

Colombia - The Magdalena Valley and Eastern Andes

Naturetrek Tour Itinerary

Outline itinerary

Day 1	Fly Bogota
Day 2	Bucaramanga
Day 3/4	Cerulean Warbler Reserve
Day 5/6	Rio Claro
Day 7/8	Ibague
Day 9	Drive to Bogota
Day 10	Chingaza National Park
Day 11/12	Depart Bogota / Arrive London

Departs

January, February and March

Focus

Birds

Grading

A. Day walks only

Dates and Prices

See website (tour code COL04)



Citron-throated Toucan



Beautiful Woodpecker



Recurve-billed Bushbird



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Introduction

Following in the footsteps of our successful Multicoloured Tanager and Santa Marta Endemics tours, this birding holiday explores Colombia's endemic-rich eastern Andes and Magdalena Valley, with its many showy and rare delights. After visiting a cloud forest reserve near Bogota which holds the incredible near-endemic Golden-bellied Starfrontlet, we spend a week or so in the valley, sampling the ever-changing birdlife along the route.

Among the sites we visit are the Rio Claro Nature Reserve and the Cerulean Warbler Reserve (a major wintering ground for this rare northern warbler). We will search for many specialities, such as Tolima Blossomcrown, White-mantled Barbet, Beautiful Woodpecker, the recently rediscovered Recurve-billed Bushbird (an antbird), Niceforo's Wren, Turquoise Dacnis, and a host of dazzling and range-restricted hummingbirds and manakins. Dozens of rare and restricted species are likely to be seen – our 2020 February tour recorded just about every key target (plus a few others besides!) and finished with a list of over 400 species on the main tour alone!

Colombia, with over 1,900 recorded species at the last count, including around 80 endemics, is the undisputed number one country on the planet for bird diversity. Unfortunately, for most of the 90's and 'noughties', civil unrest had made visiting remote areas within the country inadvisable. Whilst ecotourism flourished in neighbouring Panama, Ecuador, Venezuela, Brazil and Peru, Colombia remained in the doldrums, waiting patiently for the chance to reveal its wonderful landscapes, birds and people to the world once more. Happily, Colombia has changed dramatically in the past few years and birders worldwide are now flocking to this beautiful country in search of its many avian jewels.

Colombia's topography is both diverse and breath-taking, with snow-capped mountains, cloud-filled valleys, savannas and rainforests providing habitat for a magnificent birdlife ranging from tiny hummingbirds to Andean Condors. This tour concentrates on endemics as well as the trademark hummingbirds, antpittas and tanagers which are always a feature of birding tours in the subtropical Andes.

Itinerary

Please note that the itinerary below offers our planned programme of excursions. However, adverse weather & 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.

Day 1

Fly to Bogota

We leave London Heathrow this evening on a direct overnight scheduled flight to the Colombian capital Bogota.

Day 2

Bucaramanga

Our flight arrives early this morning, and having cleared customs we will connect on to Bucaramanga, which lies north of Bogota in Colombia's eastern Andes. Upon arrival we plan to enjoy some light birding in a nearby reserve which boasts a bird list approaching 300 species, including Colombian Chachalaca, Marbled Wood Quail, Scaled Pigeon, both Rufous and Long-billed Hermits, Green Thorntail, Blue-chested Hummingbird, Black-hawk Eagle, Collared Aracari, Channel-billed (Citron-throated) Toucan, Beautiful Woodpecker, Spectacled Parrotlet, Bar-crested Antshrike, Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, Double-banded Greytail, both White-bearded and Striolated Manakins, and Ochre-bellied Flycatcher, to name only a few! Rufous-crested Coquette has also been recorded here but we will need considerable luck for this cracking little hummingbird.

Having no doubt got the tour off to a flying and bird-filled start, we shall continue to our hotel in San Vicente de Chucurí, well situated to go in search of more tantalising and range-restricted Magdalena Valley species tomorrow!

