

Northern Peru Itinerary

[Link: Northern Peru](#)

Tour Overview

Our Northern Peru birding tour explores one of South America's premier birding destinations, home to an extraordinary diversity of habitats and one of the continent's highest concentrations of endemic birds. From the ancient Tumbesian dry forests and endemic-rich Marañón Valley to the lush cloud forests of Abra Patricia and the spectacular high Andes, this carefully designed itinerary visits some of Northern Peru's most celebrated birding locations.

Throughout the tour, we target an outstanding collection of northern Peruvian specialties, including iconic species such as White-winged Guan, Marvelous Spatuletail, Long-whiskered Owlet, Gray-bellied Comet, Yellow-scarfed Tanager, and Great Spinetail, along with hundreds of other Andean, Amazonian, and Tumbesian birds.

Itinerary

Day 1: Arrival in Lima



Upon arrival in Lima, you will be greeted at the airport and transferred to your hotel. Our Northern Peru birding tour will begin with our evening meal where we will discuss our exciting birding tour ahead. Night in Lima.

Day 2: Pantanos de Villa, Pucusana and Flight to Chiclayo



Early this morning, we will visit Pantanos de Villa, one of Lima's most important coastal wetlands. Here, we will search for Many-colored Rush Tyrant, Wren-like Rushbird, White-cheeked Pintail, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, White-tufted Grebe, Peruvian Thick-knee, and a variety of herons, ducks, grebes, and shorebirds. We will then continue south to Pucusana for a boat excursion around the rocky coastline and nearby islands. Target species include Peruvian Pelican, Peruvian Booby, Humboldt Penguin, Surf Cinclodes, Guanay Cormorant, Red-legged Cormorant, and Inca Tern. After completing our morning birding activities, we will transfer to Lima Airport for an afternoon flight to Chiclayo. Overnight in Chiclayo.

Day 3: Bosque de Pómac and Chaparrí



We start our tour in one of the few remaining areas of carob trees in the region, the Bosque de Pómac. This dry forest habitat offers our first chances for several important Peruvian and Tumbesian specialties, including Peruvian Plantcutter, Tumbes Swallow, Cinereous Finch, Tumbes Chat-Tyrant, Coastal Miner, Rufous Flycatcher, Peruvian Pygmy-Owl, Pacific Parrotlet, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Mouse-gray Tyrannulet, Short-tailed Field-Tyrant, and Baird's Flycatcher. We may also have the chance to spot Sechuran Fox. Continuing north, we'll stop at Tinajones, where wetlands and surrounding open country add a different mix of birds. Four species of ibis are possible here Bare-faced, Black-faced, Andean, and White Ibis along with a variety of other wetland species. In the afternoon, we arrive at Chaparrí Reserve, a conservation area protecting the dry forests of northwestern Peru and an important expanse of Tumbesian habitat. We'll spend the remainder of the afternoon exploring the reserve, getting our first introduction to its dry-forest birdlife before more birding here tomorrow. Night in Chaparrí.

Day 4: Casupe Road and Chaparrí Reserve



After breakfast, we will head toward Casupe Road, where we will initially look for one of the last wild populations of the endemic White-winged Guan, once considered extinct. This area is also excellent for several other Tumbesian dry forest species, including Guayaquil Woodpecker, Piura Chat-Tyrant, Chapman's Antshrike, Black-capped Sparrow, and Ecuadorian Piculet. In the afternoon, we will return to Chaparrí for more birding in the reserve. Possible species include Lesser Nighthawk, Scrub Nightjar, Purple-collared Woodstar, Savanna Hawk, Red-masked Parakeet, Collared Antshrike, Pacific Hornero, Sooty-crowned Flycatcher, Snowy-throated Kingbird, White-tailed Jay, Tumbes Sparrow, Peruvian Meadowlark, and White-edged Oriole. After dinner, we will look for Peruvian Screech-Owl, one of the nocturnal targets of the area. Night in Chaparrí.

