

Ecuador - Andes & Amazon

Naturetrek Tour Report

11 - 24 November 2009



Gilded Barbet



Sacha



Silvery Grebes



Viridian Metaltail

Report and images by Byron Palacios



Naturetrek Cheriton Mill Cheriton Alresford Hampshire SO24 0NG England

T: +44 (0)1962 733051

F: +44 (0)1962 736426

E: info@naturetrek.co.uk

W: www.naturetrek.co.uk

Tour Leader: Byron Palacios

Participants: Andy Shand
Jan Shand
Andrew Lapworth
Ruth Lapworth

Day 1

Wednesday 11th November

London - Quito

After a long flight and journey from the UK, we arrived to Quito in the early evening. We were transferred to the comfortable and centrally located Hotel Sebastian. We then had a restful night in order to start this fantastic tour the next morning.

Day 2

Thursday 12th November

Quito – Tandayapa – Sachatamia Lodge

We took it easy this morning and started the day at 8.30am heading northwest and following the Calacali – La Independencia main road. Our first stop was made at Pululahua Crater and the surrounding areas, where many birds such as American Kestrel, White-winged and Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, Great Thrush, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Blue-and-Yellow Tanager, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Eared Dove, Cinereous Conebill, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch, Southern Yellow (Golden-bellied) Grosbeak, Sparkling Violetear, Variable Hawk and the stunning Black-tailed Trainbearer were seen. We continued driving down the main road making a quick stop at Calacali where we had some refreshments and took some photos of the monument signifying the equator line. We then diverted onto the old Nono – Mindo road in order to do some birding along the Tandayapa Valley, where a good amount of birds was seen including Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Tropical Parula, Red-eyed Vireo, Fawn-breasted Tanager, Slate-throated Whitestart, Black-winged Saltator, Yellow-bellied Siskin, Golden Tanager, Yellow-bellied Siskin, Lemon-rumped Tanager, White-sided Flowerpiercer, Banaquit, and more! Continuing on, we decided to have our lunch in a very nice hummingbird garden on the way up to Bellavista Reserve, giving us the opportunity to see an amazing amount of ‘hummer’ species such as Purple-throated Woodstar, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Collared and Brown Incas, Western and Andean Emeralds, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Violet-tailed Sylph, Speckled Hummingbird, and Buff-tailed Coronet, amongst other nice birds like Squirrel Cuckoo and Flame-faced Tanager. We had such a great birding time that it was hard to leave this place behind.

We hit the road again making a final stop along the Mindo – Nambillo Protected Forest area, where a good flock of birds came to us offering fantastic views of Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Grass-green Tanager, Crested Quetzal, Montane Woodcreeper, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Flavescent Flycatcher, Smoked-coloured Pewee, Plumbeous Pigeon, Blackburnian Warbler, Turquoise Jay, Masked Trogon, and Golden Tanager, amongst others. We even were lucky enough to catch wonderful views of a Nine-banded Armadillo walking along the track, right next to the bus, wonderful! After seeing all these beautiful birds we headed to Sachatamia Lodge, arriving in the late afternoon. After checking in, we had a look at the beautiful surroundings of the lodge which was going to be our base for the next three nights.

Day 3

Friday 13th November

Milpe Road – Sachatamia Area

It was a beautiful morning across Mindo Valley, and the birds were very active right at the lodge gardens. A pre-breakfast birding walk was filled with plenty of colourful Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Lemon-rumped, Fawn-breasted, Blue-grey, Flame-faced and Golden Tanagers flitting on the fruit feeders. A few Montane Woodcreepers were catching dead moths from the previous night by a lamp post in the garden and were showing themselves off beautifully. A group of Pale-mandibled Aracari were feeding on the fresh fig fruits of the surrounded trees whilst an Olive-crowned Yellowthroat was singing away, perched on a May flower tree. We also saw Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Brown-capped Vireo, Blackpoll Warbler, Slaty Spinetail, Flammulated Treehunter, Red-eyed Vireo, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Tropical Parula, Cattle Egret and more. It was an explosion of pre-breakfast birdlife!

After breakfast, we drove to Milpe Road where we walked along the track for the first few hours where many good flocks of birds were seen including Ornate Flycatcher, Choco Trogon, Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner, Cinnamon Becard, Ashy-headed Tyrannulet, Red-faced Spinetail, Slaty Spinetail, Pacific Hornero, Masked Water-Tyrant, Ochre-breasted Tanager, Swallow Tanager, and Snowy-throated Kingbird.

