

Northern Peru

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Fly Lima	Day 15	Moyobamba
Day 2/4	Muyuna Lodge	Day 16	Tarapoto
Day 5	Iquitos	Day 17	Lima/in flight
Day 6	Chiclayo	Day 18	UK
Day 7/8	Chaparrí		
Day 9	Tucume		
Day 10	Jaen		
Day 11	El Chillo		
Day 12	Puerto Pumas		
Day 13/14	Owlet Lodge, Abra Patricia		

Departs

October

Focus

Birds mainly, plus a few mammals and a little culture

Grading

A/B. Easy to moderate walking with the hardest walk optional. Some altitude considerations – see main text.

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code PER01) or brochure

Highlights

A wealth of superb birds, a chance of Spectacled Bear and stunning scenery throughout the Amazon, Andes and the Pacific!



Amazon River Dolphin; Yellow-scarfed Tanager; Tumbes Tyrant



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NB. Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather and other local considerations can necessitate some re-ordering of the programme during the course of the tour, though this will always be done to maximise best use of the time and weather conditions available.

Introduction

Northern Peru is arguably the overlooked highlight of a truly diverse and spectacular country. With a mountainous backbone carved up by the mighty Marañón River and its tributaries, this vast region is a biogeographic jigsaw that is surely yet to reveal all of its hidden secrets.

This adventurous tour will take us from the verdant midst of the Amazonian lowlands and into the breathtaking Marañón canyon. Onwards through the Cordillera of the Andes and then dry Andean foothills, concluding with the crashing surf of the Pacific, this will be a spellbinding voyage with a wealth of opportunities en-route to focus on the region's avian delights, breath-taking scenery and rich archaeological heritage.

Bird-wise, we will search for such legendary gems as the remarkable Marvellous Spatuletail, endemic Inca-finches, the endangered White-winged Guan (which was thought to be extinct for over 100 years), and a huge variety of more widespread birds including Andean Condor, King Vulture, and Cock-of-the-Rock. This, without doubt, is one of the world's most tantalising birding destinations!

Note that to tie in with domestic flight schedules the itinerary has been reversed from that shown in the Naturetrek brochure.

Day 1

In Flight

We depart from the UK this morning bound for the Peruvian capital of Lima. Usually we will aim to use the non-stop service offered by BA from Gatwick. Alternatives include Iberia through Madrid or KLM via Amsterdam, arriving at Jorge Chávez International Airport in Lima during the evening. Regional flights with KLM are also generally available from Bristol, Birmingham, Manchester, Newcastle and Norwich. Please state your preference upon booking. Upon arrival in Lima we will transfer the short distance to a convenient hotel for the night.

Day 2

Muyuna Lodge

We will catch a flight this morning to the city of Iquitos in the north-east Amazonian lowlands of Peru. From here we will travel to the nearby dock and take a boat ride for 3 hours or so to our lodge on the edge of the Pacaya-Samiria Reserve. This huge protected area safeguards a unique habitat of flooded or Varzea forest. We will be visiting in the dry season when water levels are low and it is possible to walk in areas of forest which are flooded for much of the year. Our explorations of the area will however mostly be by boat, allowing us to access a range of microhabitats and to get good looks at the amazing wildlife of the region. These boat journeys should give us a superb opportunity to get to grips with the many waterbirds and water-edge birds that are abundant in the region including five species of kingfishers,

herons, terns, skimmers, Pied Lapwings and Black-collared Hawks amongst others. On arrival we will settle into the comfortable cabins at Muyuna Lodge for a stay of three nights which will give us a chance to unpack and "bed in" after the long journey to Peru. <http://www.muyuna.com/>

Muyuna Lodge comprises of an attractive 'safari' style wooden lodge built on stilts with boardwalks linking the cabins/rooms to the main building. The cabins have basic furnishings but were clean, spacious and comfortable with outside verandas overlooking the forest. The en suite facilities are good and there are electric lamps in the rooms and on the boardwalks but there is no hot water or air conditioning.

