

# **ECUADOR: THE NORTHWESTERN ANDEAN SLOPES**

**NOVEMBER 13-21, 2011**

## **TINALANDIA PRE-TRIP**

**NOVEMBER 9-14, 2011**

©2011

*Ecuador's spectacular Chocó-Andean bioregion offers extraordinary biodiversity and unsurpassed endemism along with the greatest hummingbird and antpitta shows on earth. This jam-packed, weeklong adventure covers a relatively tiny natural corridor that runs from high-elevation elfin Andean woodland to remnant wet lowland jungle along the Pacific coastal plain while based at a single birding lodge!*

*Ecuador may well be the epicenter of Neotropical bird diversity, and perhaps no other destination expresses this better than the western slopes of Volcán Pichincha. This region stretches for only some 50 miles to the west of the country's charming capital city, Quito, and holds a phenomenal array of bird species. We will base our "operations" out of Séptimo Paraíso Cloud Forest Reserve in the renowned Mindo Valley and visit a variety of nearby bird sanctuaries, nature reserves and birding hotspots in search of the local avian specialties found here.*

*Breathtaking dawn vistas greet our first morning as we climb over the slopes of the inter-Andean plateau and wind our way up to Yanacocha Reserve. Here—where hummingbirds represent a truly major element of this stunted, moss and epiphyte-covered wonderland—we will search for high-Andean mixed foraging flocks and marvel at the wing-whirr of up to twelve species of these feathered jewels, including the unimaginable Sword-bill! We continue birding onward and constantly down-slope through temperate and subtropical mountain-forest along Ecuador's first "Ecoroute," a pioneer community-based conservation project that has converted a 54-kilometer country road into a protected sustainable bird-tourism zone, to finally arrive at our destination and "headquarters" for the week.*

*Nestled in a dramatic, prime montane cloud forest setting, Séptimo Paraíso not only offers comfortable accommodations, excellent cuisine and the best birding opportunities to be found in the area, but it's also strategically located to allow easy access to the key birding sites in this important bioregion. We will take good advantage of each day, working exceptional locations including Río Silanche and Milpe Bird Sanctuaries, Angel Paz Reserve and the "Paseo del Quinde" Ecoroute.*

*This is the domain of Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Toucan Barbet, Moss-backed Tanager, Guayaquil Woodpecker, and over 40 hummingbirds and tanagers, among more than 500 possible Neotropical avian specialties, with promises of unforgettable experiences for all.*

*Ecuador's western Andean slopes offer the world's most incredible biodiversity and this Tinalandia Pre-Trip has been designed to complement our Northwestern Andes tour in a comfortable and leisurely setting. The birding will be fairly relaxed, the cuisine will be excellent and the scenery will be quite spectacular.*

*Tinalandia Nature Reserve is Ecuador's classic birding site and continues to offer the finest and easiest conditions to see and study Neotropical avifauna in this spectacularly rich country. This four-day extension takes-off from the southwest of Quito and travels along the renowned Chiriboga Road, to finally arrive at our main destination, where we will spend three nights at Tinalandia, situated in the Andean foothills. We will bird the reserve's diverse grounds, exploring gardens, edge vegetation, forest trails, and make a day-trip to the very rich Río Palenque Scientific Station, where we will enjoy birding coastal lowland habitats.*

*Set in an idyllic location overlooking the Río Toachi, Tinalandia Nature Reserve was created by the late Tina de Garzón, a white-Russian immigrant, and her husband Alfredo. When their successful cattle ranching/coffee plantation business was eventually affected by the falling international price of coffee, the plantation was converted into a golf course! Tina, who spoke 14 languages, would invite friends and a variety of dignitaries to enjoy her wonderful tropical environment and as time passed, word began to spread of the natural treasures harbored here. By the early 1970s, Tinalandia was already well known for its rich birdlife, butterflies, reptiles and amphibians. Several species new to science were discovered on these grounds as well.*

*Our pre-trip begins as we head out from Quito and travel most of the first day along the "old" Chiriboga Road, meandering down the southwestern Andean slopes of Volcán Pichincha through diverse temperate and subtropical habitats. Then, using the comfortable Tinalandia Hotel as our base of operations, we spend the next two-and-a-half days exploring a variety of forest and edge habitats, sitting around the gardens, and watching over the very productive fruit and nectar feeders right outside the dining terrace, searching for the 300 plus bird species recorded here. We will also visit the species-rich Río Palenque Scientific Station, another famous birding hotspot, where we will enjoy lowland habitat with many additional avian species.*