Day 5: Pacific Shore and Wetlands



After some early birding around Chaparrí, we will head toward the Pacific coast, where we will spend the rest of the morning along the shore. This day adds an important ecological contrast to the itinerary, moving from Tumbesian dry forest to coastal and wetland habitats influenced by the productive waters of the Pacific. Along the coast, we will look for species such as Peruvian Tern, Peruvian Pelican, Peruvian Booby, Gray-hooded Gull, Gray Gull, Belcher's Gull, Kelp Gull, Elegant Tern, and Peruvian Pipit. These coastal habitats are an important part of the route because they allow us to include a different group of birds before continuing toward the Andean and Marañón sections of the tour. The wetland areas also offer a distinct bird community. Here we may find Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Plumbeous Rail, and Peruvian Thick-knee, among others. The combination of shorebirds, seabirds, wetland birds, and coastal specialists makes this a productive and varied birding day. Night in Motupe.

Day 6: Abra Porculla to Jaén

This morning we will make our way to Abra Porculla, an important Andean pass located at approximately 2,145 meters above sea level. This semi-humid montane scrub habitat is one of the key transition zones of the route, connecting the lowlands and foothills of the Tumbesian region with the deep valleys of the Marañón Basin. Abra Porculla can be very productive, and possible species here include Piura Chat-Tyrant, Marañón Tyrannulet, Tumbes Tyrannulet, Gray-chinned Hermit, Tumbes Hummingbird, Ecuadorian Piculet, Line-cheeked Spinetail, Black-cowled Saltator, Chapman's Antshrike, Bay-crowned Brush-Finch, White-winged Brush-Finch, White-headed Brush-Finch, Henna-hooded Foliage-Gleaner, Rufous-necked Foliage-Gleaner, Mouse-gray Flycatcher, Tumbes Pewee, Three-banded Warbler, Gray-and-Gold Warbler, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Plumbeous-backed Thrush, Speckle-breasted Wren, and White-browed Gnatcatcher. In the afternoon, we will continue the drive toward the Marañón Basin, where the environment becomes drier and more desert-like. This unique inter-Andean valley is home to a very different bird community, and we may start seeing species such as Northern Slaty-Antshrike, Red-crested Finch, Striped Cuckoo, and Gray-breasted Crake. We will end the day in Jaén, an important base for exploring the dry Marañón habitats the following morning. Night in Jaén.

Day 7: Dry Marañón Basin and Marvelous Spatuletail



Jaén is located in the Marañón Basin, one of the most important regions of the tour for dry valley endemics and specialties. The unique desert-like environment around this area supports a distinctive bird community, and the morning will be dedicated to searching for some of its most important targets. Possible species include Little Inca-Finch, Chinchipe Spinetail, Marañón Crescentchest, Marañón Tyrannulet, Marañón Spinetail, and Marañón Sparrow. Additional possibilities include Tataupa Tinamou, Paint-billed Crake, Ecuadorian Ground Dove, Ochre-bellied Dove, Cordilleran Parakeet, Rufous-fronted Thornbird, Fulvous-faced Scrub-Tyrant, and Cryptic Becard. After lunch, we will drive toward the eastern Andes, leaving the dry Marañón habitats and moving into the cloud forest region. Our next major target will be one of the most spectacular hummingbirds in the world: the Marvelous Spatuletail. We will visit a hummingbird feeding spot where this wonderful Peruvian endemic is resident. Other hummingbirds such as Andean Emerald, Lesser Violetear, Bronzy Inca, and Long-tailed Sylph may also visit the garden. This day is one of the most exciting transitions of the itinerary, combining Marañón dry forest endemics in the morning with the first taste of the eastern Andean hummingbird habitats in the afternoon. Night at Owlet Lodge.