Day 3

Cerulean Warbler Reserve

Our day will start a little outside the city, where we will explore a secret location which holds several special species. Perhaps the most sought-after comes in the bizarre (bill) form of the rare Recurve-billed Bushbird, a critically endangered species with an estimated population of less than 1,000. It was only recently rediscovered in Colombia and Venezuela after a 40-year period in which no sightings were recorded. It favours patches of secondary growth forest and bamboo, and while searching for this rarity we might also come across other goodies such as the striking Yellow-browed Shrike-vireo, the tiny Green Thorntail (hummingbird), Alder Flycatcher, Cinereous Becard, Large-billed Seed Finch and the dazzling Speckled Tanager.

Our next stop is the superb Cerulean Warbler Reserve and we will arrive this afternoon, allowing time to get accustomed with a new and dazzling suite of birds. Of particular interest are three new potential endemics which we hope to add to our tour tally. The first, the striking Turquoise Dacnis, should be relatively straightforward, as it often feeds in a stand of cecropia trees adjacent to the lodge. The second, the skulking and critically endangered Niceforo's Wren, should hopefully yield good views with patient efforts, while the last, Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, will require a generous slice of luck. We will also no doubt encounter the endemic Indigo-capped Hummingbird, which should already be on our list, although this location will offer extended views around the lodge hummingbird feeders, offering great opportunities for any keen photographers in the group.

We have an early start tomorrow, so, having enjoyed some relaxed birding around the lodge gardens, we'll aim to enjoy an early dinner followed by a restful night's sleep.

Day 4

Cerulean Warbler Reserve

The Cerulean Warbler Reserve is a buffer to the much larger and generally inaccessible Yarikues National Park. However, this morning we can explore a section of this little visited and exciting national park! We'll be up before first light making our way steadily along a trail which ascends through local pastures above the lodge. The walk should take around 30-40 minutes, although for those that wish gentle horses (with accompanying horseman) can be hired. Avian gems up here include Gorgeted Wood-quail, Black Inca and Parker's Antbird. Of these three endemic species, the wood-quail will certainly prove the toughest. While we might well hear it (it's most vocal in the early mornings), our best shot of laying eyes on one is to catch a glimpse at a feeding spot tucked away in the dense forest. Here, too, we can find retiring Lined Quail-doves making the most of a free feed, and several hummingbirds buzzing around a few sugar-water feeders as well. These might include Green Hermit, Green-crowned Brilliant, Speckled Hummingbird, Booted Racket-tail and Long-tailed Sylph, to name but a few. However, the star of the show will undoubtedly be the elegant and endemic Black Inca – another special Colombian endemic hummingbird restricted to the eastern Andes!

We shall also try to eke out a couple of antpittas along the trail – with White-bellied and Ochre-breasted the most likely varieties to be encountered. Other potential star birds that might make an appearance today include Crested Quetzal, White-winged Tanager, Ashy-throated Bush Tanager, Spotted Barbtail, Brown-billed Scythebill and Olive-backed Woodcreeper, to name only a few.

This afternoon we'll enjoy further relaxed birding close to the lodge. The shade-grown coffee plantations are often packed with boreal migrants which might include Cerulean Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Summer Tanager, Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, and residents such as Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Red-billed Scythebill, Plain Xenops, Orange-billed Nightingale-thrush, Slaty Spinetail and Bar-crested Antshrike.

Day 5

Rio Claro

Our final morning at the Cerulean Warbler Reserve will be spent gently birding close to the lodge, paying particular attention to any key species that we might have missed up to this point. There should also be time to relax around the fruit and hummingbird feeders before we have to leave. As we descend, we'll stop at some promising sites along the way for the difficult Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird, if we're still missing this tough little hummer. Indeed, as we slowly descend conditions will warm up and we might be able to register some other hummers such as Ruby-topaz and Violet-bellied Hummingbirds.

