

# COLOMBIA

Choco Specialties at Araucana Lodge

March 11 - 18, 2026

## Trip Report



Text & photos by  
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# TOUR SUMMARY

Set in the western Andes of Colombia, our Sunrise Birding: Choco Specialties at Araucana Lodge Tour combined world-class birding, spectacular Andean scenery, and the comfort of a single premier lodge base. Throughout the journey, participants enjoyed comfortable accommodations, excellent local cuisine, and outstanding birding and photographic opportunities at feeders, garden and forest trails.

Centered around the beautiful Araucana Lodge near Cali, this tour explored one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth: Colombia's Pacific slope and the Chocó biogeographic region, famous for its extraordinary levels of endemism and breathtaking bird diversity.



# HIGHLIGHTS

- Multicolored Tanager
- Gray-and-gold Tanager
- Saffron-crowned Tanager
- Glistening-green Tanager
- Blue Dacnis
- Golden-winged Warbler
- Green-and-Black Fruiteater
- Andean Cock-of-the-Rock
- Chestnut Wood-quail
- Pale-mandibled Aracari
- Andean Motmot
- Colombian Chachalaca
- Common Potoo
- Black-breasted Puffbird
- Grayish Piculet
- Masked Duck
- Saffron-headed Parrot
- Toucan Barbet
- Tropical Screech-owl
- Slate-colored Grosbeak
- Golden-headed Quetzal
- Torrent Duck
- Golden-winged Manakin
- Masked Flowerpiercer
- Fork-tailed Flycatcher
- 29 species of Hummingbirds!
- Accomodation and meals at Araucana Lodge!
- Jose and Jose Pablo
- Everybody's fantastic energy, laughs and joy for nature!



## Day 1

Our tour began smoothly with everyone safely arrived in Cali. At the airport we met our driver Eduardo who took us on a smooth 1.5 hours drive from the city to Araucana Lodge. After checking-in and settling up our things in the rooms, we gathered in the afternoon for our first birding walk. From the very beginning, the grounds of Araucana Lodge offered a nice introduction to Colombian birding: Scrub Tanager, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Colombian Chachalaca, Golden Tanager, Thick-billed Euphonia, Flame-rumped Tanager, Crimson-backed Tanager, Green Honeycreeper, were some of the highlights, as well as an impressive variety of hummingbirds including Andean Emerald, Long-billed Starthroat, White-necked Jacobin and Western Emerald.

## Day 2

Today we enjoyed a memorable full day at the famous KM 18 region where the humid montane forests support a spectacular concentration of endemic and near-endemic species. We ended up recording close to a 100 species of birds, including White-booted Racket-tail, Long-tailed Sylph, Greenish Puffleg, Buff-tailed Coronet, Blue-headed Sapphire, Saffron-crowned Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Multicolored Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Little Tinamou, Chestnut Wood-quail, Red-headed Barbet, Sickle-winged Guan, Andean Motmot, Yellow-vented Woodpecker, Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, Streaked Xenops, Montane Woodcreeper, Lineated Foliage-gleaner, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, Grayish Piculet, nesting Slate-throated Redstart, Canada Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler and Crimson-rumped Toucanet!

### **Day 3**

Venturing deeper into the Chocó lowlands, today we had an early departure to explore the famous San Cipriano reserve, accessed aboard locally engineered “Brujitas,” small motorcycle-powered rail carts that travel through dense rainforest. This humid and species-rich region provided us with a wonderful variety of birds like Pied Puffbird, Black-breasted Puffbird, White-whiskered Puffbird, Spot-crowned Barbet, Yellow-throated Toucan, Semiplumbeous Hawk, Dot-winged Antwren, Band-rumped Swift, Purple-crowned Fairy, Tawny-crested Tanager, Rufous Motmot, Amazon Kingfisher, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Stub-tailed Antbird, Pacific Flatbill, Purple Honeycreeper, Scarlet-thighed Dacnis, Rufous-winged Tanager, Swallow-tailed Kite, Blue-headed Parrot, White-ringed Flycatcher and the spectacular Saffron-headed Parrot!

We were also amazed by the variety of colorful butterflies including the outstanding *Morpho cypris*.