Day 8: Abra Patricia

Abra Patricia rises at around 2,300 meters elevation and forms an important pass across the eastern Andes. This is one of the most productive and enjoyable cloud forest birding areas in the Neotropics, combining excellent roadside birding, forest trails, hummingbird feeders, mixed flocks, and access to several very special species. Around Owlet Lodge, the gardens and nearby forest can be very active. Hummingbirds such as Emerald-bellied Puffleg, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Bronzy Inca, and White-bellied Woodstar are residents around the lodge. Mixed flocks may bring spectacular birds such as Yellow-scarfed Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Flame-faced Tanager, Black-faced Tanager, Green-throated Tanager, and Metallic-green Tanager. The trails around the lodge are also excellent for important endemics and forest birds. Johnson's Tody-Flycatcher is regularly found, together with Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant. This cordillera is especially important for antpittas, and species such as Ochre-fronted Antpitta, Rusty-tinged Antpitta, and Chestnut Antpitta are possible at feeding sites close to the lodge. Leymebamba Antpitta can also be found along the trails. During the day, we will focus on the best available areas depending on bird activity, weather, and target priorities. In the evening, the region also offers possibilities for nocturnal birding, including some of the most iconic night birds of the area. Night at Owlet Lodge.

Day 9: Abra Patricia and Alto Nieva



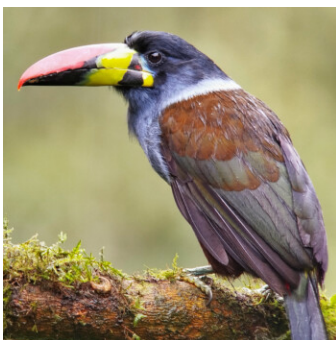
We will dedicate another day to Abra Patricia and Alto Nieva, increasing our chances for the most important cloud forest targets. At Alto Nieva, the feeders may attract Royal Sunangel, Rufous-booted Racket-tail, White-capped Tanager, Violet-throated Brilliant, Rufous-vented Whitetip, Collared Inca, and Green-fronted Lancebill. Nearby trails offer chances for Rufous-vented Tapaculo, Bar-winged Wood-Wren, Cinnamon-breasted Tody-Tyrant, Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, and other eastern slope specialties. If conditions are suitable, we will make an outing for Long-whiskered Owlet, one of the most famous birds of northern Peru. Other possible nocturnal species include White-throated Screech-Owl, Cinnamon Screech-Owl, and Rufous-banded Owl. Night at Owlet Lodge.

Day 10: Andean Foothills and Utcubamba Valley



We will have another morning birding around Abra Patricia looking for any species we may have missed. After lunch, we will start gaining elevation again as we return toward the Andes, birding along the road. Possible species along this section include Lanceolated Monklet, Tawny-bellied Hermit, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Crested Quetzal, Speckle-chested Piculet, Ornate Flycatcher, and Peruvian Tyrannulet. In the afternoon, we will have our second chance for Marvelous Spatuletail at a hummingbird feeding area in Cocachimba, one of the most spectacular Peruvian endemics of the route, other specialties included here are Peruvian Pigeon, Marañón Thrush, Spot-throated Hummingbird, Black-necked Woodpecker, Cordilleran Parakeet, Buff-bellied Tanager, Fasciated Tiger-Heron, and Torrent Duck. Night in Cocachimba.

Day 11: Huaylla Belén - Utcubamba Valley



We will have a very early start today and travel toward Huaylla Belén, an outstanding cloud forest area in the Utcubamba Valley. Surrounded by remote mountain scenery, this now more reliably accessible site offers excellent birding and several highly localized specialties. We will spend the morning birding along the forest road, with Pale-billed Antpitta as our main target. Huaylla Belén is one of the best areas for this rare Peruvian endemic and also provides very good opportunities for Chachapoyas Antpitta, Utcubamba Tapaculo, Peruvian Wren, Gray-browed Wren, Russet-mantled Softtail, Yellow-scarfed Tanager, and Coppery Metaltail. Another particularly exciting possibility is the rare Mountain Avocetbill. Other species we may encounter include Sword-billed Hummingbird, Mountain Velvetbreast, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, White-collared Jay, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Pearled Treerunner, and several other mountain tanagers. After a productive morning in this scenic cloud forest, we will continue through the Utcubamba Valley toward Leymebamba, arriving in the afternoon. Night at Leymebamba.