We finished with a visit to Mirador del Rio Blanco where we enjoyed a break while watching fantastic hummingbirds, such as Green Thorntail, Green-crowned Brilliant, White-whiskered Hermit, Green-crowned Woodnymph, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird and Andean Emerald. The tanager feeders were full of Silver-throated, Palm, Blue-grey, White-lined and Golden Tanagers. Also seen were Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Guira Tanager, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, and Black and Turkey Vultures. The balcony of the restaurant which overlooks the River Blanco was a good spot to see Snowy Egrets and a Neotropic Cormorant, plus we had good views of a Broad-winged Hawk soaring in the sky.

Then we returned to Sachatamia to have an 'al fresco' lunch where we admired the landscape and did some birding before the rain started. Later on in the afternoon around the lodge, our first Toucan Barbets were seen whilst hummingbird feeders were particularly productive, especially after we came back from Bellavista area. The rain was still persistent and we rather enjoyed watching some male Violet-tailed Sylphs having a nice 'shower' while perched on a twig. The rain stopped and later at dusk we drove up the main road looking for Rufous-bellied Nighthawk and saw four very co-operative individuals, especially a nice male which was flying right above our heads, we had fantastic views of it, and it was a great finale to a good birding day!

Day 4

Saturday 14th November

Rio Silanche Area

We started very early today heading further northwest towards the Pedro Vicente Maldonado area. It was a very misty morning with a bit of a drizzle on the way, but it became perfect and clear when we arrived at Rio Silanche Reserve. Some good birds, and new for our list, were seen along the road, such as Pacific Hornero, Masked Water-Tyrant, Green Kingfisher, Dusky-faced Tanager, Cattle Egret, Swallow-tailed Kite, Choco Warbler, White-throated Spadebill, Immaculate Antbird, White-backed Fire-eye, Orange-billed Sparrow and Buff-rumped Warbler.

At the reserve, we checked the forest from the tower getting lots of good bird species such as Purple-chested and Blue-chested Hummingbirds, Purple-crowned Fairy, Tawny-crested, Bay-headed, Blue-necked, Scarlet-browed and Palm Tanagers, Green and Purple Honeycreepers, Lineated Woodpecker, Pale-mandibled (Collared) Aracari, Choco and Chesnut-mandibled Toucans, Red-headed Barbet and Orange-fronted Barbets, Grey-rumped and White-tipped Swift, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Bronze-winged and Blue-headed Parrots, Masked and Black-crowned Tityras, and more. The trails offered other goodies such as Choco Woodpecker, Dot-winged and Checker-throated Antwrens, Collared Trogon, Cinnamon and One-coloured Becards, Plain-brown, Spotted and Wedge-billed Woodcreepers, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Western Slaty Antshrike, Bay Wren, Dusky Antbird, Sooty-headed and Brown-capped Tyranulet, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Plain Xenops, and White-bearded Manakin, amongst others.

We took a break to enjoy our packed lunch and then carried on birding a bit more on our way back to Sachatamia Lodge, where we enjoyed some refreshments in the gardens before we went seeking nocturnal birds such as Lyre-tailed Nightjar (a female was seen on her nest) and Common Potoo. We later enjoyed a delicious supper!

Day 5

Sunday 15th November

Antpitta Sanctuary – Quito

We had a very early start for our drive back towards Nanegalito in order to visit Refugio Paz de las Aves where the Paz brothers (Angel and Rodrigo) took us to look for their tame and elusive antpittas. We firstly enjoyed watching the magical displaying male Cock-of-the-Rock's in their lek first thing in the morning. After this, Olivaceous Piha, White-throated Quail Dove and Sickle-winged Guan were seen from the plantain feeder hide. We walked the trails having wonderful views of Maria, the Giant Antpitta who was very co-operative with photos. We kept looking for other antpittas and that search took us to check the different trails where another elusive Olivaceous Piha was seen along with glimpses of a shy Crested Quetzal. We also had Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager and many others birds moving actively in large flocks around the forest canopy. We ended up in a lush creek looking for a Yellow-breasted Antpitta called Willy, which was apparently nesting in the area, but a very confident Moustached Antpitta turned up first, showing herself off very well! Right after that Willy, the Yellow-breasted Antpitta arrived giving us good views.