Having enjoyed the morning's birding, we shall make our way west to the wonderful Rio Claro Reserve. There should be time to enjoy some further birding this afternoon at some nearby wetland habitat, where we'll hope for such species as Northern Screamer, Black-necked Stilt, Wattled Jacana, Lesser Yellowlegs, Solitary Sandpiper, Black Skimmer, Large-billed Tern and Striated Heron. Fringing scrub forest might hold both Striped and Dwarf Cuckoo, Straight-billed Woodcreeper and Pale-legged Hornero. Having birded an excellent range of habitats today, we'll continue to our hotel. At around 600 metres above sea level the conditions here are hot and humid, and our hotel's pool will no doubt appeal, whilst our air-conditioned rooms will ensure a pleasant and restful night.

Day 6

Rio Claro

The Rio Claro Reserve is surely one of Colombia's most beautiful natural settings. Here the Rio Claro (clear river) has cut through limestone bedrock to create a stunning natural canyon, surrounded by a precious tract of low-lying humid tropical forest – one of the few remaining in the mid-Magdalena Valley. So long as there has not been recent rain, we can expect the river to be crystal-clear, and a dip in the cool gently flowing waters offers the perfect antidote to a session of hot and humid birding! However, before that we have a full day of birding to look forward to, continuing our search for several special Magdalena endemic species, including White-mantled Barbet, Beautiful Woodpecker, Sooty Ant-tanager and Antioquia Bristle-tyrant – the latter described as recently as 1988.

As we slowly bird the reserve's gentle trails, we should also encounter the likes of Citron-throated Toucan, Collared Aracari, White-tailed and Gartered Trogons, Spot-breasted and Cinnamon Woodpeckers, White-whiskered Puffbird, Dusky-faced and Plain-coloured Tanagers, Cinnamon and One-coloured Becards, Checker-throated Antwren and Olivaceous Flatbill. The reserve is also home to a number of sought-after but far more elusive and rare species such as Saffron-headed Parrot, Gray-cheeked Nunlet, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet and Blue Cotinga: a sighting of even one of these hard-to-see birds would represent a very good return indeed. Other exciting attractions here are five resident species of manakin, including White-bearded, Golden-headed and Striolated varieties. Further special birds of the reserve include Fasciated Tiger-heron, Yellow-browed Shrike-vireo, Chestnut-backed, Magdalena (split from Dull-mantled) and Bicoloured Antbirds and an exciting selection of raptors such as Laughing Falcon, Bat Falcon, Double-toothed Kite, Collared Forest-falcon and Black Hawk-eagle! In addition to these avian delights, we will be hoping to come across a family group of the endemic Silvery-brown Bare-face Tamarin that are commonly encountered here, while a chance encounter with a Neotropical Otter or Jaguarundi is not out of the question either.

As darkness falls we shall make our way to the entrance of an Oilbird cave and watch as these weird birds head out for a night of foraging in the forest. Making our way back to the bus we'll listen out for a couple of species of owls, including the striking Crested Owl, as well as Choco Screech Owl.

Day 7

Ibague

We will make a very early start this morning, arriving at the little-visited reserve close to the town of Victoria. Here we will have another chance at several key regional endemics, including stunners such as White-mantled Barbet, Beautiful Woodpecker and Sooty Ant-tanager. Other species that might make an appearance include both Cocoa and Streak-headed Woodcreepers, Ochre-bellied Flycatcher and perhaps even the shy Tody Motmot. The reserve also holds several species of manakin, including White-bibbed, Striolated (Streaked), Golden-headed and White-bearded! On previous visits we've also recorded the likes of King Vulture, Rufous Motmot, Blue-chested Hummingbird and Black-crowned Antshrike.

