Eagle-Eye Tours



Colombia Trip Report (March 4 - 18, 2026)

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Day 1. Arrival

We met at our hotel in Bogotá this evening for a welcome dinner, introductions, and to discuss the exciting days of birding ahead. Some of us were coming off the Santa Maria tour and continuing their journey, while others were just beginning their adventures in Colombia!

Day 2. Sumapaz and Reserva Chiguaza

We started our first day with a very early departure from our hotel to beat the horrendous Bogotá traffic. After an hour drive out of town, we arrives at our first birding stop: the lovely Reserva Chiguaza, a combination of restaurant and bird reserve surrounded by local farms with lots of edge habitat. We had breakfast while we waited for the sun to rise. It didn't take long to find our first birds of the tour with great looks at several Black-backed Grosbeaks, Superciliaried Hemispingus, and White-throated Tyrannulet. We also saw three species of flowerpiercer visiting the garden and hummingbird feeders: Glossy, Black, and Masked. One more highlight before we climbed to higher elevations was a beautiful Green-tailed Trainbearer that turned up in the garden.



Green-tailed Trainbearer ©Blair Dudeck

Our next stop was at around 3,500 metres (11, 500 feet) at the Sumapaz páramo, where we got our first taste of the unique páramo habitat. We birded for several hours and found many páramo specialties including Apolinar's Wren, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Bronze-tailed Thornbill, and excellent views of Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles as they crossed the mountaintops. We spent some time searching for our primary target in the Eastern Andes: the Green-bearded Helmetcrest. After several brief glimpses, a beautiful individual finally perched right in front of us. While exploring the páramo we also heard Boyacá Antpitta, Pale-bellied Tapaculo, Buff-banded Mountain-Tanager, and Andean Pygmy-Owl.



Green-bearded Helmetchrest ©Blair Dudeck



Bronze-tailed-Thornbill ©Blair Dudeck

We returned to Reserva Chiguaza for a traditional Colombian lunch and more time watching the garden and surrounding habitats. We added Silvery-throated Spinetail, Rufous-browed Conebill, and White-throated Tyrannulet, then started our way back to Bogotá.



Rufous-browed Conebill ©Blair Dudeck

Day 3. La Florida and Campo Tangara

We left early from our Bogotá hotel and headed to Parque La Florida, a lovely park in Bogotá with wetlands and parkland. We first searched for the endemic Bogotá Rail; the rails were very vocal but shy, giving only quick glimpses as they moved through the reeds. Birding the wetland added highlights such as Yellow-hooded Blackbird (South America's counterpart to the Yellow-headed Blackbird), Spot-flanked Gallinule, Bare-faced Ibis, Southern Lapwing, and excellent views of a Torrent Tyrannulet. We then continued toward the Central Andes.



Spot-flanked Gallinule ©Blair Dudeck



Yellow-hooded blackbird ©Blair Dudeck

At Campo Tangara's hummingbird feeders we had our first taste of the amazing Andean hummingbird diversity, with Sparkling and Lesser Violetear, Tourmaline Sunangel, Buff-tailed Coronet, and White-bellied Woodstar. We also saw Moustached Brushfinch, Slate-throated Redstart, Blue-capped Tanager, White-sided Flowerpiercer, and several Blackburnian Warblers. After lunch we drove to our next hotel and switched from the bus to a fleet of 4x4s for the coming days.

Day 4. Vereda Potosí and Hotel Cantos del Río

After an early breakfast we loaded into our 4x4 convoy and drove about an hour to higher elevation. Our local guide maintains a feeding station for Black-billed Mountain-Toucan at this spot, our main target. On arrival we enjoyed flocks of Golden-plumed Parakeets and smaller flocks of the critically endangered Yellow-eared Parrot.



