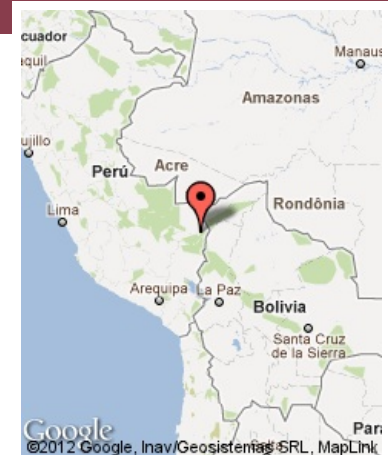


Birding in Peru



Highlights

Peru has the largest number of bird species anywhere in the world. The Tambopata-Candamo National Reserve, situated in the south of the country, is an ornithologist's dream. Stretching over 1.4 million hectares of pristine forest in the Amazon Basin this is one of the most biodiverse regions on Earth, home to an astounding 592 species of bird.

Tambopata National Reserve, in the south of Peru, is a protected area and refuge for many species of birds and animals whose habitats have been disturbed elsewhere. The reserve is only accessible by boat, with great areas completely untouched by humans. This is incredible bird country: the sheer fertility of the region has produced a wealth of ecological niches, allowing a proliferation of species that must seem to be believed. Their vibrant colours and songs underline the uniqueness of this precious place.

It's impossible to describe the highlights of this trip in one paragraph as even a straight list of the birds you might spot would fill this page. You'll visit many different kinds of habitat, from terra firme, secondary and transitional forest to bamboo groves, floodplain and swampland, each of which offers new opportunities to see different birds. You'll witness the living kaleidoscope of the parrot and macaw clay lick in the early morning light, and view owls at night with the aid of a spotlight. You'll also have the opportunity to watch the flocks that live in the rainforest canopy from the purpose-built viewing tower. With luck you may even spot a Harpy Eagle.

Is it for me?

This trip is for all people interested in wildlife but particularly for bird lovers. There are more bird species in this region than in the whole USA and this makes it one of the top ornithological destinations on the planet. You will be outside every day, trekking, climbing towers and travelling on the rivers: make sure you are fit enough to cope with long days of activity.

In the rainforest there are insects, wild animals and changeable weather patterns. Make sure you are vaccinated against any jungle diseases and that you are medically prepared for your trip - antimalarials are normally advised. Remember you will need waterproof clothing and good footwear. This trip is for people who respect the rainforest and will behave accordingly (leaving no rubbish, adhering to trails and listening to the safety advice of your guides).

Accommodation

Accommodation is at three different locations. All are purpose-built eco lodges, combining modern design with traditional natural materials. They are designed with the aim of promoting sustainable interactions between local communities and the forest ecosystem. Rooms are simple but comfortable, though please note there is no hot water or electricity in any of the lodges (a generator is turned on daily for a short time for charging electrical items).

Food is self-service, three-course meals featuring both Peruvian and International dishes. Unlimited sterile drinking water, tea and coffee are also provided, as well as fruit juice with meals.

Itinerary

Prices from

981 GBP (9 days) per person

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Day 1: Arrive

On arrival at the airport, you'll be met and welcomed by your Birding Guide, then transferred by car and boat to Posada Amazonas lodge.

(Lunch)

Upon arrival, the lodge manager will welcome you and brief you with important navigation and security tips.

(Dinner)

Overnight at Posada Amazonas

Day 2: Shahue Trail

(Breakfast)

A thirty minute walk takes you to the 30 metre canopy tower, where you'll wait for a mixed flock to appear.

(Lunch)

You'll then head off to bird the Shahue Trail.

(Dinner)

Overnight at Posada Amazonas

Day 3: Tres Chimbadas Lake

(Breakfast)

You'll drive to the bamboo patches around Tres Chimbadas Lake to focus on birds endemic to the area, then transfer by boat to Tambopata Research Centre.

(Packed Lunch)

On arrival, the lodge manager will welcome you and brief you with important navigation and security tips.

(Dinner)

After dinner, scientists will provide an in-depth look at the biology of macaws, their feeding habits, theories for the clay lick behaviour, breeding and feeding ecology, population fluctuations and the threats to their conservation.

Overnight at Tambopata Research Centre.