We walked back to the car park making a brief stop at the hummingbird feeders where Velvet-purple Coronet, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Brown and Collared Incas, Sparkling Violetear, Purple-throated Woodstar, Empress Brilliant, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Band-tailed Coronet, Green Violetear, and other local hummers were seen! We finally enjoyed our local and delicious 'brunch' at the car park picnic tables, whilst watching a very co-operative pair of Orange-breasted Fruiteaters - we had wonderful views of this endemic bird!

We were delighted with our fantastic morning, and went to enjoy a delicious local breakfast. We came back to Sachatamia for lunch and pack our belongings in order to start our return journey to the 'big city'. We tried to explore Bellavista area once again in the afternoon, but unfortunately we were unlucky with the weather as it was misty and rainy, so we decided to drive straight back to Quito in order to rest and get ready for the next day's adventure!

Day 6

Monday 16th November

Antisana & Papallacta

After a relaxed early morning start, we drove up and out of Quito heading southeast to Antisana. It was a very dry, sunny and picturesque morning with blue skies, perfect to enjoy the landscape and the volcanoes and mountains which surround Quito. Once we got to Antisana reserve, many paramo specialties such as Streak-backed Canastero, Silvery Grebe, Black-faced Ibis, Stout-billed and Bar-winged Cinclodes, Variable Hawk, Andean Lapwing, Paramo Pipit, hundreds of Caracaras, Andean Gull, Black-winged Ground-Dove, Plain-coloured Seedeater, Hooded Siskin, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, Greater Yellowleg, Yellow-bill Pintail, Andean Ruddy-Duck, Andean Coot, and much more were seen!

After a typical and tasty lunch at the old Hacienda Antisana, we had fantastic views of a beautiful Cinereous Harrier and scope views of a single male Andean Condor drifting in the sky at a considerable distance.

We drove over the 'interoceanica' road from Pintag heading on the eastern slope through the inter-andean valley and paramo areas, and finally we got into the temperate and elfin forest where the Termas de Papallacta resort is located, right in the heart of the forest. We were welcomed by a pair of White-capped Dippers on the way to our cabanas, and enjoyed its relaxing hot springs pools before and after dinner, truly a treat after a long day birding in the stunning Ecuadorian high Andes!

Day 7

Tuesday 17th November

Papallacta Pass & Guango Area

We went on a pre-breakfast birding walk to explore the very high-altitude Termas – Oyacachi old road. The Antisana glaciers were stunning on this mild early morning. We had great views of many elfin forest birds such as Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Shining Sunbeam, Viridian Metaltail, Red-crested Cotinga, Great Sapphirewing, Pale-naped Brush-Finch, Brown-bellied Swallow, Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager, and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, amongst others.

After a pleasant breakfast we drove up to the Paramo area, stopping just outside the village of Papallacta to see a Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle on its nest and a youngster feeding on a prey. Besides this, a juvenile Black-and-Chestnut Eagle was perched near the cliff where the nests were! A Grass (Sedge) Wren and Hooded Siskins were also seen. Once at the paramo and over 4,000 metres, our first stop was very productive and we had very good views of some paramo specialties such as Andean Tit-Spinetail, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Variable Hawk (dark and black-white morphs), Bar-winged and Stout-billed Cinclodes, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, White-chinned Thistletail, Many-striped Canastero, Paramo Ground-Tyrant, Grass (Sedge) Wren and Tawny Antpitta. Driving even higher, a pair of beautiful Rufous-bellied Seedsnipes was very obliging!

As lunch time was coming, we started to drive down heading for the hotel, and had great views of a Tawny Antpitta perched and singing away from the top of a puya flower, together with a Blue-mantled Thornbill nearby. We made another productive stop on the way down to the tree-line, right next to the main road where a beautiful patch of ancient Polylepis forest grows down towards a gully.

A beautiful Giant Conebill rapidly responded to the tape calls, followed by Spectacled Whitestart, White-throated Tyrannulet, Black-backed Bush-Tanager, Pale-naped Brush-Finch, Pearled Treerunner, and other four Giant Conebills, all seen very close and at eye-level. What a treat of a flock!

