tanager but were never able to get eyes on. We kept hearing the chitter of hummingbirds around and saw a Swordbill and a Shining Sunbeam but we kept persevering and were finally rewarded with a Viridian Metaltail. Hummingbird species number 66! What an amazing total for the first in our Hummingbird Series of tours.

After breakfast we headed into high volcano territory with the Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe on our minds. The antennas at the top of Cayamabe Volcano are the place to go and it was quite the drive into the clouds, into the wind and into the cold at 14,000 feet. But we were prepared. It was a holiday weekend in Ecuador so there were a surprising number of people venturing into this unique landscape of what is called the paramo - the ecosystem of the regions above the continuous forest line, yet below the permanent snowline. Luis and Andrea headed off in search of the Seedsnipe and within about 15-20 minutes, we got word that there was a pair nearby. We walked as quietly as possible, over some of the most interesting, spongy paramo plants and there they were - grouse-like shorebirds at 14,000 feet. And talk about some of the most beautiful feather patterns – wow! After admiring them for a while, we headed back down and made a few good stops along the way. There was a small lake with Andean Teal. We saw Variable Hawk and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle soaring above and then heard the distinctive call of a Tawny Antpitta. We were able to hone in on the call and there it was, singing away. We added a few more species including the Chesnut-winged Cinclodes, Many-striped Canastero, the White-tailed Thistle-tail and Red-rumped bush-Tyrant.

As we headed back to the resort, along the main highway, we saw all these cars pulled over and a whole bunch of people gathered at the guardrail. Of course, we pulled over too, intrigued by what everyone was looking at. As we got across the road, we soon discovered what the big attraction was – a mother and cub Bear! These were much closer than the ones we'd seen days earlier and so neat that all these locals were as excited about seeing them as we were. What a treat!





After a last lunch and packing up, we started making our way back to Quito to say goodbye after an extraordinary tour. Of course, we had a bit of time, so we decided to drive back up the Cayambe Road, west of the pass, for one last look. We parked and walked, parked and walked and then we saw it – at least one Rainbow-bearded Thornbill! We got the best view when he perched atop a bush and that iridescent beard flashed and flashed. Our 67th hummingbird! We got to see over half the species of hummingbirds found in all of Ecuador. Thank you, Andrea and Luis!! To top it all off, we added a Red-crested Cotinga and we heard the call of the Paramo Tapaculo as a farewell.

Some of the group were staying on at nearby airport hotels; some were flying out later that night. We said our goodbyes and all headed home with smiles on our faces!

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