As we make our way southwards along the Magdalena Valley we will enjoy birding in dry forest habitat where we'll have a chance for the tricky Velvet-fronted Euphonia, as well as other nice species including Spectacled Parrotlet, Russet-throated Puffbird, both Purple and Green Honeycreepers, Black-faced Dacnis, Scrub Tanager, Great-crested Flycatcher, Barred Antshrike and Southern-fringed Antwren. In

more open country we'll check for Crested Bobwhite, Red-breasted Blackbird, Grassland Sparrow and a variety of seedeaters including Grey, Yellow-bellied and Ruddy-breasted varieties, and scan for any raptors.

Day 8

Ibague

Freshly brewed Colombian coffee and hot chocolate will help with our early morning start and from our lodge we'll transfer for a matter of minutes before making our way on foot. Our gentle 45-minute walk will take us slowly up into the beautiful Combeima Canyon, birding as we go, before reaching a small guest house after about thirty minutes. Here we'll spend the entire morning, enjoying an al fresco breakfast and soaking up the abundant birdlife of the area. Our first target for the morning will be the endemic Tolima Dove – a very timid species which is extremely difficult to observe throughout its highly restricted range, but is relatively reliable here. Other nice birds we'll be on the lookout for include Streak-throated Bush Tyrant, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, both Yellow-backed and Orange-crowned Orioles, Rusty Flowerpiercer and Black-winged Saltator. As we gently bird we'll make sure to keep alert for the distinctive call of Yellow-headed Brushfinch, another of our endemic targets for the day. They are fairly abundant here, so we should hopefully get excellent views.

Another key target for the day is Tolima Blossomcrown, a special hummingbird of this rich Andean habitat. We know of several haunts which we'll stake out in the hope of good views. Other hummingbirds we'll expect to encounter around the lodge's feeders including Green Hermit, White-necked Jacobin, Red-billed Emerald, Crowned Woodnymph, White-vented Plumeleteer, Buff-tailed Coronet, Bronzy Inca, and the endemic Indigo-capped Hummingbird. All the while we will keep a lookout above us for raptors, such as White-rumped and Broad-winged Hawks.

Lunch will be taken at the guesthouse, and having recharged our batteries we'll make our way by minibus to a superbly scenic cloud-forest location, with spectacular views of the snow-capped Nevado de Tolima volcano. Possible species include both Smoky-brown and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, Montane Woodcreeper, Streaked Xenops, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Black-billed Peppershrike, Whiskered Wren, and a fine selection of both migrant and resident warblers. A dazzling array of tanagers will also be on show and might include the likes of Golden, Saffron-crowned, Bay-headed, Golden-naped, Metallic-green, Beryl-spangled, Blue-and-black and Black-capped varieties! Having no doubt enjoyed a fine selection of avian delights we'll make our way back to the lodge for a restful night.

Day 9

Drive to Bogota

We have a final morning in the area for any missing targets. Later we will start to make our way towards Bogota, descending once again into the broad Magdalena Valley as we go. As we descend, the climatic conditions change, becoming considerably hotter and drier, and ensuring the avian diversity changes as well. Species we'll be hoping for this afternoon include Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Barred Puffbird, Orange-chinned Parakeet, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Barred Antshrike, Pale-eyed Pygmy Tyrant, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Boat-billed Flycatcher and the endemic Velvet-fronted Euphonia. A few raptors are also

possible throughout the day, including Black Hawk-eagle and both Roadside and White-tailed hawks.

Having crossed the Magdalena, we start to ascend the western slope of the Eastern Andes towards Bogota. We shall spend the night in a comfortable hotel in Bogota.

Day 10

Chingaza National Park

The spectacular high altitude Chingaza National Park lies a short distance to the east of the bustling capital and we shall enjoy a full day excursion to this beautiful site, which protects paramo, sub-paramo and elfin forest habitats, and harbours a number of country endemic and near-endemic bird species. Rufous-browed Conebill and Silvery-throated Spinetail will be high priorities, and should make an appearance, whilst the beautiful Golden-fronted Whitestart, here in its white-faced form, often betrays its location with repeated contact calls. Here too, (Northern) Tawny Antpitta can be surprisingly conspicuous, unlike Rufous Antpitta, which is far more furtive. The reserve is also home to Spectacled Bear, Puma and Margay, although considerable luck will be required to see any of these secretive creatures. Chingaza is a site that is all about quality over quantity, but birding in such stunning high-altitude Andean scenery is a real treat - especially when the weather behaves itself.

