

Ecuador's Mammals

Naturetrek Tour Report

7th – 21st January 2026



Brown-headed Spider Monkey



Spectacled Bear



Andean Cock-of-the-rock



Giant Otter

Tour report by Javier Arias



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Tour participants: Javier Arias (leader) with three Naturetrek clients

Day 1

Wednesday 7th January

The arriving clients met up at Mariscal Sucre Quito airport and drove to the Mercure Hotel, where we met up with those who had arrived a day early. We had dinner and were given a briefing about the next day.

Day 2

Thursday 8th January

We started early in the morning and visited the Yanacocha Reserve (Zuroloma) at approximately 3400m, where we walked around the property. We saw an Andean Rabbit and many birds, like the Ecuadorian endemic Black-breasted Puffleg, Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager, Shining Sunbeam, Mountain Velvetbreast, Equatorial Antpitta, Tyrian Metaltail and others. We continued our expedition along the Ecoruta and arrived at Guaycapy for lunch; we watched ten hummingbird species and other species, such as Red-headed Barbet. After lunch, we went to Sachatamia, where we had dinner and did the checklist for the day. We continued to the Punto Ornitologico, to see a Western Lowland Olingo.

Day 3

Friday 9th January

Early in the morning, after breakfast, we drove for ninety minutes to the Amagusa Reserve, at approximately 2000m. We enjoyed the banana feeders, the hummingbird spot and the hide, where we saw Tayra, Western Dwarf Squirrel and many birds (approximately seventy-five species!) including Moss-backed Tanager, Empress Brilliant, Glistening-green and Rufous-throated Tanagers, Rose-faced Parrot, Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Velvet-purple Coronet and others. We returned to the lodge for lunch and rested, as tonight we would be going to Bellavista to look for Olinguito and Kinkajou: we succeeded!

Day 4

Saturday 10th January

We had an early breakfast and drove to the Reserva Primera de Mayo, where we saw a Long-wattled Umbrellabird and walked in the reserve looking for mammals. We returned to Sachatamia and saw Central American Agouti and Red-tailed Squirrel; we also saw a Vermilion Flycatcher. We had lunch and rested.

At 6.00pm, we met to do the list and have dinner, and then went to visit Las Cotingas Reserve, where we had the opportunity to see Kinkajou and Common Opossum.

Day 5

Sunday 11th January

We had an early breakfast and then visited Refugio Paz de las Aves, at approximately 1800m, to see Andean Cock-of-the-rock at their lek. We then visited Frutti Tour, and saw many other species. We returned to the lodge for lunch and drove to Termas de Papallacta; on the way, we made a stop to look for Spectacled Bear, but had no luck.

Day 6**Monday 12th January**

Today we went to the upper part of the Termas, looking for South American Tapir, Spectacled Bear and other mammals. We looked all morning and afternoon, but again had no luck: we saw Andean Rabbit many times!



Andean Rabbit



Rufous-breasted Wood Quail



Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan



Squirrel Monkey

In the afternoon, we went to Cayambe Coca National Park and stayed until after nightfall, looking for nocturnal mammals, but we were not lucky. However, we saw some good birds today, such as Andean Condor, Variable Hawk, Great Thrush, Carunculated Caracara, Black Flowerpiercer and Rufous-collared Sparrow.

Day 7**Tuesday 13th January**

Early on, we took tea and coffee in the lodge, after which we went to look for mammals once more. We returned for breakfast and continued to the Papallacta Pass where, finally, we found Spectacled Bears: a mother and two babies! The whole group was really happy, and we spent more than three hours watching them.

In the afternoon, we went again to Cayambe Coca, this time concentrating on the South American Tapir; we saw more rabbits and another Spectacled Bear, but there was no tapir.

Day 8**Wednesday 14th January**

Today we went to the upper part of the Termas de Papallacta to look for mammals, but we returned because the weather was terrible. We had breakfast and checked out of the lodge. We went to the Papallacta Paramo again, and then went to Guango, but again we saw no tapirs. However, we saw some good birds, like the Torrent Duck, Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Collared Inca and Hooded Mountain Tanager, among others.

In the afternoon, we drove to San Isidro for overnight accommodation in the cabins. At 6.15pm, we met near the lodge to see a Black-headed Night Monkey (we couldn't get a great picture, but the group was happy). We had dinner, made the list, and waited for the tapir until 9.00pm, but once again we were not lucky.

Day 9

Thursday 15th January

We met at 6.00am to go birding at the lodge; we saw a Black Agouti and many species of birds like Inca Jay, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Canada Warbler, Cinnamon Flycatcher and Masked Trogon. We then visited the Wayra Reserve, where we had the opportunity to see a Rufous-breasted Wood Quail, Paradise Tanager, Black-throated Brilliant and more. We walked around the property looking for a Black-mantled Tamarin, but unfortunately found none.