Golden-plumed Parakeets ©Blair Dudeck



Yellow-eared Parrot ©Blair Dudeck

While waiting for the toucan we observed Golden-fronted Redstart, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Yellow-backed Oriole, Golden-bellied Flycatcher, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, and Bronze-winged Parrots. After about 45 minutes, the Black-billed Mountain-Toucan arrived and fed on grapes while posing for photos.



Black-billed Mountain-Touca ©Blair Dudeck

We then walked up the road into higher elevation habitat. We had great looks at Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Black-crested Warbler, Collared Inca, Northern Slaty Brushfinch, Smoky Brush-Tyrant, White-rumped Hawk, and Sword-billed Hummingbird. Back at the hotel after lunch and a siesta, those who chose not to rest up had an incredible showing at the hummingbird feeders: Long-tailed Sylph, Andean Emerald, White-booted Racket-tail, Indigo-capped Hummingbird, Bronzy Inca, and the endemic Tolima Blossomcrown.



Black-crested Warbler ©Blair Dudeck



Tolima blossomcrown ©Blair Dudeck

In the afternoon, we birded the roadside at lower elevations focusing on flowering bamboo patches. Our first mixed flock produced Crimson-backed Woodpecker, Streaked Xenops, Barred Becard, and Oleaginous Hemispingus. A subsequent mixed flock yielded Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Chestnut-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Streak-headed Antbird, and the endemic Yellow-headed Brushfinch. A cooperative Plushcap perched openly for photos, which made for an unforgettable moment.



Plushcap ©Blair Dudeck



Crimson-backed Woodpecker ©Blair Dudeck

Day 5. National Reserve Retorno de Colibrí

We departed Hotel Cantos del Río for the western slope of the Central Andes, stopping first at Retorno del Colibrí, managed by our local guide. The feeders here are superb for hummingbirds and other species and offer two local endemics: Tolima Blossomcrown and Tolima Dove. The Blossomcrown visited many flowers and the Tolima Dove eventually appeared at its feeder just before lunch. While waiting for the dove we observed Colombian Chachalaca, Common Squirrel-Cuckoo, Andean Motmot, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Crimson-backed Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Scrub Tanager, and Rufous-naped Greenlet.



Tolima Dove ©Blair Dudeck



Violet-capped Hummingbird ©Blair Dudeck

Nearby heliconia flowers attracted a White-tipped Sicklebill; when it arrived we all rushed over for great views. An Olivaceous Piculet also showed exceptionally well.



Olivaceous Piculet ©Blair Dudeck

After lunch we continued north to Hotel Mandalay, with a quick stop in Pinares that produced Ruddy-breasted and Yellow-bellied Seedeaters, Carib Grackles, and a male Vermilion Flycatcher.



Ruddy-breasted Seedeater ©Blair Dudeck

We finished the day at Hotel Mandalay and prepared for another early morning of birding.

Day 6. Parque Regional Ucumarí and surrounds

We left before sunrise for a small bridge in La Florida to look for Torrent Ducks. An initial sighting was a domestic Muscovy Duck, but later we located a pair of Torrent Ducks downstream. We enjoyed excellent views of White-capped Dipper, plus Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Tropical Parula, Blackburnian Warbler, Black-capped Tanager, Golden Tanager, and Flame-rumped Tanager.



White-capped Dipper ©Blair Dudeck

Driving into the cloud forest on the west slope of the Central Andes, we encountered Cauca Guans, a species once feared extinct, making the sighting particularly special. At the end of the road two Red-ruffed Fruitcrows were briefly seen in the canopy. Birding down the road produced Yellow-eared Parrots (overhead), Sharpe's Wren, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant, and Moustached Puffbird. A shy Golden-headed Quetzal eventually gave everyone a look, and a cooperative pair of Red-ruffed Fruitcrows displayed near the road.



Sharpe's Wren ©Blair Dudeck



Red-Ruffed Fruitcrow ©Blair Dudeck

After a traditional lunch serenaded by Red Howler Monkeys, we returned to the bridge to try for better looks of the Torrent Ducks but they did not cooperate. We then packed and drove to Hacienda El Bosque, adding Western Emerald and Steely-vented Hummingbird around the hotel grounds.