### **Day 4**

After an adventurous day at San Cipriano, today we spent the entire morning at Araucana Lodge enjoying many species of birds like Spectacled Parrotlet, Streaked Saltator, Bay-headed Tanager, Fawn-breasted Tanager, Yellow-backed Oriole, Golden-faced Tyrannulet, Dull-colored Grassquit, Mourning Warbler, Summer Tanager, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Purple-throated Woodstar, Brown Violetear, and many more.

In the afternoon we went back to the Km 18 area, to enjoy a fantastic roadside birding session with many new species like Golden-winged Warbler, Spotted Barbtail, Ashy-headed Tyrannulet, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, Glossy-black Thrush, Blue-necked Tanager, Multicolored Tanager, Metallic-green Tanager, Masked Flowerpiercer, Golden-winged Manakin and closing the day with wonderful views of a male Crested Quetzal!

## Day 5

Another major highlight of the trip was visiting is the Upper Anchicayá Valley and the Avistamiento de Aves Doña Dora near the Farallones National Park. Birding here revealed an incredible diversity of species and habitats.

One of the most memorable experiences of the journey was visiting an active lek of the spectacular Andean Cock-of-the-rock. Watching males displaying their brilliant orange plumage while performing elaborate courtship dances and strange sounds at the very start of the day.

The day was full of exciting moments with birds like Toucan Barbet, Spot-crowned Barbet, Green Thorntail, Empress Brilliant, Velvet-purple Coronet, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Rufous-gaped Hillstar, White-winged Becard, Andean Solitaire, Olive Finch, Black-headed Brushfinch, Choco Brushfinch, Chestnut-headed Oropendola, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Buff-rumped Warbler, Glistening-green Tanager, Rufous-throated Tanager, Gray-and-gold Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Silver-throated Tanager, Slate-colored Grosbeak, Purplish-mantled Tanager, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Torrent Duck and Barred Hawk.

## Day 6

The tour also visits the Sonso Lagoon and Osprey Ecolodge, one of the last major wetlands remaining in the Cauca Valley. This biologically rich ecosystem contrasts dramatically with the surrounding mountain forests and provides excellent opportunities to observe multiple wetland species. In company with our local guide Natalia, our day was full of exciting birds, including White-faced Whistling-duck, Fulvous-whistling Duck, Comb Duck, Blue-winged Teal, Cinnamon Teal, Masked Duck, Cooi Heron, Striated Heron, Snail Kite, Wattled Jacana, Roseate Spoonbill, Glossy Ibis, Buff-necked Ibis, Jet Antbird, Masked Cardinal, Prothonotary Warbler, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, Yellow Oriole, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture, Lesser Nighthawk, Common Potoo and Tropical Screech-owl!

## Day 7

In the morning we visited the dry forests of Atuncela, where the rain shadow creates a completely different habitat filled with distinct cacti and dry scrub vegetation. In this unique ecosystem we found another suite of specialties including Bar-crested Antshrike, Hook-billed Kite, Ultramarine Grosbeak, Dwarf Cuckoo, Pale-breasted Spinetail, Orange-crowned Euphonia, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Slate-headed Tody-flycatcher, Vermilio Flycatcher, Cattle Tyrant, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, the endemic Apical Flycatcher and the beautiful Ruby Topaz!

In the afternoon, we came back to the cloudforest and visited Bosque de San Antonio enjoying a beautiful mixed flock with Multicolored Tanager, Beryl-spangle Tanager, Black-capped Tanager, Black-winged Saltator, Ashy-throated Chlorospingus, Swainson's Thrush, Red-faced Spinetail, Southern Emerald-Toucanet and fantastic views of Green-and-Black Fruiteater.

## Day 8

Today, we said goodbye to Araucana Lodge and all its wonderful staff and departed back to Cali Airport.

I sincerely thank all participants for their wonderful energy and trusting Sunrise Birding and me to guide this journey in beautiful Colombia. Special thanks to everyone who helped make the tour run smoothly, our local guide José Luna for his amazing guiding and our fantastic driver Eduardo for his excellent driving skills.

Pura vida and until next time!