After a nice lunch and a short break, we set off down to the montane forest and visited Guango Lodge in order to look for new hummingbirds species and other birds of that altitudinal range. We had great views of many species of stunning hummingbirds such as Sword-billed, Tourmaline Sunangel, Tyrian Metaltail, White-bellied Woodstar, Chesnut-breasted Coronet, Long-tailed Sylph, Buff-winged Startfrontlet and some Masked Flowerpiercers around the feeders. Some of us got very handy advice from very keen professional photographers who were there showing off their skills.

As the sky became deep grey as threats of rain were obvious, we decided to move on and do some birding along the lodge's main trail, where birds such as Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Pearled Treerunner and Blue-backed Conebill were seen, followed by Spectacled Whitestarts, Black-capped and Black-eared Hemispingus and Plushcap. We quickly checked the River Quijos in search of Torrent Ducks, having seen a beautiful male very active in the river. As the rain turned heavier we drove back to our hotel where the many hot spring pools and a warm supper were waiting for us!

Day 8

Wednesday 18th November

Baeza area – San Isidro – Quito

We started very early today and watched some 'car park' birds such as Black Flowerpiercer, Black-crested Warbler and Plain-colored Seedeaters, before we left Papallacta behind and took the main road down towards Baeza. The day was overcast during the first 20 minutes of our journey. A bird perched on a dead tree by the road made us stop, it was a fantastic Black-collared Jay, a very rare and unusual bird to see, what a surprise! In the same area, a flock of Hooded Mountain Tanager, Northern Mountain Cacique, Beryl Spangle and Blue-and-Black Tanagers, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker and Mountain Velvetbreast – by the bridge – actively feeding on fruits and flowers.

After this enjoyable stop, we continued our drive until we got to the old Borja – Baeza road. Many great birds were seen such as Inca Jay, Chestnut-bellied Seedeater, Yellow-browed Sparrow, Red-breasted Blackbird, Sierran Elaenia, Summer and Blue-grey Tanagers. The lower areas of the road were full of Blackburnian and Canada Warblers, Ruddy Pigeon, Tropical Kingbird, Russet-backed Oropendola, Inca Jay, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Blue-necked and Golden-eared Tanagers, Smooth-billed Ani and Black-billed Thrush. The bridge over the river Quijos and the surrounding forest offered excellent views of a male Torrent Duck, Spotted Sandpiper, Pale-footed Swallow, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Inca Jay, Highland Hepatic Tanager, Golden-faced Tyrannulet, Olivaceous Siskin, Blue-necked, Flame-faced and Saffron-crowned Tanagers, Broad-winged Hawk, a female Rose-breasted Grosbeak, amongst others.

We arrived to San Isidro at noon and went to the hummingbird feeder area where Bronzy Inca, Long-tailed Sylph, Speckled Hummingbird, Chesnut-breasted Coronet, Collared Inca, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Green and Sparkling Violetears, and a Bluish Flowerpiercer together with a beautiful Rufous-crowned Tody-Tyrant were seen.

A Black-billed Peppershrike, Long-tailed Antbird, Summer Tanager, Slate-throated Whitestart, Montane Woodcreeper and Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant were seen from the dinner room as we were just about to have lunch. After a delicious Mexican-style meal, we went to check a different part of the lodge having been surprised by a very-used-to-people male Masked Trogon perched by a rail, looking like an artificial ornament! More Long-tailed Antbirds, Mountain Wrens, a single Azara's Spinetail, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Barred Becard, Common Bush-Tanagers and Rufous-breasted Flycatcher were seen too. We left San Isidro afterwards heading back to the Andes in order to get to Quito where we arrived in the late afternoon. After enjoying a great birding day, and why not, we tasted the very unique and traditional 'paila ice cream' in the village of Cumbaya, what a treat of flavours!

Day 9

Thursday 19th November

Quito – Sacha Lodge

After a leisurely morning (some of us did some birding at the small plaza across the street from the hotel where a northern migrant Yellow Warbler and the local Sparkling Violetear were seen), we drove towards the airport in order to catch our mid-morning flight to Puerto Francisco de Orellana, locally known as 'Coca'. At our arrival, we were transferred to the main house in town to re-pack and have lunch and drinks. We then boarded a motorised dug-out canoe and started to go downstream on the Napo River to Sacha Lodge. The weather was good but quite hot for some, especially having spent the previous days in the highlands. The birding was good down the river and birds such as White-winged and White-banded Swallow, Great White Egret, Swallow-winged Puffbird, Black and Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, Swallow-tailed Kite, Drab Water-Tyrant, Violaceous Jay, and Brown-chested Martin, were seen amongst others.