Days 3-4

Muyuna Lodge



Blue-and-Yellow Macaws

During the two full days here we will make sure to explore the full variety of habitats in the area, taking excursions by boat along the rivers, walking through both seasonally flooded and terra firme forest. One early morning we will go in search of the spectacular Wattled Curassow, one of the rarest and most difficult to find of the Cracids as it has been hunted to extinction in most areas. The walk will take us through virgin rainforest and we should see a good variety of birds and with luck some mammals, possibly including the

curious Night Monkey. We will return to the lodge for our lunches and then offer short optional walks nearby which might reveal a roosting Great Potoo or a Three-toed Sloth. On one of the afternoons we will visit a peaceful old oxbow lake where one of the highlights will be seeing *Victoria regia* or Amazonian Giant Water Lily. This area is also home to a good variety of birds including Hoatzins and Horned Scremers. We can expect to see a good variety of wildlife including many birds and some primates during our time here.

Day 5

Iquitos

We will make an early departure from the lodge to the main river where we will explore some of the numerous river islands in search of the many specialities confined to them such as Black-and-white Antbird and Lesser Hornero. We will also search for both Pink and Grey River Dolphins en route back to Iquitos.

Our accommodation for the night in Iquitos is in a comfortable air conditioned city hotel where we'll also have dinner.

By the time we arrive in the late afternoon there will be some time to enjoy a hot shower and other facilities in the hotel.

Day 6

Iquitos - Chiclayo

We will spend today investigating the curious white sand forests of the Allpahuayo-Mishana reserve which is home to many rare birds including five species only recently revealed to science! This is amongst the rarest forest type in the Amazon with nutrient-poor soils millions of years old. The result is a unique, highly diverse and very slow growing forest rich in endemic species. We will have a good chance of seeing several of these including Ancient Antwren, Mishana Tyrannulet, and Pompadour Cotinga. There are plenty of other birds of interest too, such as Paradise Jacamar, Brown-banded Puffbird and Yellow-billed Nunbird. In the afternoon we will catch a flight to Chiclayo, arriving in the evening after dark before transferring to our hotel for dinner and sleep.

Day 7

Coast near Chiclayo, Tinajones Reservoir

We will head to the nearby Pacific coast and see our first gulls, Magnificent Frigatebirds, Blue-footed Boobies and Peruvian Pelicans. A short visit to Santa Rosa nearby is usually good for Killdeer and Tawny-throated Dotterel, and Puerto Elen also for Wren-like Rushbird, Black-lored (Masked) Yellowthroat and the smart Many-coloured Rush Tyrant.

We will then travel inland to Chaparri and en route we will stop at Tinajones reservoir and look for species such as the Black-faced Ibis, part of an isolated and now very rare population, and the impressive Great Grebe.



Tumbes Tyrant

The Chaparri Ecological Reserve, a community-owned private reserve in the dry forests of the Tumbesian region. Arriving in the afternoon we will settle into our bungalows and start to get familiar with the local wildlife, much of which is endemic to the region. One of the highlights here is the critically threatened White-winged Guan which is thriving under the protection of the community; this valley is now home to some 30 individuals, approximately 20% of the world population. The reserve is also

home to other rare specialities such as the Tumbes Tyrant, Rufous Flycatcher, Elegant Crescentchest and Sulphur-throated Finch as well as more widespread but spectacular species including both Andean Condor and King Vulture and we will ensure to keep an eye skyward for other soaring raptors. The

delicately proportioned endemic Sechuran Fox is particularly common here and we should see them easily around the camp.

After dusk a West Peruvian Screech-Owl may be added to our list.

Chaparrí Lodge is our base for two nights. Idyllically situated in the Chaparrí Ecological Reserve, this lodge is a firm favourite with tour participants. Although the cabins/rooms are small with very basic furnishings, they were clean, comfortable and have electricity (although lighting is dim). The en suite facilities are very good with plenty of hot water. The walk from some of the accommodation blocks to the main lodge area is along rough, uneven, poorly lit paths and across a swinging footbridge, so a head torch is essential.