Western Emerald ©Blair Dudeck

After a few hours of driving we arrived at the scenic Hacienda El Bosque in time to enjoy the sunset over the Western Andes and the city of Manizales. After dinner several clients saw a Buff-banded Owl calling near the cabins.



Hacienda el Bosque © Blair Dudeck



Buff-banded Owl ©Blair Dudeck

Day 7. Hacienda El Bosque, PNN Los Nevados & Hotel Termales del Ruiz

Hacienda El Bosque has several feeder stations. A morning visit to a gully feeder intended for Equatorial Antpitta produced Gray-browed Brushfinch and the striking White-browed Spinetail instead.



White-browed Spinetail ©Blair Dudeck

A nearby Grass Wren feeder gave unusually good looks for a typically skulky species.



Grass Wren ©Blair Dudeck

At another feeder we experienced intimate interactions: Mountain Wrens swarmed around guests for mealworms, Northern Slaty Brushfinches came in close, and Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrants fed from hands and caught mealworms on the wing.



Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant ©Blair Dudeck



Northern Slaty Brushfinch ©Blair Dudeck

The hummingbird and fruit feeder produced Shining Sunbeam, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Collared Inca, White-bellied Woodstar, and Tourmaline Sunangel. A pair of Sickle-winged Guans cleaned up fallen fruit, and the Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan eventually appeared and posed while snacking on grapes.



Shining Sunbeam ©Blair Dudeck



Sword-billed Hummingbird ©Blair Dudeck



Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan ©Blair Dudeck

We then drove up Nevado del Ruiz to 4,200 metres (13, 800 feet) into the páramo to search for Buffy Helmetcrest. Despite the thin air, we found a Helmetcrest feeding on small yellow flowers, giving everyone excellent views. After descending, we arrived at Hotel Termales del Ruiz. Lunch and a brief shower preceded visits to feeders where we added Great Sapphirewing (the world's second-largest hummingbird), Golden-breasted Puffleg, and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill. Fruit feeders

brought Lacrimose, Hooded, and Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers, plus Pale-naped Brushfinch and Masked Flowerpiercers.



Nevado Del Ruiz ©Blair Dudeck



Buffy Helmetcrest ©Blair Dudeck



Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager ©Blair Dudeck



Rainbow-bearded Thornbill ©Blair Dudeck



Golden-breasted Puffleg ©Blair Dudeck

Day 8. Reserva Ecológica Río Blanco

We left early for Reserva Ecológica Río Blanco, home to three famous antpittas: Chestnut-crowned, Brown-banded, and Slate-crowned Antpittas. While waiting, we walked forested trails and added Powerful Woodpecker, Southern Emerald-Toucanet, and Hooded Siskin. The Chestnut-crowned Antpitta met us at the trail entrance and followed us to the feeder, where it and its mate took mealworms.



Chestnut-crowned Antpitta ©Blair Dudeck

At the Slate-crowned Antpitta feeding station the little bird eventually appeared and posed beautifully for photos.



Slate-crowned Antpitta ©Blair Dudeck

We continued through the cloud forest adding Yellow-vented Woodpecker, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Black-collared Jay, Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Pale-footed Swallow, Masked Saltator, and Hook-billed Kite. At the Brown-banded Antpitta feeder a Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush initially dominated the mealworms, but the antpitta eventually fed as well.



Brown-banded Antpitta ©Blair Dudeck

Lunch at the lodge and the hummingbird feeders produced Tourmaline Sunangel, Speckled Hummingbird, Long-tailed Sylph, Bronzy Inca, and Buff-tailed Coronet. Before leaving we had very distant views of a Black-and-Chestnut Eagle nest and then found a White-throated Daggerbill at the park entrance flower garden.



White-throated Daggerbill ©Blair Dudeck



Torrent Tyrannulet ©Blair Dudeck

We departed Río Blanco and traveled to the Montezuma area, transferring from the bus to 4x4s for the drive into the lodge.