## **TINALANDIA PRE-TRIP**

### **NOVEMBER 9-14, 2011**

**November 9, Day 1: Arrival in Quito.** Participants arriving into Quito on American Airlines Flight 931 from Miami (scheduled to arrive at 8:40 p.m.-subject to change) will be met at the airport and transferred to the Hotel Quito where a room will be reserved in your name. For those not on this flight, a private transfer can be arranged for an additional fee.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group should consider arriving in Quito on or before November 8 and spending the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

**November 10, Day 2: Chiriboga Road to Tinalandia Nature Reserve.** We'll depart from the capital city of Quito fairly early this morning. After a short climb up and over the southwestern slopes of the Pichincha Volcano, we will begin our winding descent down the "old" Chiriboga Road. This spectacular and little-traveled transect takes us first through cool temperate habitat where we will meander along, stopping for the mixed foraging flocks of birds that are so characteristic here. We will slowly walk some stretches and scan the vegetation along the roadside for anything that catches our eye in the rather stunted, epiphyte-covered trees. As we descend in altitude into the subtropical zone and later into the foothills, the scenery changes subtly but constantly; and so does the bird-life. Throughout the day, we'll be on the lookout for many different species characteristic of the varied habitats and life zones that we pass through. The species possibilities are great; among them are Torrent Duck; Variable Hawk; Andean Guan; White-capped, Red-billed, and Bronze-winged parrots; Lyre-tailed Nightjar; Turquoise Jay; Barred Puffbird; Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan; Crimson-mantled Woodpecker; Pearled Treerunner; Streaked Tuftedcheek; Agile Tit-Tyrant; Red-crested Cotinga; White-capped Dipper; Beryl-spangled, Golden, and Golden-crowned tanagers; and Hooded and Scarlet-bellied mountain-tanagers. We plan to arrive at our destination in time for dinner.

NIGHT: Hacienda Tinalandia Hotel and Nature Reserve

**November 11, Day 3: Hacienda Tinalandia Grounds.** Set at the edge of the Andean foothills with a commanding view over the torrent Toachi River, Tinalandia is the perfect spot to use as our base of operations for the remainder of this extension. Its gardens, forest edge, and jungle trails hold some of the most accessible and easy birding opportunities found anywhere. On this, our first morning, we will want to be out around dawn for a quiet walk close by our cabins, where new species will keep us busy just about everywhere we look. Before we know it, we will have to head down-slope for breakfast—on foot and birding all the way! The fruit feeders set up by the dining area will keep our attention (so have your binoculars close at hand!) with an array of tanagers, honeycreepers, dacnises, barbets, and even an araçari or toucanet. We may be treated to a mixed feeding flock in the trees in front of us, too. The hummingbird feeders will also be buzzing. So be warned; breakfast probably won't be very relaxing! Afterwards, we will be driven back to our cabins, to then continue to walk along the forest edge around the nine-hole golf course and along trails and nearby roadside, and will make an incursion into the forest in search of so many of the species that inhabit this area. We'll be entertained with a barrage of "regular" tropical species. Tinalandia is well renowned for its 250-300 species bird list and we will be looking for the specialties to be found here, including Rufous-fronted Wood-Quail; Pallid Dove; Bronze-winged Parrot; Spectacled, Mottled, and Crested owls; White-tipped Sicklebill; White-whiskered Hermit; Green-crowned Brilliant; Green-crowned Woodnymph; Purple-crowned Fairy; Chocó and Collared trogons; Rufous-tailed Jacamar; Rufous and Broad-billed motmots; Crimson-rumped Toucanet; Pale-mandible Araçari; Chocó and Chestnut-mandibled toucans; Black-cheeked, Golden-olive, Red-rumped, Guayaquil and Lineated woodpeckers; Orange-fronted and Red-headed barbets; Slaty and Red-faced spinetails; Scaly-throated and Buff-fronted foliage-gleaners; Pacific Hornero; Pacific and Slaty antwrens; Plain-brown, Northern Barred, Streak-headed and Wedge-billed woodcreepers; Immaculate and Chestnut-backed antbirds; White-backed Fire-eye; Masked Water-Tyrant; White-thighed Swallow; Band-backed and Bay wrens; Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo; Ecuadorian Thrush; Chocó and Buff-rumped warblers; Yellow-tufted and Blue dacnises; Orange-crowned, Orange-bellied and Thick-billed euphonias; Gray-and-Gold, Blue-necked, Bay-headed, Guira, and Swallow tanagers; and Black-winged Saltator to name a few.