After two hours on the boat, we arrived at the lodge's warehouse area where we started our walk towards the creek, where birds like Yellow-rumped Cacique, Short-crested, Social and Boat-billed Flycatchers, Black-fronted Nunbird and a group of Squirrel Monkeys were seen. We then jumped in a paddling canoe and headed for the lodge crossing across the lake experiencing the first sounds, smells and views of the jungle. There was constantly moving foliage at the lake edges as many birds were hopping round; Red-capped Cardinals, Violaceous Jay, Great Kiskadees, Tropical Kingbirds, Blue-gray and Palm Tanagers, Yellow-rumped Caciques and Russet-backed Oropendolas, even White-throated Toucans were calling away from a tall palm tree just in front of us! At our arrival at the lodge, we were welcomed with a refreshing cocktail and were all distributed to our cabins. Dinner was superb and we all enjoyed our first night in the jungle!

Day 10

Friday 20th November

Sacha Lodge

With three full days at Sacha Lodge we had time to bird all its best areas. After an early start and breakfast, we hit the trail towards the lodge's main attraction – the 500 ft. (300 m.) long canopy walkway. An elusive Striated Antthrush was seen while we were walking there. We finally arrived at the impressive structure built of metal and supported by three towers, which is sturdy and moves very little. Climbing up the stairs, an Opossum was comfortably asleep beneath the main platform. A Lawrence's Thrush was well spotted and heard making a vast variety of bird mimics in his repertoire, while a Tooth-billed Kite was nicely perched nearby.

We walked through the 'canopy trail' onto platform 2 where we got great views of Crimson-crested Woodpecker, White-throated Toucan, Masked, Palm and Green-and-Gold Tanagers – glimpses of Paradise Tanager in flight – Spangled, Plum-throated and Purple-throated Cotinga, Ivory-billed Aracari, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Crested Oropendola, Cobalt-winged, Dusky-headed and Marron-tailed Parakeets, Gilded Barbet, Black-tailed Tityra, White Hawk, Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, White-tailed Trogon, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, Boat-billed Flycatcher, and Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift, amongst others!! As the sun started to heat up the morning, we decided to do some birding along the trail. A beautiful Musician Wren amazed us with its harmonic song while having stunning views of this unusual wren. A Southern Nightingale (Scale-breasted) Wren was very co-operative by showing himself very well on top of a dead log. We also had stunning views of a pair of roosting Crested Owls and wide-eyed Night Monkeys.

We arrived at the lodge to have a break – some of us had a refreshing dip in the black waters of Pilchicocha Lake taking advantage of the sunny warm day – and after enjoying a delicious lunch, we jumped on the paddling canoes crossing the lake towards the Anaconda creek. A memorable moment was when we had great views of three Hoatzins perched in a line on a branch, what great views of these mysterious birds we had, one was even nesting at the creek entrance! We also had Red-capped Cardinal, Violaceous Jay, Great Kiskadee, Blue-grey Tanager and Pale-vented Pigeon. Along the creek were Long-billed, Plain-brown and Straight-billed Woodcreepers, White-chinned Jacamar, Rufous-bellied Euphonia, White-tailed Trogon, Rufescent Tiger-Heron, and a group of Red Howler Monkeys moving along the nearby branches.

We arrived at the wooden trail and started to walk on it, having a very shy Hauxwell's Thrush on the way. We also had great views of Black-tailed Trogon, Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin, and a family group of Pygmy Marmosets - what a cute little monkeys! After a refreshing cold shower, drinks and nibbles at the bar, we enjoyed another delicious dinner!

Day 11

Saturday 21st November

Sacha Lodge

We started early this morning and got into the canoes to paddle along the river, watching some good birds en route such as Silvered and Warbling Antbirds, Red-capped Cardinal and Ringed Kingfisher. We then took the motorized canoe and went 25 minutes down the River Napo in order to get to the parrot lick. The weather was quite overcast but still great for birding and despite the fact that the parrots did not come down to the bank at the main blind nearest the Napo River, we had perfect views of dozens of Mealy, Yellow-crowned Amazon Parrots. We also saw a pair of Orange-winged Amazon Parrots, plus Blue-headed Parrot, Dusky-headed Parakeet, and other important birds such as Cocoli Heron, Yellow-headed and Black Caracaras and several Ladder-tailed Nightjars roosting at the river banks!