# PHOTOS



Chestnut Wood-quail



Red-headed Barbet

# PHOTOS



Crimson-rumped Toucanet



White-throated Quail-dove

# PHOTOS



Little Tinamou



Gray-and-Gold Tanager

# PHOTOS



Chestnut-headed Oropendola



Blue Dacnis

# PHOTOS



Velvet-purple Coronet



Common Potoo

# PHOTOS



Cooi Heron

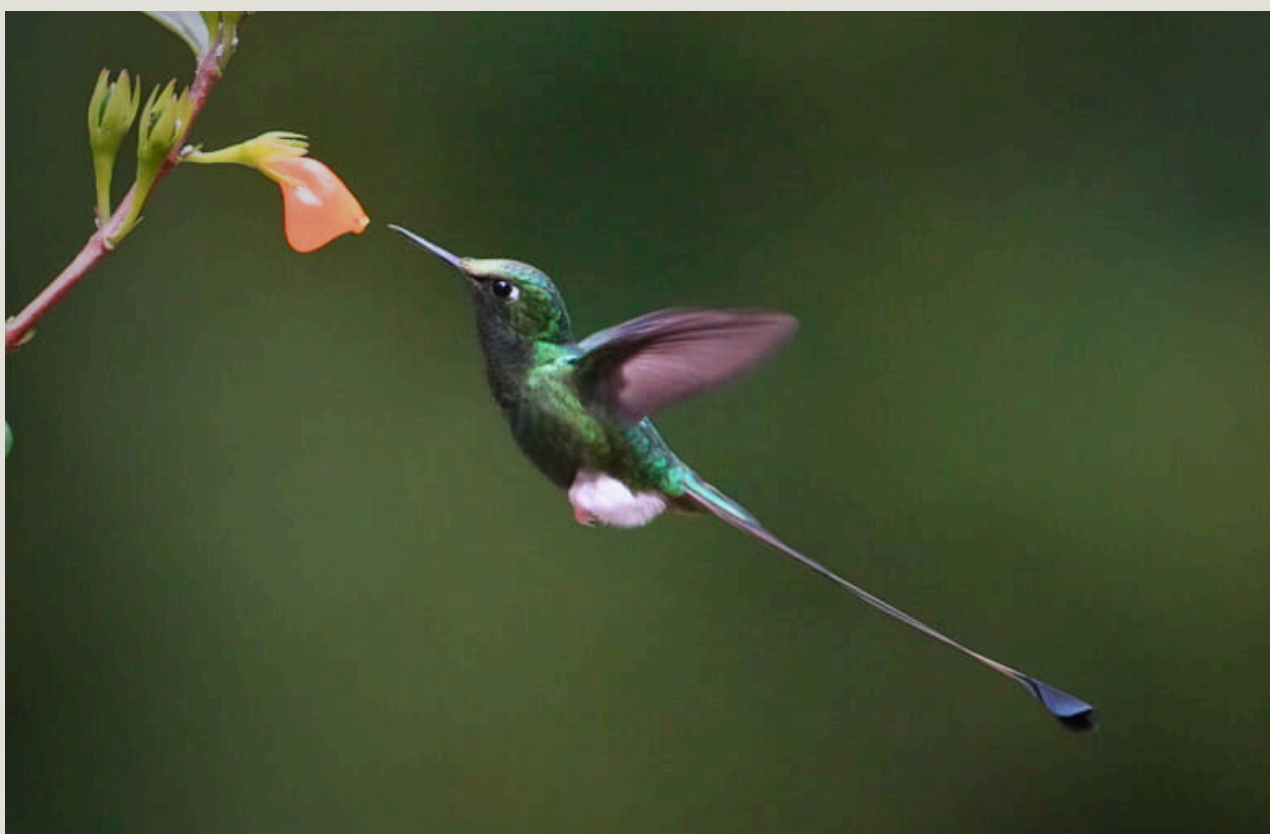


Tropical Screech-owl

# PHOTOS



Rufous-throated Tanager



White-booted Racket-tail

# PHOTOS



Saffron-headed Parrot. Photo by Jose Luna



Colombian Chachalaca

# PHOTOS



Ruby Topaz Hummingbird



Torrent Duck

# PHOTOS



Golden-headed Quetzal

# PHOTOS



Andean Cock-of-the-Rock

# PHOTOS



# PHOTOS



**282 SPECIES RECORDED**

**LINK TO EBIRD TRIP REPORT**

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/487804?view=checklists>



Toucan Barbet