NIGHT: Hacienda Tinalandia Hotel and Nature Reserve

**November 12, Day 4: Day-trip to Río Palenque Scientific Station.** We will have a pre-dawn breakfast and depart from Tinalandia this morning for a day-trip to the Río Palenque Biological Station, located about one hour to the south. This rather small "island" of lowland forest is home to many species that are becoming harder and harder to find due to the deforestation that is so rampant throughout the tropics. Río Palenque is being impacted by an "island effect" phenomenon whereby extinction befalls certain species that cannot hold viable populations in reduced areas and where there may exist a break in gene-flow to other populations because of the

*Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes, Page 4*

disappearance of connecting habitat. On the other hand, there is an impressive concentration of many species within this small area and the intricate trail system set up here will give us a great opportunity to explore for challenging understory species and the fascinating mid-level and canopy mixed foraging flocks. This is indeed a birdy place with many lowland forest species to be found—motmots, flycatchers, tityras, becards, wrens, tanagers—and a good selection that are the same as those found at Tinalandia (some easier to see here!), but there are many that we can find mainly or only at this site, a few being quite rare. If we are at all lucky, we should see our share of them: Plumbeous Kite; Gray and Short-tailed hawks; Laughing and Bat falcons; Rufous-headed Chachalaca; Ecuadorian Ground-Dove; Pacific Parrotlet; Maroon-tailed Parakeet; Blue-headed Parrot; Bronzy, Stripe-throated, and Baron's hermits; Violet-bellied Hummingbird; Ecuadorian, Western White-tailed and Northern Violaceous trogons; Cinnamon and Scarlet-backed woodpeckers; Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaner; Western Slaty and Great antshrikes; Dot-winged, Slaty and Checker-throated antwrens; Black-headed Antthrush; Common and Black-headed tody-flycatchers; White-winged Becard; White-bearded Manakin; Whiskered and Song wrens; Gray-and-Gold Warbler; Black-lored Yellowthroat; as well as the Golden-hooded, Tawny-crested, and Dusky-faced tanagers; Orange-billed Sparrow; and Crimson-breasted Finch. We will be searching for understory flocks inside the forest and will spend some down time overlooking the Río Baba. We return to Tinalandia by mid to late afternoon.

NIGHT: Hacienda Tinalandia Hotel and Nature Reserve

**November 13, Day 5: Tinalandia “Clean-up” and Return to Quito.** This morning we will wrap up our visit to Tinalandia, and depending on how we've done so far or what else we may want to see or do, we will depart after breakfast or lunch. As we make our way along the main highway, we may want to make a few strategic stops en route as we climb back up the western Andean slope and break into the scenic inter-Andean valley. We should arrive in Quito by mid-afternoon.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

**November 14, Day 6: Departure for Home.** Participants not continuing on Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes may depart from Quito at any time today.

## **ECUADOR: THE NORTHWESTERN ANDEAN SLOPES NOVEMBER 13-21, 2011**

**November 13, Day 1: Arrival in Quito.** Participants not continuing from the Tinalandia Pre-Trip and arriving into Quito on American Airlines Flight 931 from Miami (scheduled to arrive at 8:40 p.m.-subject to change) will be met at the airport and transferred to the Hotel Quito where a room will be reserved in your name. For those not on this flight, a private transfer can be arranged for an additional fee.

Participants wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting with the group should consider arriving in Quito on or before November 12 and spending the night. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with any additional lodging arrangements.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

**November 14, Day 2: Quito to Yanacocha Reserve; Then Continuing Along the “Paseo del Quinde” Ecoroute to Séptimo Paraíso.** This morning we will have an early breakfast and depart from Quito to wind our way over the northwestern flank of the massive Pichincha Volcano to the Yanacocha Reserve. At over 11,000 feet in altitude, Yanacocha (960 hectares) was recently purchased by the Jocotoco Foundation, whose main goal is the protection of the very rare, critically endangered, and endemic hummingbird—the Black-breasted Puffleg. This absolutely beautiful area—with its commanding views of “Guagua” Pichincha Volcano and its deep gorges

covered in lush elfin forest—is a hummingbird hangout, simply buzzing with many high-elevation species. We will be looking for Mountain Velvetbreast, Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted pufflegs, Purple-backed Thornbill, Tyrian Metaltail, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, and maybe even a Sword-billed Hummingbird or two, most of which visit the series of nectar feeders that are kept up here. The views will be mind-blowing, to say the least! We will walk the relatively flat and easy trail, which is lined with mossy, entangled vegetation; five foot-wide *Gunnera* leaves; an uncanny number of distinct flowering plants; and spectacular vistas. We'll be searching for mixed foraging species flocks, including White-browed Spinetail; White-throated Tyrannulet; Crowned Chat-Tyrant; Barred Fruiteater; Red-crested Cotinga; Rufous Wren; Masked and Glossy flowerpiercers; Blue-backed and Cinereous conebills; Superciliaried Hemispingus; Blue-and-black Tanager; and Scarlet-bellied and Black-chested mountain-tanagers. We will also be on the lookout for Andean Guan and Undulated and Rufous antpittas, and we might even find an Andean Pygmy-Owl. As the late morning fog rolls in, as it usually always does, we will continue our journey down-slope along the "Paseo del Quinde" Ecoroute towards our final destination in the Mindo Valley.