Following an enjoyable morning's birding, we'll retire for a delicious late lunch before rounding the day off with time spent in an active hummingbird garden which attracts such sought-after species as Sword-billed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Starfrontlet, both Coppery-bellied and Glowing Pufflegs, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, and both Black-tailed and Green-tailed Trainbearers. Later, we will transfer back to our comfortable hotel in Bogota.

Day 11

La Florida & Depart to London

Our final day in Colombia will be put to excellent use! Just a few kilometres north from the international airport lies Parque La Florida, a small municipal park in the Sabana de Bogotá, a broad, flat and high elevation inter-andean tableland lying at 8,600 feet. The park contains a variety of habitats with the two key attractions being the Colombian endemics: Bogotá Rail. The marshy areas also hold Spot-flanked Gallinule, Pied-billed Grebe, Sora (northern winter) and American Coot. Varying numbers of waterfowl can also be present including Blue-winged Teal and Andean Duck (a resident Andean subspecies with all black head). Other common species in the park include the near-endemic Rufous-browed Conebill, Grassland Yellow-Finch, Sparkling Violetear, Brown-bellied Swallow, Great Thrush, Black Flowerpiercer, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, Eastern Meadowlark, and the ubiquitous Rufous-collared Sparrow. Subtropical Doraditos live in the tall sedges, but can be difficult to see. Finally we'll look for Yellow-backed Oriole and the endemic Silvery-throated Spinetail which can usually be found in brushy areas or in tall eucalyptus trees.

Having enjoyed our morning's birding, we'll transfer to another reserve just outside of Bogota called Chicaque. Here we will enjoy a relaxed lunch, and then be on the lookout for exciting species including Moustached Brushfinch, Andean Siskin, Black-crested Warbler, Andean Guan and a host of colourful

tanagers. However, our main target is the near-endemic Golden-bellied Starfrontlet, a stunning hummingbird with the potential to become a full Colombian endemic following a likely future split!

Finally, we transfer directly to the airport where we'll check in for our direct flight to London Heathrow, no doubt with many wonderful memories of the special birds, friendly people and spectacular landscapes of Colombia's Magdalena Valley and eastern Andes!

Day 12

Arrival London

Our flight arrives London Heathrow at around lunchtime today.

Optional extensions

We are offering both pre- and post-tour extensions. The pre-tour extension offers a couple of extra days of birding close to Bogota, going in search of a few additional range-restricted Colombian endemics including such sought-after species as Green-bearded Helmetcrest, Brown-breasted (Flame-winged) Parakeet and Apolinar's Wren. The longer one-week post-tour extension offers the chance to visit another of Colombia's most exciting birding destinations - Mitu. Put simply, Mitu is an avian treasure chest, and over the course of a week we expect to add on a couple hundred additional new species to the main tour list! Highlights of a private Naturetrek Tailormade tour there in 2020 included Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Red-fan Parrot, Tawny-crested Toucanet, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Spangled Cotinga, Paradise Tanager, Chestnut-crested Antbird and Crested Eagle to name only a few! Keep reading for further details.

Pre-tour extension – Green-bearded Helmetcrest

Day -1

We leave London Heathrow this evening on a direct overnight scheduled flight to the Colombian capital Bogota.

Day 0

The flight is scheduled to arrive in Bogota in the early hours of the morning, and we shall waste no time, immediately transferring out to a super cloud forest site just outside the city. Here we'll start our search for a very special and highly range-restricted endemic – the striking Brown-breasted (Flame-winged) Parakeet. A host of other fine species are also possible today including Andean Pygmy Owl, White-rumped Hawk, Black-billed Mountain Toucan, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, White-banded Tyrannulet, Northern Mountain Cacique, Hooded Mountain Tanager and Grey-hooded Bush Tanager, to name only a few!