Day 8

Casupe and Chaparrí

Whilst still dark, we will drive to Casupe, a mountainous region inside the reserve, looking for Peruvian Thick-knee and Scrub Nightjars on the way. Over a packed breakfast new birds might include Red-masked Parakeet, Ochre-bellied Dove, White-collared Swift, Plumbeous-backed Thrush, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Ecuadorean Trogon, Rufous-necked and Henna-hooded Foliage Gleaner, Grey-and-Gold Warbler, Pacific Elaenia, Tumbes Pewee and Black-capped Sparrow, while King Vultures sometimes wheel around above the valley.

Back at the lodge during the heat of the day we will relax in the shade either in a hammock or watching the bird feeders that attract White-tailed Jays, Tumbes Sparrows and Superciliated Wrens amongst others.

Later this afternoon we will continue to explore the reserve looking for more birds and mammals. This is one of the best places to see Spectacled Bear in Peru and whilst we will be very lucky to see one of these secretive animals we will keep an eye open and will also be able to see some in a rescue and rehabilitation project.

Day 9

Sipan Museum - Bosque de Pomac - Tucume

Before breakfast, we will walk the short distance to observe hummingbirds drinking and bathing in the nearby creek. This is a lovely spectacle and visitors will hopefully include the endemic Tumbes Hummingbird amongst half a dozen or so other species.

We'll next drive on to the town of Lambayeque on the coastal plain. This area was once home to a diversity of pre-Inca civilisations including the Muchik, who left a rich testament of gold and silvery jewellery in their adobe pyramids. In the late afternoon we will visit the Museo del Señor de Sipan. Discovered as recently as 1988, these riches are displayed in the museum (recently named as one of the world's ten best small museums by *Art News* magazine of New York).

In the afternoon we will visit the nearby Pomac archaeological sanctuary and look for the endangered Peruvian Plantcutter, Tumbes Swallow and other specialities. Here adobe pyramids from the Sican culture

stand above the mesquite dominated forest. Our hotel near the village of Tucume is in the shadow of another archaeological complex.

Day 10

Abra Porculla - Jaen

We'll leave early this morning for Abra Porculla, taking a packed breakfast with us. This is the lowest pass in the Andes, at only 7000 feet (2,145 m) above sea level. We'll bird semi-humid montane scrub bordering agricultural fields, looking for a suite of interesting species including Piura Chat-Tyrant, Ecuadorian Piculet, White-winged Brush-Finch, Bay-crowned Brush-finch, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Line-cheeked Spinetail, Porculla Hermit, Black-cowled Saltator, Elegant Crescentchest, Chapman's Antshrike, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta and Three-banded Warbler.

We will then cross over the lowest Andean Pass and drive to the town of Jaen in the lower Marañón valley. We will stop en route to look for endemics including Little Inca-Finch, a member of the genus *Incapiza* that is endemic to Peru. In the dry scrub here we will also be looking for Pacific Parrotlets, Tawny-crowned Pygmy Tyrant, Marañón Gnatcatchers (*major* race of Tropical) and Drab Seedeater.

We'll arrive at our hotel El Bosque in time for lunch, after which we'll check in and get settled. Later in the afternoon, once the heat of the day starts to dissipate, we'll head out again to look for Marañón Slaty Antshrike (Western Slaty race) and the stunning but skulking Marañón Crescentchest.

Day 11

Kuelap/El Chillo

Leaving Jaen in the early morning, we will travel up the Utcubamba valley where we expect to see a good number of the middle Marañón such as Peruvian (Marañón) Pigeon, Marañón Streak Saltator, Marañón Wren and Marañón Thrush.

After lunch we will travel on to the ancient fortress of Kuelap, the most important site of the Chachapoyas



Crimson-mantled Woodpecker

culture, and considered by many to rival Machu Picchu for its grandeur and location. The ruins are still partially covered in forest and having ascended via the new cable car, we should see a good variety of birds here including several hummingbirds, with luck including the remarkable Sword-billed Hummingbird and Rainbow Starfrontlet, plus Crimson mantled Woodpecker, Tufted Tit Tyrant, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Black throated Flowerpiercer and the distinct grey-morph of Superciliated Hemispingus (perhaps a future split?).