This recently created Ecoroute is a 30-mile long, little-traveled country road that has been converted into a community-based, conservation-through-ecotourism pilot project designed by the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation. Three local communities co-manage the road for bird and nature tourism. They are beginning a reforestation and waste-management program, and are being trained in the production of crafts and souvenirs, along with the ability to provide various tourism and environmental services that will guarantee their wellbeing and improve their economies.

We will spend the remainder of the afternoon working our way along this natural corridor through temperate, subtropical and foothill habitats as we search for a wide variety of montane species, many of them unique to the *world's richest bird area*—often referred to as the Chocó-Andean Endemic Center. The possibilities are almost endless; among them are Black-and-Chestnut Eagle; Red-billed Parrot; Scaly-naped Amazon; Crimson-mantled and Powerful woodpeckers; Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan; Montane and Tyrannine woodcreepers; Streaked Tuftedcheek; Pearled Treerunner; White-tailed Tyrannulet; Streak-necked, Cinnamon, and Golden-crowned flycatchers; Glossy-black Thrush; Plain-tailed Wren; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren; Russet-crowned Warbler; Capped Conebill; Golden, Flame-faced, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled, Black-capped and Grass-green tanagers; along with Blue-winged, Black-chinned and Hooded mountain-tanagers and a wide "spectrum" of hummingbird species!

NIGHT: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo

**November 15-19, Days 3-7: Séptimo Paraíso Grounds and the Mindo-Milpe-Río Silanche Area.** The Mindo Valley has become extremely well known over the last decade or so for its incredibly high biodiversity. While basing our "operations" out of Séptimo Paraíso, we will spend the next five days examining a wonderful selection of birding sites, exuberant roadside vegetation and forest trails, bird gardens, and forest reserves searching for many of the nearly 600 species possible here. The lush, epiphyte-covered forests with their entangled under-stories seem to come to life in an instant. Bursts of mixed feeding flock activity appear to come from out of the blue! We will concentrate on sorting out confusing species and revel in the colorful splendor of this spectacular Neotropical avifauna during these feeding frenzies, trying to "sift" through the gaudy euphonies and tanagers in hopes of identifying some of the more cryptic and secretive denizens. We'll have plenty of time to check out the hotel's spectacular hummingbird feeders for some 15 to 20 species, while on the watch for raptors and parrots flying overhead. We will also witness a spectacular dawn feeding session as over a dozen species come to an area where a bright streetlight has attracted moths through the night.

We will head out very early one morning for an unforgettable visit to the Paz Antpitta Reserve. Here we will be accompanied by Angel Paz himself, a local *campesino* who has created a most spectacular birding experience—starting off with a visit to a conveniently placed blind that overlooks an Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek and continue with what has become "the greatest show," his feeding of at least three species of wild antpittas—Giant, Yellow-breasted, and Moustached—along with a family of Dark-backed Wood-Quails! All of these

*Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes, Page 6*

species are normally extremely difficult to see at best, even with the greatest of luck; but here, Angel does wonders to bring these special birds ridiculously close, calling each individual by name!

We will also take separate day-trips to visit two of the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation's newly created bird sanctuaries—Río Silanche and Milpe—along with other key birding sites (everything is relatively close by) to explore prime lowland and foothill hotspots that offer superb birding opportunities and some of the best conditions for great bird photography to be found anywhere! A canopy tower, nectar and fruit feeders have truly converted this area into a birder's paradise!