Day 12: Leymebamba Cloud Forest



We will spend the morning birding in the surroundings of Leymebamba, one of the key areas of the tour for cloud forest and high-elevation specialties. This region gives us access to several important endemics and localized species, making it one of the most valuable sections of the itinerary. Possible birds around Leymebamba include Chachapoyas Antpitta, Leymebamba Antpitta, Utcubamba Tapaculo, Rufous-chested Tanager, Purple-throated Sunangel, and Large-footed Tapaculo. Other species here Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Hooded Mountain Tanager, Grass-green Tanager, Yellow-billed Cacique and Yungas Pygmy-Owl. In the afternoon, we will bird near Ccalla Ccalla Pass, also known as Barro Negro, where we will begin exploring higher elevation habitats. Possible species here include Coppery Metaltail, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Many-striped Canastero, White-chinned Thistletail, Paramo Pipit, and Andean Lapwing. Before dinner, Koepcke's Screech-Owl is possible near the town. Night in Leymebamba.

Day 13: Barro Negro Pass

We will start the day in Leymebamba and, after an early breakfast, drive toward Abra Barro Negro, a high mountain pass and one of the most important Andean sections of the route. This area is excellent for high-altitude birding and offers access to several special birds associated with montane forest, elfin woodland, and open Andean habitats. Possible birds in this area include Grass Wren, Yellow-breasted Brushfinch, Purple-backed Thornbill, Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Yungas Pygmy-Owl, Chachapoyas Antpitta, and Neblina Tapaculo. This section also gives us another chance for important endemics such as Utcubamba Tapaculo, Russet-mantled Softtail, and Yellow-scarfed Tanager. Later, on the other side of the pass, we will take a break for a picnic lunch surrounded by impressive mountain landscapes before continuing toward Balsas. As we descend into drier inter-Andean habitats, the bird community changes again, giving us chances for impressive species such as Buff-bridled Inca-Finch, Gray-winged Inca-Finch, Yellow-faced Parrotlet, Black-necked Woodpecker, and Chestnut-backed Thornbird. Night in Celendín.

Day 14: Cruz Conga, Sangal and Chonta River

We will spend the morning exploring Cruz Conga and Sangal, both known for their diverse birdlife and important highland habitats. This area marks the beginning of the Cajamarca section of the tour and is especially valuable for several northern Peruvian specialties and range-restricted birds. Possible species include Cajamarca Antpitta, Black Metaltail, the endangered Plain-tailed Warbling-Finch, Rufous-eared Brushfinch, Rusty-crowned Tit-Spinetail, Black-crested Tit-Tyrant, White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant, Line-cheeked Spinetail, Jelski's Chat-Tyrant and Slender-billed Miner. The combination of highland scrub, open slopes, and Andean habitats makes this a very productive area for focused birding. Later, we will visit the Chonta River, one of the key sites for the highly restricted Gray-bellied Comet. This impressive hummingbird is resident in the area and is one of the major targets of the Cajamarca region. Other birds here include Giant Hummingbird, Andean Flicker, Andean Parakeet, and others. Night in Cajamarca.

Day 15: Great Spinetail and Departure from Cajamarca

Our final morning in Cajamarca provides additional flexibility and another opportunity to search for the region's most important endemic and restricted-range species including the highly restricted Great Spinetail. Other possible birds in the area include Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Peruvian Meadowlark, Black-lored Yellowthroat, Buff-bridled Inca-Finch and a chance for Andean Tinamou. Our Northern Peru birding tour will end after lunch in Cajamarca. We will transfer you to the airport where you can catch a departing flight to Lima and then to your final destination.