We next moved to the parakeet clay licks where Cobalt-winged Parakeets, Scarlet-shoulder Parrotlets and a few Orange-cheeked Parrots were perfectly seen. On the way to the hide we had great views of Black-faced Antthrush, Grey-fronted Dove, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Straight-billed Hermit, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper and a nice pit-viper of the *Portidium* genera. More birds such as Orange-backed Trupial, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker and glimpses of a very shy pair of Solitary Black Caciques were seen just before a heavy storm came over. Another snake of the *Chironius* genera was also seen swimming rapidly across the black water creek!

After lunch, we took the paddling boat again and drifted it along the Orquidea Creek heading to the wooden canopy tower. Great-billed Hermit, Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher, and Chestnut Woodpecker, were seen at the beginning of the journey. Once at the tower, a nesting Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher welcomed us as we got to the top of the platform, together with other gorgeous birds such as Purple-throated Fruitcrow, Many-banded Aracari, Black-headed Parrot, Bare-necked Fruitcrows, White-lored Euphonia, Opal-rumped Tanager, Crested Oropendola, a nesting White-vented Euphonia – feeding four chicks –Rufous-bellied Euphonia, and Yellow-rumped Cacique, amongst others. A pair of roosting Tawny-bellied Screech-Owls were also seen around the tower. We started our journey back to the lodge watching some Bulldog Fishing Bats gliding over our heads while we were crossing the narrow creek. We arrived at the lodge in the early evening ready for a refreshing shower, drinks and a well deserved and delicious supper!

Day 12

Sunday 22nd November

Sacha Lodge

We had our very last full day at Sacha and decided to try a longer way exploring the rest of the narrow Anaconda Creek where we had lovely views of many birds such as White-bearded Hermit, Masked-Crimson Tanager, Grey-headed and Silver-beak Tanagers, Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher, White-chinned Jacamar, Snail Kite, Silvered and Plumbeous Antbird, Buff-breasted Wren, Long-billed Woodcreeper, Spix's Woodcreeper, Chestnut Woodpecker, Speckled Chachalaca, Buff-throated Woodcreeper, Buff-throated Saltator, and much more. We stopped paddling as we got to the trail where a good flock of birds flew across the dense foliage, where alongside the trail were roosting Crested Owls, Green-and-Gold Tanager, Plain-winged and Mouse-coloured Antshrikes, Ornate, White-flanked and Checker-throated Antwrens, Ocellated Woodcreeper, Red-billed Woodcreeper, Orange-bellied Euphonia, White-fronted Nunbird, Crimson-crested Woodpecker an elusive male Wire-tailed Manakin, and many more birds were seen.

After a delicious lunch, we decided to walk towards the metal tower and spent the last afternoon looking for more birds and even other wildlife. Later we enjoyed a farewell scrumptious barbeque at the lodge's lake deck.

Day 13

Monday 23rd November

Coca - Quito

An early start today to head back to Coca and catch our return flight to Quito. The flight was in time and once in Quito, we headed to our hotel to rest in the afternoon. In the early evening, we went to the Old Town to see its highlights, followed by a special pre-end-of-the-tour dinner!

Day 14

Tuesday 24th November

Yanacocha Reserve – Quito's Airport

This was sadly our very last day together which we were ready to enjoy! We started early and drove to the outskirts of the city where Yanacocha Reserve is located which is important as the last known refuge of the rare and endangered endemic Black-breasted Puffleg. It offers a fantastic birding trail which we walked, enjoying the many hummingbird feeders full of Great Sapphirewing, Golden-breasted and Sapphire-vented Pufflegs, Tyrian Metaltail, the unbelievable Sword-billed Hummingbird and some cheeky Glossy and Masked Flowerpiercers.

Day 15

Wednesday 25th November

Arrival back in the UK

Receive our e-newsletter

Join the Naturetrek e-mailing list and be the first to hear about new tours, additional departures and new dates, tour reports and special offers. Visit www.naturetrek.co.uk to sign up.

Naturetrek Facebook

We are delighted to launch the Naturetrek Facebook page so that participants of Naturetrek tours can remain in touch after the holiday and share photos, comments and future travel plans.

Setting up a personal profile at www.facebook.com is quick, free and easy. The [Naturetrek Facebook page](#) is now live; do please pay us a visit!