Just a few of the target species we will be after in this wonderful area include Plumbeous Kite; Tiny, Bicolored, Semiplumbeous, Plumbeous and Barred hawks; Black Hawk-Eagle; Wattled and Sickle-winged guans; Sunbittern; Barred, Red-masked and Maroon-tailed parakeets; Red-billed, Blue-headed, Bronze-winged and Rose-faced parrots; Tawny-bellied, White-whiskered and Stripe-throated hermits; Purple-bibbed Whitetip; Buff-tailed and Velvet-purple coronets; Fawn-breasted, Green-crowned and Empress brilliants; Violet-tailed Sylph; Booted Racket-tail; Golden-headed and Crested quetzals; Masked Trogon; Red-headed and Toucan barbets; Chocó and Chestnut-mandibled toucans; Powerful, Guayaquil, Chocó, and Smoky-brown woodpeckers; Uniform, Fasciated, Russet and Great antshrikes; Rufous-rumped, Checker-throated, White-flanked, Slaty, Dot-winged and Moustached antwrens; Stub-tailed and Dusky antbirds; Red-faced Spinetail; Lineated and Buff-fronted foliage-gleaners; Streak-capped and Uniform treehunters; Strong-billed and Black-striped woodcreepers; Double-banded Graytail; Nariño and Spillmann's tapaculos; Rufous-winged, Black-capped, and Sooty-headed tyrannulets; Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant; Green-and-black, Orange-breasted and Scaled fruit-eater; Club-winged, White-bearded, Red-capped and Golden-winged manakins; Pale-eyed, Glossy-black, Pale-vented and Ecuadorian thrushes; Sepia-brown, Stripe-throated and Southern Nightingale wrens; Tropical and Slate-throated gnatcatchers; Yellow-collared Chlorophonia (seasonal); Orange-crowned Euphonia; Yellow-tufted, Scarlet-thighed, Scarlet-breasted and Blue dacnises; Glistening-green, Metallic-green, Gray-and-gold, Rufous-throated, Emerald, Silver-throated, Golden-hooded, Rufous-winged, Bay-headed and Scarlet-browed tanagers; Blue Seedeater; Tricolored Brush-Finch; and Yellow-bellied Siskin.

NIGHTS: Séptimo Paraíso, Mindo

**November 20, Day 8: Birding the Ecoruta "El Paseo del Quinde" and Return to Quito.** This morning we will take off after breakfast on our return trip to Quito, which takes us back along the "Paseo del Quinde" Ecoroute, which winds up and over what was the original "old" road to Quito. Retracing our first-day's steps for some 20-30 kms along this route into the Tandayapa Valley, we will have more time to enjoy the spectacular natural conditions being protected here. Today we will allow time to walk various stretches so as to not miss anything. Again, the mixed foraging flocks will be of interest. We will be on the lookout in hopes of finding Sickle-winged Guan; Cloudforest Pygmy-Owl; Green-fronted Lancebill; Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Brown, Green, and Sparkling violet-ears; Western Emerald; Green-crowned Woodnymph; Andean Emerald; Speckled Hummingbird; Empress Brilliant; Brown and Collared incas; Gorgeted Sunangel; Purple-throated, White-bellied and the seasonal Little woodstars; Crested Quetzal; Rufous Spinetail; Pacific Tuftedcheek; Tyrannine Woodcreeper; Chestnut-crowned Antpitta; Ocellated Tapaculo; Barred Becard; Beautiful Jay; Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager; Grass-green Tanager; and the rare and secretive Tanager Finch. Depending on how the day goes, we may spend part of the afternoon at "Pachaquinde" to revel in the greatest hummingbird show in "town" (or on earth!) and as the afternoon falls upon us, we will head back to Quito. We may make a stop to search for the rare and threatened White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant, if time permits.

NIGHT: Hotel Quito, Quito

**November 21, Day 9: Departure for Home.** A group transfer will be provided to the Quito Airport in time for the 7:45 a.m. departure of American Airlines Flight 932 to Miami.

**TOUR SIZE:** The main tour will be limited to 14 participants; the pre-trip will be limited to 7 participants.

**TOUR LEADERS:** Paul Greenfield and Steve Hilty (Paul Greenfield will be the only leader for the pre-trip.)

**Paul Greenfield** grew up near New York City and became interested in birds as a child. He received his B.F.A. from Temple University where he was an art major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated with the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador*, which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador's avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with local government and communities to encourage their involvement in the protection of "their" biodiversity and the promotion of birding tourism in Ecuador. He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for over two decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. He and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.

**Steve Hilty** is the senior author of *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*, and the recently published *Birds of Venezuela*, both by Princeton University Press. Other credits include *Birds of Tropical America, A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity*, which has just been republished by the University of Texas Press. He has also written a number of scientific papers on birds and plants, and is presently preparing the text and species accounts for the tanagers for a forthcoming volume of the acclaimed *Handbook of Birds of the World*, published by Lynx Press in Barcelona. Steve holds a Ph.D. in zoology from the University of Arizona and has worked at the Arid Lands Department at the University of Arizona, as a consultant to The Nature Conservancy, and as a stockbroker. He is currently a research associate at the University of Kansas Museum of Natural History. Since 1975, he has led tours throughout North and South America, and co-led trips to India, the Orient, and Australasian regions. With three decades of experience in South America and a wide range of natural history interests, he brings a unique breadth of expertise to his Neotropical tours. At night he often turns his binoculars towards the skies for stargazing. Steve lives in Kansas City with his wife, Beverly. They have two daughters recently graduated from college and now working.