It's sure to be a wonderful introduction to birding in Colombia's eastern Andes, and we will no doubt return to Bogota later this afternoon with several mouth-watering species in the bag!

Day 1

A very early start is required this morning in order to beat Bogota's notoriously bad traffic. However, we'll soon be making our way to a nearby location that couldn't be further from the hustle and bustle of the capital. Sumapaz National Park protects an ecologically valuable tract of elfin, sub-paramo and paramo habitat and is a superb site for several range-restricted and endemic species. Perhaps top of our target list today is the striking and endemic Green-bearded Helmetcrest – the close cousin of Buffy Helmetcrest which has been marveled at by many Naturetrek clients on our 'Multicoloured Tanager' tour. However, the Green-bearded variety is a little harder to find and will take some searching out, but with perseverance we should enjoy cracking views of what is surely one of the finest looking hummingbirds on the planet! However, the helmetcrest is only one of several other special species and we'll also target a further two Colombia endemics in the form of Apolinar's Wren and Bogota Rail, as well as a host of range-restricted species including Rufous-browed Conebill, Bronze-tailed Thornbill, Pale-bellied Tapaculo and the northern race of Tawny Antpitta.

Having spent a wonderful day in the rarified air and stunning natural scenery of Sumapaz, we'll look to make our way back to Bogota for a restful night – we'll be up again early tomorrow for the start of the main tour.

Post-tour extension – Mitu's White-sand forest specialties!

Thanks to a superb mosaic of habitats, including terra firma, varzea and white-sand forests, Mitu is an ornithological treasure chest. Consequently, several nights are required to do this incredible destination justice, and so we're delighted to propose the following one-week extension to the main tour. Highlights will be plentiful, with many much-sought-after species possible, including the likes of Guianan Cock-of-the-rock, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Pavonine Quetzal, Orinoco Piculet, Chestnut-crested Antbird, Fiery Topaz, Tawny-tufted Toucanet, Citron-bellied Atilla, Yellow-crowned Manakin, Plum-throated, Spangled and Pompadour cotingas, both Paradise and Opal-rumped tanagers, Azure-naped Jay, Red-fan Parrot and perhaps even a Crested or Harpy eagle! Suffices to say that the birding around Mitu is world-class and we're very much looking forward to hearing of other surprise species that might well turn up as our tours start venturing to this little explored location that will surely be a staple of Amazonian birding in the years to come.

During our time in Mitu, we shall stay 4-nights in a simple but clean hotel (the best in town, with air-conditioned rooms), which will be our birding base. Trails are plentiful and start close by, fanning out for miles into the surrounding forests. A day's birding typically starts very early (as on the main tour, pre-dawn starts are the norm), heading out to the start of one of the gentle trails, and making the most of the relatively cooler early mornings, before returning to the hotel for lunch. There will be plenty of time to relax during the hottest part of the day, before getting back out for further afternoon birding.

At the end of our time in Mitu we shall take a short flight to Villavicencio – a city that sits on the transition between Andes and the eastern Llanos plains. Here we shall enjoy an exciting day's birding in search of several elusive eastern Andean specialties including the rare and recently discovered Cundinamarca Antpitta and the beautiful Brown-bellied (Flame-winged) Parakeet.

Day 10

Following the final birding excursion of the main group tour in Chingaza National Park, we transfer to a city hotel in Bogota. This evening, over dinner, your tour leader will give a briefing on the exciting birding that we have in prospect over the coming days.