Finally we will head to our pleasant farmstead type accommodation at El Chillo where, in past tours, we have sometimes seen Koepcke's Screech Owl, a very little known and range-restricted Peruvian endemic.

Day 12

Huembo and Pomacochas

We will drive back down the Utcubamba valley before climbing onto the slopes of the Cordillera Colán and will spend the rest of the day looking for perhaps the world's most spectacular hummingbird, the amazing Marvellous Spatuletail at the hummingbird reserve at Huembo. This species is confined to humid montane forests on the west slope of the eastern Andes above the spectacular Utcubamba river valley. Whilst the females and juveniles of this species are relatively easily seen, it is the spectacle of the extremely long tail feathers (ending in round brackets and curved back over the body) of the male bird that really sets the pulse racing! With the help of a local guide we will search out the bird's favourite flower patches and we should have a good chance of seeing species. The habitat of the spatuletail is shared by several other hummingbird species such as Sparkling Violetear and Green-tailed Trainbearer together with a variety of other montane birds which we will enjoy watching as we wait for the hummer.



Marvellous Spatuletail

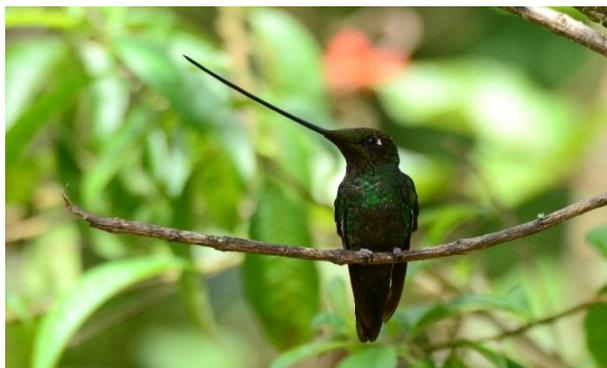
In the afternoon we will drive on to Puerto Pumas, where a clean and functional hotel close to Lake Pomacochas is our base for the night. The last hour of daylight we will explore nearby Pomacochas Lake, looking for Plumbeous Rail, Black crowned Night Heron, Andean Gull, Andean Lapwing, Puna Snipe and others.

Day 13

Abra Patricia & surroundings

We will leave early to head to the humid cloud forests of Abra Patricia. The stunted forests here, amidst the most awe-inspiring scenery of the tour, are home to some of Peru's least known species. The new birder's lodge here, Owlet Lodge, is ideally placed overlooking the forested ridges falling away to the east, and will be our base for the next two nights. Today we will focus on birding the environs of the lodge and Abra Patricia, perhaps one of the most exciting birding spots in the world. We will focus on the upper elevations and work our way down as we find the birds. We'll look for busy flocks of tanagers regularly make their rounds in these moss-covered forests and in addition to the endemic Yellow-scarfed Tanager (which can be difficult to find) we may also be dazzled by Saffron-crowned, Flame-faced, Blue-browed, Metallic-green, Beryl-spangled, Yellow-throated, Rufous-crested and Grass-green Tanagers, as well as mountain-tanagers, hemispingii, conebills and flowerpiercers. We will make a special effort to seek out and enjoy these flocks which are surely one of the highlights of birding in the Neotropics. As we ascend the road we will endeavour to seek out a number of other specialities such as the stunning endemic Royal Sunangel and Bar-winged Wood-wren, both species confined to ridge-top elfin forest within a small geographical area.

If we have any energy left after night fall, nocturnal birding here can be exciting, with White-throated Screech-Owl, Band-winged Nightjar, Rufous-banded Owl and Cinnamon Screech-Owl all possible. This is the type locality for the enigmatic Long-whiskered Owllet (after which our lodge is named), one of the great ornithological mysteries of the continent. The owllet, discovered in 1976, was for many years only ever encountered by a handful of mist-netting researchers. Finally, in February 2007, it was encountered naturally by researchers and has been seen by a handful of birding groups since. Going after the owllet will likely involve a long hard walk along muddy trails in torchlight and is only for the intrepid!