Day 4: Macaw Clay Lick

At dawn you'll cross the river and enjoy the world's largest macaw clay lick where hundreds of parrots and macaws of up to 15 species congregate daily.

(Breakfast)

You'll explore the quintessential rainforest on two 5-mile trail systems: one in the floodplain, and one is tall rainforest that rarely floods. These represent the most speciose habitats for birds.

(Boxed Lunch)

After the hikes you can continue to bird within the confines of TRC.

(Dinner)

Overnight at Tambopata Research Centre

Day 5: Terra Firme Forest

(Breakfast)

You'll visit the floodplain and terra firme forest again.

(Lunch)

You'll bird at the transitional forests above the clay lick. (Dinner)

Overnight at Tambopata Research Centre

Day 6: Cecropia Forests and Balsa Wood

(Breakfast)

We will explore older river created habitats at the pond five minutes upstream from TRC – forests of Cecropia and Balsa Wood with a bamboo understory.

(Lunch)

You'll pay a visit to the palm swamp.

(Dinner)

After dinner, you'll venture out near the lodge to spot-light night birds.

Overnight at Tambopata Research Centre

Day 7: Canopy tour

(Breakfast)

A three and a half hour boat ride brings you to Refugio Amazonas.

(Boxed Lunch)

A thirty minute walk from the lodge is the 25-metre canopy tower. From here views of mixed species canopy flocks as well as toucans, macaws and raptors are likely.

(Dinner)

Overnight at Refugio Amazonas

Day 8: Oxbow Lake

(Breakfast)

A two hour hike from the lodge will bring you to an oxbow lake with palm swamp and grassland vegetation, where you'll look for more bird species.

(Boxed Lunch)

You'll bird in the secondary forest near the lodge.

(Dinner)

Overnight at Refugio Amazonas

Day 9: Puerto Maldonado

(Breakfast)

You'll retrace your original river and road journey back to Puerto Maldonado office and the airport. Depending on airline schedules, this may require dawn departures.

Getting there**Flying to Peru...**

Fly to Lima or Cusco and take an internal flight from there to Puerto Maldonado Airport (PEM).

Joining instructions...

You will be picked up from Puerto Maldonado Airport (PEM) and driven, first to the provider's Puerto Maldonado headquarters, and then on to Tambopata River Port. You will then be transferred by boat to Tambopata Reserve.

All boats are 20 ft long, roofed canoes with 55 hp outboard motors. They have scheduled arrivals and departures from each port. These schedules are programmed daily so that they fit seamlessly with airport arrivals and departures. There is no need to worry about whether your plane fits the boat schedule; this is arranged for you and the boats will wait for up to two hours.

Price includes

Programmes based on double occupancy. Includes all meal, accommodation, river transportation and transfers to and from the airport of Puerto Maldonado.

Price quoted is per person in a group of six (for a double/twin or triple room). For a group of five it's \$1549 pp, four \$1617 pp, three \$1737 pp, two \$1963 pp and a single traveller \$2675. Single supplement \$400.

When is best

The lowland rain forests of the Tambopata Reserve lie far enough south of the Equator to provide a cooler, drier winter season between May and October. The general weather conditions, are warm and humid. The average daytime high is between 78° and 93° F (24° and 31° C) and the average nighttime low is between 66° and 78° F (20° and 24° C). Nevertheless between May and September cold fronts from Argentina can sweep into southwestern Amazonia and push daytime highs down to 50° F (9° C) and the nighttime lows to 43° F (5° C). During the rainy months of November through April, always be prepared for heavy rain that can continue for hours or days. Around 80% of the annual average 3000 mm rainfall occurs during this season.

Available

Jan—Dec

Typical Duration

9 days

Comfort level

Reasonably comfortable (Inns, B&Bs, luxury camping etc.)

Experience required

A reasonable interest is all that is needed

Travellers should bring

Recommended kit list Good binoculars; Camera gear; Tight-weave, light colored, long cotton pants; Long sleeved, tight-weave, light colored cotton shirts; Ankle-high hiking boots and sneakers; Flashlight with batteries; Sunblock lotion; Sunglasses; Broad-brimmed hat; Rain suit or poncho; Insect repellent; Small denomination bills; Small daypack.