

## COLOMBIA ADVENTURE

### SIERRA NEVADA DE SANTA MARTA AND CARIBBEAN SPECIALTIES TOUR

March 22-30, 2015

Maximum participants: 10

The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, a unique massif separated from the Andes Mountains, rises 19,000 feet in elevation from the nearby Caribbean coastline. This rapid change in topography hosts the highest concentration of continental range-restricted bird species found anywhere in the world. Its isolation from other mountain regions has allowed the plant communities to evolve separately and as a result, endemism is very high, with about 30 species of birds occurring only there.

#### Day 1: Arrival into Barranquilla

After our afternoon arrival, we will go to our lodgings. We will have the evening to get to know each other and prepare for our early morning departure eastward.

#### Day 2: Barranquilla - Salamanca - Riohacha

In the morning we'll head out to Ciénaga Grande in Salamanca. The Ciénaga Grande (Great Marsh) and Isla Salamanca National Parks lie along the Caribbean coast between Barranquilla and Santa Marta. This marshland is formed by the delta created as the Magdalena River enters the Atlantic. Once there we will bird along the boardwalk among the mangrove stands and dry scrub. We will also bird along the main coast road, stopping at intervals to scan the pools, etc. We will look for Chestnut-winged Chachalacas as they stand in full view on cacti. We will also look for Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, American Pygmy Kingfisher, Bronze-brown Cowbird (endemic), Red-rumped Woodpecker, Northern Scrub Flycatcher, Wood Stork and Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird (endemic). Along the Ciénaga in the various pools, we'll look for White-cheeked Pintail and Large-billed Tern as well as countless shorebirds. We will continue on into dryer ecosystems to the northeast until we arrive at Riohacha. Of course, birding along the way.

#### Day 3: Parque Los Flamencos

We will rise early and head out towards Los Flamencos National Park located on the Caribbean coast, in dry tropical forest area to the west of the peninsula of La Guajira. Among the scrub, we'll look for Orinoco Saltator, Caribbean Hornero, Bare-eyed Pigeon, Green-rumped Parrotlet, Scaled Dove and Brown-throated



White-tipped Quetzal



Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture

Parakeet. Within cactus-rich scrub we'll look for Chestnut Piculet, White-fringed Antwren, Tocuyo Sparrow, Black-crested Antshrike, Vermilion Cardinal, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Buffy Hummingbird, Red-billed Emerald, Pileated Finch, Crested Bobwhite and Red-crowned Woodpecker. In seasonally flooded plains and lagoons we'll look for Roseate Spoonbill, Greater Flamingo and Scarlet & White Ibis, as well as for terns, cormorants, herons and egrets. After a good lunch at the beach, we will head out towards the gates of the Parque Tayrona. We will lodge at Rio de Piedra where our comfortable and unique lodgings await.



Greater Flamingo

#### Day 4: Parque Tayrona

We will rise early and make our way to the Parque Tayrona. Within the Park, we will walk along trails and look for Lance-tailed and White-bearded Manakins, Jet and White-bellied Antbirds, White-fringed Antwren, King Vulture, Crested Guan, Military Macaw, Rufous-capped Warbler, Scrub Greenlet, Long-billed Gnatwren, Little Tinamou, Zone-tailed, Grey and Short-tailed Hawk, Whooping Motmot, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, One-coloured Becard, Blue Dacnis, and during the season, a selection of North American migrants. We will also look for Red-billed Emerald, Pale-bellied Hermit and Orange-crowned Oriole. With much luck we may even see Blue-billed Currawong. After a full day of birding and taking in the exceptional views and beaches we will begin our trip towards Minca, at the base of the mighty Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.



Santa Marta Parakeet

#### Day 5 and 6: Minca - El Dorado - Cuchilla de San Lorenzo

We'll rise early and begin birding along the Minca road towards the Lodge. At the lower elevations we'll look for Rufous-capped Warbler and Swallow Tanager as well as Coppery Emerald, Black-&-white Owl, Royal Flycatcher, Golden-winged Sparrow and of course the Rosy Thrush-Tanager. We'll stop frequently as we climb towards our lodgings at "El Dorado" where we will spend the night. Species to look for include Yellow-legged and Black-hooded Thrush. On day 4, we will rise early and bird all the way up to the top of the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo to search for Santa Marta Seedeater, Santa Marta Warbler, Andean Condor, Rufous Antpitta, and White-tipped Swift. The first endemics can be seen above 1200m.a.s.l. At this altitude we'll look for Santa Marta Brush-finch and White-lored Warbler and Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Parakeet, Santa Marta Mountain-tanager, White-tailed Starfrontlet, Santa Marta Bush-tyrant, Santa Marta Antpitta, Golden-crowned Whitestart, Red-billed Parrot, Band-tailed Guan, and Barred Forest-falcon. We will lodge at "El Dorado".