**FINANCIAL ARRANGEMENTS:** The fee for the **Tinalandia Pre-Trip** is **\$1,995** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 of the Pre-Trip to dinner on Day 5 of the Pre-Trip, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Quito and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for the **Tinalandia Pre-Trip** is **\$205**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

The fee for **Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes** is **\$2,795** per person in double occupancy from Quito. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 to dinner on Day 8, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare from your home to Quito and return, airport departure taxes, alcoholic beverages, special gratuities, phone calls, laundry, or items of a personal nature. Rates are based upon group tariffs; if the tour does not have sufficient registration, a small-party supplement may have to be charged.

The single supplement for **Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes** is **\$270**. You will be charged a single supplement if you desire single accommodations, or if you prefer to share but have no roommate and we cannot provide one for you.

**Combined Tour Discount:** Participants combining Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes with Ecuador: Tinalandia Pre-trip will receive a discount of \$80 per person in double occupancy and \$105 in single occupancy.

**FUEL SURCHARGES:** In the uncertain, often volatile oil market of late, it is difficult – if not impossible – to predict fuel costs over the long term, and more specifically, at the time of operation of a tour or cruise departure. Prices are based upon the prevailing fuel rates at the time of itinerary publication. While VENT will do everything possible to maintain the original price of the cruise or tour, if fuel rates increase significantly, it may be necessary to implement a fuel surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In most cases, these additional fuel costs are being passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers who reserve the right, in their agreements to provide services for VENT, to raise their prices due to significant changes in fuel costs.

**TOUR REGISTRATION:** To register for this tour, please contact the VENT office. The deposit for this tour is **\$500** per person per section. If you prefer to pay your deposit by check, your tour space will be held for 10 days to allow time for the VENT office to receive your deposit and completed registration form. If you prefer to pay your deposit using a credit card, your deposit must be made with MasterCard or Visa at the time of registration. The VENT registration form should then be completed, signed, and returned to the VENT office. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days prior to the tour departure date.

**CANCELLATION POLICY:** Cancellation penalties and refunds are based on the following schedule: if cancellation is made 120 days or more before the tour departure date, a cancellation fee of **\$250** per person will be charged unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be **\$100** per person. If cancellation is made fewer than 120 days before departure date, no refund is available. This policy and fee schedule also applies to pre-trip and post-trip extensions. *We strongly recommend the purchase of trip cancellation insurance for your protection.*

<u>If you cancel:</u>	<u>Your refund will be:</u>
120 days or more before departure date	Your deposit minus \$250*
Fewer than 120 days before departure date	No refund available

\*Unless the deposit is transferred to a new registration for another VENT tour that will operate within the next 12 months, in which case the cancellation fee will be \$100 per person.

**TRIP CANCELLATION & MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE:** A brochure and application form for optional coverage for baggage, illness, and trip cancellation can be obtained through the VENT office. **We strongly recommend that you purchase trip cancellation insurance as soon as possible to protect yourself against losses due to accidents or illness. VENT recommends Travel Insured International as our preferred insurance provider.** Check with your insurance agent regarding coverage you may presently have via other insurance policies that may cover illness during your trip. **Waiver for pre-existing conditions is available; however, stipulations apply, usually requiring the purchase of the insurance soon after registering.** Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as work-related cancellation, medical upgrade, and a “Cancel for Any Reason” clause among others. **Contact Travel Insured International prior to registration for details.** Not all insurance providers provide the same levels of coverage. If you purchase insurance through a company other than Travel Insured International, please be advised that rules and stipulations may be different.

**IMPORTANT NOTE: Please read your itinerary carefully to see whether or not your tour/cruise requires MANDATORY Medical Insurance which covers you for emergency evacuation/repatriation during the trip.** This coverage is included in the Worldwide Trip Protector plan offered by Travel Insured International. If you do not choose to purchase the insurance through Travel Insured International, you will need to do so through another insurance provider. A good website for information and acquisition of emergency evacuation/repatriation insurance is: [www.insuremytrip.com](http://www.insuremytrip.com).

**Victor Emanuel Nature Tours is not a participant in the California Travel Consumer Restitution Fund. California law requires certain sellers of travel to have a trust account or bond. This business has a bond issued by Travelers in the amount of \$50,000. CST #2014998-50.**

**AIR INFORMATION:** Victor Emanuel Travel is a full-service travel agency and wholly owned subsidiary of Victor Emanuel Nature Tours (VENT). Victor Emanuel Travel will be happy to make any domestic or international air travel arrangements from your home and return. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements.