What to Expect

Overview

Our Northern Peru birding tour is a relatively fast-paced birding tour. The itinerary includes several very early starts and numerous long drives and travel days to maximize birding opportunities, making this a demanding but rewarding tour.

Meals

Breakfast will usually be enjoyed at our hotel or lodge, although on some mornings we may head out birding before breakfast to take advantage of peak bird activity. Lunch will typically be a picnic in the field or enjoyed at a local restaurant while travelling between birding sites. In the evenings, we enjoy meals at our hotels and lodges, where we review the day's sightings, discuss the highlights, and prepare for the adventures awaiting us the following day.

Accommodations

Throughout the tour, we stay in a mix of comfortable birding lodges and well-located local hotels. In a few more remote areas, particularly around Motupe, Celendín and Leymebamba, accommodations are more basic.

Weather

In the lowlands and dry forests around Chiclayo, Chaparrí, Jaén, and the Marañón Valley, conditions are generally warm to hot, with daytime temperatures typically ranging from 25-33°C (77-91°F) and relatively little rainfall.

As we climb into the cloud forests and Andean valleys around Abra Patricia, Leymebamba, and Barro Negro, temperatures become noticeably cooler, generally ranging from 8-20°C (46-68°F). Early mornings and evenings can be chilly, making a warm jacket or layers important. Mist, low cloud, and occasional showers are also possible in these higher and more humid environments, particularly during the afternoons.

Sunshine can be strong throughout the tour, so good sun protection is essential. Mosquitoes and other biting insects may also be encountered in some of the warmer, lower-elevation areas. Packing for a range of conditions will ensure you are comfortable.

Walking

This tour is moderate in physical demand, with most days involving a combination of short to moderate walks and roadside birding. However, since we spend several days at high elevations, even simple walks can feel more demanding due to the altitude. Please talk to your doctor regarding any

concerns with being at a high elevation.

Some trails will have uphill sections and trails can be muddy, rocky, uneven, and occasionally slippery, particularly following rain. Walks are taken at a slow pace, with plenty of opportunities to stop along the way. A good level of fitness will help you enjoy the experience, and good-quality hiking shoes with reliable grip are strongly recommended.

Altitude

This tour covers an impressive range of elevations, taking us from the Pacific coastal lowlands and dry forests to cloud forests, Andean valleys, and high mountain passes. Our itinerary allows us to gradually adapt to the elevation changes, however, please be aware that we will be spending a significant amount of time at high elevation.

We begin at or near sea level along the Pacific coast and gradually travel through the foothills and Marañón Valley, generally between 800–1,800 m (2,600–5,900 ft). Cloud-forest and eastern-slope birding typically takes place around 1,800–2,400 m (5,900–7,800 ft), while our highest birding areas, including the Cajamarca highlands and Andean passes, reach approximately 3,000–3,600 m (9,800–11,800 ft).

Driving

This itinerary is designed to reach a wide variety of endemic-rich birding areas within a relatively compact timeframe. Drives of 3–5 hours are a regular part of the itinerary as we move between key birding regions. Wherever possible, these journeys are timed for the middle of the day, when bird activity is naturally lower. Longer drives are balanced with birding stops and planned breaks along the way.

Most travel is on well-maintained roads in modern, comfortable vehicles (likely Sprinter van). We will be travelling through mountainous regions, so expect windy, narrow roads.

Boat Tours

We take a 1.5 hour boat trip on the ocean near shore looking for penguins, boobies, etc. We travel on motorized long boats with a covered canopy (see image below). There are washrooms at the docks.

What's Included

Tour Price Includes

- All accommodations and meals
- Includes 1 flights: Lima - Chiclayo
- Ground Transportation
- Guides - EET guide plus local guide with 4 - 12 participants
- Park entry/tour fees
- Gratuities

Tour Price Does Not Include

- Flights to Lima, from Cajamarca
 - Travel Insurance
 - Items of a personal nature
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