Day 9. Montezuma

We left before sunrise in 4x4s, enjoying a packed breakfast and hummingbird feeders that attracted Violet-tailed Sylph, Velvet-purple Coronet, Empress Brilliant, Purple-throated Woodstar, and Rufous-gaped Hillstar. The Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer showed well.



Birding Montezuma ©Blair Dudeck



Purple-throated Woodstar ©Blair Dudeck



Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer ©Blair Dudeck

Walking downhill we added Flammulated Treehunter, Rufous Spinetail, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, Black-capped Tyrannulet, and the highly endemic Munchique Wood-Wren. Further down we found Tanager Finch, Purplish-mantled Tanager, and Handsome Flycatcher.

At a lookout with feeders we saw Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, Glossy-black Thrush, Black-billed Peppershrike, Olivaceous Piha, Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Swallow-tailed Kite, Green-fronted Lancebill, and Greenish Puffleg. Later stops added Chocó Brushfinch, Gold-ringed Tanager, and Scaled Fruiteater. Another productive site produced Golden-winged Manakin, Black-and-gold Tanager, and the endemic Crested Ant-tanager. Back at the lodge some clients saw Wattled Guans at the feeders and a family of Blackish Rails by the fish ponds.



Golden-winged Manakin ©Blair Dudeck



Tanager Finch ©Blair Dudeck.



Doing the checklist in a poweroutage ©Blair Dudeck

Day 10. Montezuma

We again left before sunrise, driving partway up the hill. Early on we had a roadside Toucan Barbet. At the valley-overlook mixed flocks produced a confiding male Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia (excellent for photos!), Beautiful Jay, and Purplish-mantled Tanager. Other species included Smoke-coloured Pewee, Ash-headed Tyrannulet, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, and Yellow-collared Chlorophonia.



Gold-ringed Tanager ©Blair Dudeck



Chestnut-bellied Chlorophonia ©Blair Dudeck

Further down the road we enjoyed a Tatamá Tapaculo that sang in the open, Masked Trogon, Club-winged Manakin, Glistening-green Tanager, Brown Inca, and Three-striped Warbler. Rain after lunch returned us to the lodge feeders, where Wattled Guan, White-necked Jacobin, White-whiskered Hermit, Tawny-bellied Hermit, Green Thorntail, Green-crowned, Fawn-breasted, and Empress Brilliants visited. The Purple-bibbed Whitetip was an occasional but stunning highlight. We also re-

found Blackish Rails, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Chivi Vireo, Black-crested Jay, Crimson-backed Tanager, and Flame-rumped Tanager.



Purple-bibed White-tip ©Blair Dudeck

Day 11. Montezuma

We had a relaxed start and birded on foot along the main road. Highlights included the Colombian endemic Black-headed Brushfinch, Ornate Flycatcher, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Chocó Toucan, White-throated Spadebill, Golden-faced Tyrannulet, Russet-backed Oropendola, and Broad-billed Motmot. After lunch we departed Montezuma for Ecohotel El Diamante near Buga. We arrived at sunset and enjoyed the setting; the hotel is noted for many bird species and a working water-buffalo dairy.

Day 12. Ecohotel El Diamante, Laguna de Sonso & Finca La Araucana

After breakfast we visited a feeding station at the hotel and observed a charming Crested Bobwhite, which had only recently begun using the feeder.



Crested Bobwhite ©Blair Dudeck

We then traveled to Laguna de Sonso, a wetland complex where water levels allow exploration of lowland riparian habitats. With our local guide we saw five Common Potoos roosting, Gray-cowled Wood-rail, Spectacled Parrotlets, Yellow Oriole, Blue-headed Parrot, and Grayish Piculet.