We returned to the lodge and walked around the trails looking yet again for a tapir; we ended the walk and concentrated on seeing a Black-headed Night Monkey instead.

Day 10

Friday 16th January

We had an early breakfast and drove to El Coca. On the way, we spotted a family of Black-mantled Tamarins; we made a short stop to watch them. Everyone was very happy, as we had looked for them and failed the day before.

We arrived at the Napo Wildlife Center office, where the staff offered tea and coffee. From here we went upriver for approximately two hours, and then got in canoes for a further two hours. There was good birding along the way.



Black-banded Owl



Black Solitaire



Green Anaconda



Inca Jay

We arrived for lunch and explored around the lodge; we met our local guide, Melinton, who gave us an orientation for our next few days here. We saw a Giant Otter and a Venezuelan Red Howler Monkey, and although bird activity was limited, we saw White-winged Swallow, Blue-grey Tanager, Black-capped Donacobius, Hoatzin and Long-billed Woodcreeper.

After navigating for more than two and a half hours around the canal, we arrived at the NWC, where the landscape was really beautiful. The staff and manager at NWC had prepared a delicious juice for us, and showed us to our rooms, which would be home for the next four nights.

Day 11

Saturday 17th January

We had an early breakfast and prepared for a wonderful day. We went by canoe along the canal, and then walked the trail until the canopy tower. We saw Poeppig's Woolly Monkey (a local subspecies of Common Woolly Monkey), Humboldt's Squirrel Monkey and a Golden-mantled Tamarin. We saw birds like Many-banded Aracari, Scarlet Macaw, White-necked Puffbird, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Opal-rumped and Opal-crowned Tanagers, Wire-tailed Manakin and Green-backed Trogan. We also saw an exciting Green Anaconda.



Zigzag Heron



Tayra



Woolly Monkey



Scarlet

We returned for lunch, rested a bit, and continued our navigation along the lagoon and canal, where we saw Proboscis Bat, Napo Saki, Russet-backed Oropendola, Yellow-rumped Cacique and others. After making the list and having dinner, we did a night walk around the lodge, where we saw a Lowland Paca and a Little Woolly Mouse Opossum, as well as some frogs and insects.

Day 12**Sunday 18th January**

We had an early breakfast and went via the canal to the Napo River, where we saw an Amazon River Dolphin. We then continued along the river to visit the Sani Warmi Cultural Centre. There, we saw Pygmy Marmoset, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Crane Hawk and Orange-backed Troupial. After that, we took the motor canoe and visited the Napo Cultural Centre, where we saw Spix's Red Titi Monkey, Linnaeus's Two-toed Sloth, Crimson-crested Woodpecker and Greater Ani.

We had lunch and prepared to return to the NWC lodge; during the canal trip, we saw yet more birds and also Lemurine Night Monkey and other mammals. When we returned to the lagoon, we found Black Caiman, Hoatzin and White Hawk.

Day 13**Monday 19th January**

Today we had an early breakfast and navigated for approximately twenty-five minutes; then walked until we reached the tower on the Tiputini Trail. During the walk, we saw another Poeppig's Woolly Monkey, Colombian White-faced Capuchin and Venezuelan Red Howler Monkey. From the tower, we observed Plum-throated, Spangled and Purple-throated Cotingas, Cinnamon and Yellow-throated Woodpeckers, Black-tailed Tityra, Golden-faced Tyrannulet and Pale-rumped Swift (a lifer for the leader!).



Pygmy Marmoset



Red Titi Monkey

We returned to the lodge for lunch, and rested. In the afternoon, we found the last monkey species we needed, the White-bellied Spider Monkey. We had seen ten species of monkey at the Napo Wildlife Center, and twelve species in total on our tour. We returned to do the list and have dinner; later on, we did our last night activity, during which we saw a Lowland Paca.

Day 14**Tuesday 20th January**

Today started really early, as we had to return to El Coca to take the plane to Quito. Along the canal, we saw birds by river such as kingfishers, a Crested Owl and a Salvini's Curassow (another lifer for the leader!). We had breakfast and finally arrived at El Coca, from where we flew to Quito.

In Quito, our driver Luis picked us up, and we visited the Puembo Birding Garden, where we had our last meal. We rested until 3.20pm and then drove to Mariscal Sucre Airport to catch our flights home. During this wonderful tour, we had seen approximated 350 species of birds, 36 mammals and ten reptiles.

Day 15

Wednesday 21st January

Our long flight arrived in Amsterdam, and we caught our connection home to Heathrow.

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