**BAGGAGE:** As space in the vehicles is limited, we ask that you limit your luggage to one lockable suitcase and a carry-on bag. As a precaution, we suggest you pack a change of clothes, your binoculars, medications, basic toiletries, walking shoes, and travel documents in your carry-on.

**CLIMATE:** During the tour we will experience two rather different climates. In the mountains out from Quito, temperatures are generally pleasant during the day; cool in the early morning, to warm at midday (low 60s to 80s). However, at higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain, so a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential. Río Palenque and Río Silanche Bird Sanctuary are in the coastal lowlands, and at these sites you should be prepared for warm-to-hot temperatures at midday (typically low 70s to low 90s). We may also get caught out in an occasional rain shower.

**CLOTHING:** Dress is casual or informal throughout the tour. Lightweight field clothing is the norm for most areas visited, with a sweater or jacket for extra warmth. We suggest dark field pants and shirts for forest birding, and lightweight long-sleeved shirts that dry quickly (long sleeves are not essential, but offer additional protection from sun and biting insects). Please wear darker colors, not whites, and avoid startling patterns that frighten the birds. Also important are a hat and sunscreen for sun protection and a rain jacket, poncho, or umbrella. Good footwear is essential, and for this we strongly suggest sturdy mud boots or waterproof hiking boots. In any case, your footgear for the field should at the very least be rated “water-resistant,” as this is a damp climate. Even the dew on the roadside grass will get your feet wet!

At higher elevations the temperatures can be as low as the low 40s on occasion, and you should be prepared to layer for warmth with a warm, long-sleeved shirt, plus a warm jacket or sweater. You can shed layers as the day warms up (or add them as it cools down). Consider bringing gloves and a warm hat if you know that you chill easily. There is a strong likelihood that we will be out in at least some mist or light rain on the west-slope, so a good umbrella or rain jacket is essential. Mud boots are recommended, but may not be essential here, as long as your footgear is waterproof or at the very least water-resistant. You may wish to bring a bathing suit along, as Séptimo Paraíso has a swimming pool (as does Tinalandia), and a hot tub.

Laundry facilities are available at the Séptimo Paraíso but are limited on the rest of this tour, so please plan to rinse out some clothing as we go along.

**CURRENCY:** The U.S. dollar is the currency in Ecuador. Cash is needed only for your personal expenses, such as bar bills, laundry, souvenirs, and international airport departure tax (see below). Please be aware that U.S. traveler’s checks are NOT recommended, but U.S. dollars, MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner’s Club credit cards are widely accepted in Quito especially, and most other cities.

**DOCUMENTS:** A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Ecuador is required. Visas are not required for United States citizens. You will be issued a tourist card to be completed on board your flight to Quito. You must hold onto this until your departure. Non-U.S. citizens should check with their consulate/embassy for instructions.

**EQUIPMENT:** You will want to have a sunhat, sunscreen, and sunglasses for protection from the sun; a belt pack or day pack for carrying your field equipment and water bottle; a small flashlight or headlamp; a washcloth or small hand towel; a water bottle; and an alarm clock. Consider bringing an extra pair of binoculars, some between-meal snacks (such as trail mix, granola bars, dried fruit, nuts, etc), and tissues or wet-wipes. Annoying insects are possible in some areas, so you should bring repellent. We recommend Cutter’s lotion (or a similar product) and a pump-style container (no cans) of OFF. Topsy gel is useful for reducing irritation from bites and

## ***Ecuador: The Northwestern Andean Slopes, Page 10***

stings, as is cortisone cream. A sturdy, collapsible walking stick is also recommended for those who feel unsteady on uneven trail surfaces, and will be especially useful at Paz Antpitta Reserve. Your leader will have a spotting scope; but if you wish to bring your own, that is fine. Again, as a precaution, it is a good idea to pack your binoculars, basic toiletry items, medications and travel documents, and a change of clothing in your carry-on bag.

**HEALTH:** As in most Latin American countries, we recommend drinking only bottled water, and using no ice in beverages. Also avoid milk products which have not been pasteurized and unpeeled fruits and vegetables. Vaccinations for polio and tetanus are recommended. Malaria is present in Ecuador, including the chloroquine-resistant strain. In addition to your physician, a good source of general health information for travelers is the United States Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in Atlanta. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line 800-CDC-INFO (232-4636) or you can check their website at [www.cdc.gov/travel](http://www.cdc.gov/travel). Canadian citizens should check the website of the Public Health Agency of Canada: [www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new\\_e.html](http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/new_e.html) (click on travel health).