Common Potoo ©Blair Dudeck



Spectacled Parrotlet ©Blair Dudeck

Inside the reserve we added Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-headed Caracara, Snail Kite, Cocoi Heron, and Limpkin. A dry marsh patch produced a pair of Horned Screamers foraging and flying into trees. A canoe trip on the canals gave excellent views of Roseate Spoonbills, more Cocoi Herons, Striped Cuckoo, Striated Heron, Masked Cardinal, and Ringed, Green, and Amazon Kingfishers. Along a trail we found a family of Tropical Screech-Owls and another roosting Common Potoo. From a lookout tower we added Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Glossy Ibis, and Black-bellied and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks. Lunch at the reserve was accompanied by Gray-cowled Wood-rails.



Horned Screamer ©Blair Dudeck



Spot-breasted Woodpecker ©Blair Dudeck

After lunch we drove to Finca La Araucana, a new lodge above Cali. Around the feeders we saw Scrub Tanager, Golden Tanager, Red-headed Barbet, Crowned Woodnymph, and Steely-vented Hummingbird.

Day 13. Doña Dora & Finca La Araucana

We rose at 5 AM to visit Doña Dora and its accessible Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek. Despite heavy rain during the drive, the weather cleared and we hiked down into the valley. En route a juvenile Moustached Antpitta accompanied part of the way. At the lek we were treated to at least half a dozen male Andean Cock-of-the-Rock displaying—brilliant red and black birds that put on a spectacular show, especially when a female arrived.



Andean Cock-of-the-Rock ©Blair Dudeck

Doña Dora's moth feeder and nearby areas produced Zeldon's Antbird, Moustached Puffbird, Yellow-throated Chlorospingus, and Ochre-breasted Tanager. At the fruit and hummingbird feeders we enjoyed excellent views of Toucan Barbet, Spot-crowned and Red-headed Barbets, Glistening-green Tanager, Rufous-throated Tanager, and Golden Tanager. Hummingbirds included Brown Violetear, Crowned Woodnymph, Green Thorntail, and Empress Brilliant. A pair of Barred Hawks flew past at eye level.



Toucan Barbet ©Blair Dudeck



Glistening-green Tanager ©Blair Dudeck

Back at Finca La Araucana the feeders continued to produce Steely-vented Hummingbird, Black-throated Mango, Colombian Chachalaca, Red-headed Barbet, and Crimson-rumped Toucanet.

Day 14. La Florida Bosque de Las Aves & flight back to Bogotá

Our final day was at La Florida Bosque de Las Aves in the cloud forest above Cali, known for Chestnut Wood-Quail and Multicolored Tanager at its feeders. On arrival we were told the wood-quail was already at the feeders; we saw an adult and a nearly grown juvenile Chestnut Wood-Quail taking cracked corn and mealworms. We then spent the day moving among feeders and filling camera memory cards.



Chestnut Wood-quail ©Blair Dudeck

Fruit feeders first brought Golden-naped and Saffron-crowned Tanagers (including a pair with recently fledged young). A juvenile Multicolored Tanager came in early, but after a wait an adult male Multicolored Tanager eventually appeared and made several visits for banana.



Multi-colored Tanager ©Blair Dudeck



Golden-naped Tanager ©Blair Dudeck

Hummingbird feeders produced Long-tailed Sylph, White-booted Racket-tail, Bronzy Inca, and Fawn-breasted Brilliant. Other species observed included Northern Chestnut-breasted Wren, Red-headed Barbet, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Plain Antvireo, Three-striped, Russet-crowned and Canada Warblers, and Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager.



Blue-winged Mountain Tanager ©Blair Dudeck



Crimson-rumped Toucanet ©Blair Dudeck



White-booted Racket-tail ©Blair Dudeck

We had our final group meal at the reserve, then drove to Cali airport and said our goodbyes to Luz and Pablo before flying back to Bogotá.



Group Photo ©Blair Dudeck

We enjoyed an amazing tour of the Colombian Andes with a wonderful group of guests and guides. We recorded a total of 419 species of birds and made many unforgettable memories and friendships along the way.