Sword-leaved Hummingbird

Day 14

Abra Patricia & surroundings

Another full day in the Abra Patricia area, we will likely venture further down the road searching for yet more tanager flocks (including Paradise, Green and gold, Bay-headed, Spotted, Yellow-bellied and Golden) and, as we move up the eastern Andean slopes we'll be keeping an eye out for White-capped Dipper, more impressive tanager flocks, the endemic Speckle-chested Piculet and interesting tyrannids like Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Slaty-backed Chat-tyrant and Rufous-tailed Tyrant and will also reach the area where subtropical species such as Andean Cock-of-the-Rock and Versicoloured Barbet occur.

Day 15

Alto Mayo Valley

Dropping down the east slope of the Andes we will arrive in the lowlands of the Alto Mayo valley, here we may find the local Pale-breasted Thrush and Huallaga (or Black-bellied) Tanager. We will make a series of birding stops as the day progresses searching out birds of different habitats and will likely end up at a fantastic hummingbird garden at where the several species include such delights as Golden-tailed Sapphire and Rufous-crested Coquette. We will overnight in the town of Moyobamba.

Day 16

Cordillera Escalera - Tarapoto

We will be on the road again early today, a first stop will be Quiscarumi Creek, a narrow gorge which is visible from the footpath on the side of a road bridge, which usually provides excellent views of strange Oilbirds as they fly around in the gloom calling. We will then push on to Tarapoto and spend the day exploring the forests of the Cordillera Escalera searching for specialities including Dotted Tanager and the endemic Koepcke's Hermit amongst others. We will overnight in Tarapoto.

Day 17

Lima



Inca Tern

After some final birding in drier habitats near the airport where we might find Planalto Hermit, ashy-headed Greenlet and a lake with Comb Duck, we will depart from Tarapoto on a flight to Lima. The day will consist of a delicious seafood lunch overlooking the Pacific and a visit to Callao harbour where we should be able to see some of the Humboldt Current seabirds like Inca Tern, Peruvian Pelican and Peruvian Booby.

Later we will transfer to the airport for our transatlantic flight home.

Day 18

London

We will arrive back at London or regional airports in the early evening.

Grading

This is primarily a birdwatching tour but also offers diverse scenery and a small amount of historical and cultural interest. The tour is comprised mainly of short and half-day walks, some of which are of a tougher, optional nature due to steeper and sometimes muddy terrain. The nature of the terrain necessitates some quite long drives (as with all birding tours of northern Peru) and some very early starts; you should be aware of this before signing up to the tour. It is not a relaxing holiday!

Weather

This tour is timed towards the end of the dry season and the end of the austral winter. The temperatures will be warm in the Amazon and coastal lowlands, rising to about 30° C by day, though if a cold front comes through it could be considerably cooler. In the Andes the temperatures are cooler and could even be cold at night. Heavy persistent rainfall is unlikely but one should always be prepared for rain in the Amazon and we could get some in the Andes.

Clothing

Please inspect the separate clothing list, sent to you on booking, thoroughly.

Included in the price

The price includes all accommodation, food, transfers and transport, internal flight airport taxes, as well as non-alcoholic drinks with meals and water during the day, all entrance fees to reserves, archaeological sites and museums.

Extra expenses

Laundry, alcoholic drinks, extra snacks and other personal expenses are not included.

How to book your place

In order to book your place on this holiday, please give us a call on 01962 733051 with a credit or debit card, book online at www.naturetrek.co.uk, or alternatively complete and post the booking form at the back of our main Naturetrek brochure, together with a deposit of 20% of the holiday cost plus any room supplements if required. If you do not have a copy of the brochure, please call us on 01962 733051 or request one via our website. Please stipulate any special requirements, for example extension requests or connecting/regional flights, at the time of booking