If you are taking prescription medication or over-the-counter medicine, be sure to bring an ample supply that will allow you to get through the tour safely. Please consult your physician as necessary. Remember to pack all medication in your carry-on baggage, preferably in original containers or packaging. As airline baggage restrictions can change without warning, please check with your airline for procedures for packing medication.

As standard travel precautions, you should always be up to date with tetanus shots, and strongly consider inoculations against Hepatitis types A and B.

**MISC:** Departure Tax - \$42 USD (subject to change without notice)  
Electricity - 110 volts AC, the same as the U.S.  
Language - Spanish, with Quechua or Indian dialects; some English  
Time - Eastern Standard Time

**SUGGESTED READING:** Our website at [www.ventbird.com](http://www.ventbird.com) offers an affiliated online store that carries a wide variety of items for birding and nature lovers including over 6,000 books. A portion of the sales from the store benefits the Cornell Lab of Ornithology. You might also want to visit such other online stores as [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com), and for those out-of-print and hard-to-find titles, [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

### ***Birds, Basic Reference:***

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. *The Birds of Ecuador*, Cornell University Press, 2001. This is the "Bible" for anyone interested in Ecuador's birds. It consists of a two-volume set made up of the Field Guide, with 96 color plates, which include illustrations of basically all the species found in the country. The informative text, designed to help species identification, includes distribution maps for all 1600 species of Ecuador's birds. The Status, Distribution and Taxonomy volume treats each of Ecuador's species with detailed information not included in the Field Guide.

Greenfield, Paul and Fernando Ortiz and Juan Carlos Mateus. *Birds of Ecuador Locational Checklist with English and Spanish Common Names*. Quito: FEPROTUR, 1990. Possibly available in Ecuador, this is a complete species list with elevation zones.

Hilty, Steven L. and William L. Brown. *A Guide to the Birds of Colombia*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1986. An excellent complementary field guide useful for identifying many of Ecuador's bird species, with excellent coverage of the birds in the eastern lowlands and northern mountains.

Fjeldsa, Jon and Niels Krabbe. *Birds of the High Andes*. Copenhagen: Zoological Museum, University of Copenhagen; Svendborg, Denmark: Apollo Books, 1990. A good reference book for the birds of the mountains above 7500 ft, with adequate illustrations, but too large to carry and expensive. Try [www.abebooks.com](http://www.abebooks.com).

***Birds, Additional Reading:***

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1996. Subtitle: "A watcher's introduction to behavior, breeding and diversity." Highly recommended as the most readable and informative book on many different aspects of bird ecology (and birding!) in the Neotropics.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume I, the Oscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1989. Excellent reference volumes, with text entries for all species and fantastic illustrations of many. This volume and the next together include all of the passerines.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Guy Tudor. *The Birds of South America: Volume II, the Suboscine Passerines*. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1994.

***Other:***

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997 (2<sup>nd</sup> edition).

**TIPPING:** Tipping (restaurants, porters, and drivers) is included on VENT tours. However, if you feel that one or both of your VENT leaders, or any local guides and drivers, have given you exceptional service, it is entirely appropriate to tip. We emphasize that such tips are not expected and are entirely optional.

**RESPONSIBILITY:** Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc. (VENT) and/or its Agents act only as agents for the passenger in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motor-coach, boat, or airplane and assume no liability for injury, damage, loss, accident, delay, or irregularity which may be occasioned either by reason of defect in any vehicle or for any reason whatsoever, or through the acts or default of any company or person engaged in conveying the passenger or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT and its Agents can accept no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in air or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will have to be borne by the passenger, as tour rates provide for arrangements only for the time stated. The right is reserved to substitute hotels of similar category for those indicated and to make any changes in the itinerary where deemed necessary or caused by changes in air schedules. The right is reserved to cancel any tour prior to departure, in which case full refund will constitute full settlement to the passenger. The right is reserved to substitute leaders on any tour. When this is necessary, notification will be given to tour members. No refund will be made for any unused portion of the tour unless arrangements are made in sufficient time to avoid penalties. The prices of the tours are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on March 28, 2011 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change therein. The right is reserved to decline to accept or to retain any person as a member of any tour. Baggage is at owner's risk entirely. The airlines concerned and their agents and affiliates are not to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time passengers are not on board their aircraft. The passenger ticket in use by said airlines, when issued, shall constitute the sole contract between the airlines and the purchaser of these tickets and/or passenger. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for these tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airline Reporting Corporation.