Day 11

Following a relaxed breakfast, we shall take a flight to Mitu, crossing Colombia's eastern Llanos plains and then expansive Amazonian forest. Upon arrival we transfer to our hotel to drop our bags off and enjoy a quick lunch. We shall head out for our first birding session this afternoon on a nearby trail. Our first species might include Gilded Barbet, Orange-cheeked Parrot, Paradise Jacamar, Cream-coloured Woodpecker, Spot-throated Woodcreeper, both Black-throated and Dusky Antbirds and Spotted Puffbird. This area is also a very promising spot for Amazonian Umbrellabird, Pavonine Quetzal, Red-fan Parrot and many more! Later we shall make our way back to our hotel which will be our base for the duration of our time in and around Mitu.

Days 12 - 14

We have 3 full days to bird the extensive trail systems around Mitu. More special birds that we'll be targeting over the coming days include (deep breath!) Scarlet and Blue-and-yellow macaws, Festive Parrot, Maroon-tailed Parakeet, Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet, Brown-banded and Chestnut-capped puffbirds, Streak-throated Hermit, Black-bellied Thorntail, Grey-breasted Sabrewing, Blue-crowned Trogon, Point-tailed Palmcreeper, both Bar-bellied and Lineated woodcreepers, Golden-green Woodpecker, both Blackish and Ladder-tailed nightjar, Stipple-throated, Cherrie's, Yellow-throated and Spot-backed Antwrens, White-plumbed, Bicoloured, Grey-bellied and Chestnut-crested antbirds, Imeri Warbling-antbird, Thrush-like Antpitta, Lemon-chested and Brown-headed greenlets, Green-and-gold and Masked tanagers, both Great and Yellow-bellied jacamar, Blue-crowned Manakin, Saffron-crested Tyrant-manakin and Lemon-throated Barbet.

Day 15

We have a final morning's birding to try for any key species that might have alluded us over the past days around Mitu. Later we transfer to the airport for a short flight to Villavicencio where we shall stay in a comfortable city hotel just a short transfer from the airport.

Day 16

Our final day in Colombia shall be put to excellent use. We shall depart our hotel early, birding in beautiful cool montane forest site. Several endemics including Cundinamarca Antpitta and Brown-breasted (Flame-winged) Parakeet will be high on our list of targets, as will other mouth-watering species such as the range-restricted Green-bellied Hummingbird, Ochre-breasted Brush-finch and Crested Spinetail – all with restricted eastern Andean distributions. Later we will enjoy a delicious late lunch, perhaps birding one or two other spots as transfer back to Bogota for our onward late evening flight back to the UK.

Day 17

Arrive London Heathrow at around lunchtime.

Tour Grading

Grade A - This holiday is a dedicated birding tour, suiting those with an adventurous spirit and a willingness to get up early and off the beaten track. Several nights are spent in the mid/lower reaches of the Magdalena Valley, where conditions are generally warm and humid. The scenic Cerulean Warbler Reserve sits at a higher elevation, so cooler conditions are to be expected, although daytime temperatures are normally still pleasantly warm. Around Bogota (including the pre-tour extension days) it's a little cooler still, and on our excursion to Chingaza National Park we will require an additional layer or two. For those taking the Mitu post-tour extension, very hot and humid conditions can be expected, with much of our birding in and around forested habitat. During the main tour, as well as both the extensions, most walking is relatively easy and downhill as much as possible with the exception of Ibagué – a gentle, uphill 20–30-minute walk with beautiful scenery that leads to some super birding. This walk outstanding, in general our birding will be along roadsides/on jeep tracks. Most mornings we will be up well before dawn for early breakfasts (or coffee/tea and snacks to be followed by packed breakfasts later).

Food & accommodation included in the price

All accommodation and meals are included, as well as bottled/filtered water. All rooms throughout are comfortable and en-suite, although as above, please note that no single accommodation is available at the Cerulean Reserve where there are only 5 guest rooms.

Extra expenses

Please note that we do not include the following in the cost of this holiday: all items of a more personal nature such as alcoholic drinks, laundry and souvenirs.

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.

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