Santa Marta Brush Finch



Golden-winged Sparrow



### Day 7: El Dorado-Minca

Today, we will bird around the lodge at leisure and get those elusive pictures. We will continue birding as we descend toward Minca to look for target species we may have missed and lodge at Minca for the night.

### Day 8: Minca-Barranquilla

Today we will wake up at leisure and bird in and around Minca. We will visit Faunal Reserve where hummingbird feeders and Feeders attract more than 20 species and will give us amazing opportunities for fantastic photos. After a leisure lunch, we will make our way back to Barranquilla birding at leisure along the highway.

### Day 9 Departure home or to other destinations

Fly off to Miami or other destinations in Colombia if desired (approximate flight time is 11:00 am).

Extension Tours available include: Eastern Cordillera and Eastern Plains (6 days), Western Andes and Pacific Lowlands (4 days), Pacific Lowlands Bahia Solano (4 days), and Western and Central Andes (8 days). If you are interested in joining these, please contact Ernest Leupin (954.415.1852) or Jim Eager (423.593.0059) for more details.

### TOUR INCLUDES

- Terrestrial Transportation
- All Meals (Dinner Day 1-Breakfast Day 9)
- Drinks and Snacks
- All accommodations
- All Guides
- Gratuities and entry fees
- Photo CD with highlights of the trip

TO REGISTER AND TO LEARN MORE ABOUT PAYMENT OPTIONS PLEASE CONTACT ERNEST (954.415.1852; [eleupin@colombiawild.com](mailto:eleupin@colombiawild.com)), PADDY CUNNINGHAM ([birdpaddy@yahoo.com](mailto:birdpaddy@yahoo.com)) OR JIM EAGER (423.593.0059; [beachbirder@bellsouth.net](mailto:beachbirder@bellsouth.net)).

### WHAT TO EXPECT AND WHAT TO BRING

Once you arrive in Colombia you will find out that Colombians are extremely friendly and hospitable people, and will go to great lengths to make you feel at home. While Colombia is known for its progressive and modern cities, our tour takes us to remote areas where the way of life is still tranquil and serene. In Northern Colombia, people are very relaxed and the fast pace typical of large cities is absent. Here we hope that you can relax and enjoy this unique lifestyle.

In general, we will leave early and stay out all day to maximize our birding efforts. This is however completely up to you. On some days if you feel you want to remain behind and bird near our lodgings, you are welcome to do so. We will make sure someone will be there to attend to you.

## OTHER IMPORTANT INFORMATION

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** We require you purchase trip medical insurance and strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. We will require you sign a waiver stating that you have procured a medical evacuation/repatriation policy. We recommend the use of Travelex Insurance. For more information and to purchase insurance visit [www.travelexinsurance.com](http://www.travelexinsurance.com) use location #09-0491. For policy questions, please call their call centre at 1.800.228.9792.

**BAGGAGE LIMITS:** All tour participants are asked to limit their baggage to a single bag of no more than forty pounds and a single carry on item such as a small backpack. Please pack in duffels if possible as these will fit better in our transports and will be more useful in the lodge where we stay. In general, this is a leisurely trip and amenities at the lodge where we stay vary. When packing, we urge you to give some thought to traveling lighter rather than heavier. We also recommend that you bring a few plastic bags large enough to protect your clothing and/or luggage in case of rain.

**LAUNDRY:** Laundry services will be limited to a few areas. We recommend that you bring sufficient clothes to see you through day 4 of the trip. If you can, bring items that can be washed easily and will dry quickly. Laundry service will be available at the Rio de Piedra at an additional cost.

**CLIMATE:** Weather conditions can be somewhat variable; however, expect hot, humid and dry days and heavy rains. Participants should dress with layers for changing conditions.

**CLOTHING:** We suggest loose-fitting clothing or other cotton clothing. Do not bring any military camouflage as it conveys an inappropriate image to police and military personnel, whom we are likely to encounter at highway checkpoints. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are recommended to protect against insects and the sun. A long, waterproof poncho (ponchos are better than rain jackets for protecting optical equipment) or rain jacket is a must for higher elevation areas. For sun protection, bring a broad brimmed hat and good sunscreen. Footwear should include comfortable trekking shoes, and sandals. Rubber boots are not required but can come in handy.

**SECURITY:** The Colombian countryside in all the areas that we visit is now quite safe and you will find that Colombians everywhere are friendly and helpful. Big cities, however suffer the same problems as large cities anywhere, and all persons should take precautions to safeguard personal belongings such as money, passports and optical equipment. We recommend using money belts or security pouches worn inside your clothing.