



ECUADOR

The Best of Amazonia Short Tour



Scarlet Macaws at forest clay lick, Yasuni National Park © Brian Gibbons

January 19 – 26, 2027

Please note this tour may be taken in combination with Ecuador: Eastern Slope of the Andes, January 24– February 3, 2027



Napo Wildlife Center lodge on Añangucocha Lagoon © Brian Gibbons

From the lush Amazonian rainforests to the high Andean páramos, Ecuador is indeed a special place, boasting good access to birding habitat, unsurpassed scenic splendor, friendly people, and a stable government. Incredibly, over 1,730 species of birds have been recorded in the country, in an area smaller than the state of Colorado! Among them are many of the most spectacular and distinctive Neotropical species. “Ecuador: The Best of Amazonia Short Tour” is designed to sample this magnificent avifauna, immersed in the lush neotropical rainforests of this nation’s upper Amazon Basin. When combined with our back-to-back “Ecuador: Eastern Slope of the Andes” adventure, a full and spectacular range of birding possibilities will offer up a true

kaleidoscope of Ecuador’s biodiversity—from the steamy Amazonian lowlands to the gelid snow-capped glacial volcanic peaks of the Andes.



The exciting and well-appointed Napo Wildlife Center (NWC) in the Río Napo lowlands of northeastern Ecuador lies within the most diverse avifaunal zone in the world, the vast rainforests of upper Amazonia. Located within the huge Yasuní National Park, at one million hectares (the largest park in Ecuador), the Center is a model in sustainable development, born of the vision conjured up by the local indigenous community of Añangu. The lodge is located on the beautiful Añangucocha (Añangu Lagoon), a picturesque lake ensconced in forest wilderness. This is one of the very few pristine areas remaining in the Napo River drainage, thanks to the care of this small, environmentally conscious community that is the custodian of some 25,000 hectares (that’s 100 square miles!). Over the years, unrelenting pressure has been exerted on the community to open this marvelous area to oil exploitation. The Añangu have stood fast against this tide to achieve their ultimate dream—to build and run their own jungle lodge. Their vision is one of a healthy environment, one that will support their traditional way of life, while, at the same time, keep them connected to a constantly more

globalized world through sustainable management. Every member of the village has been involved in the planning and construction of this impressive project. Hunting was discontinued years ago by unanimous decision, which has created a 'garden-of-Eden'-like environment throughout Napo Wildlife Center's domain.

The lowland rainforests of Amazonia—so uniform in general appearance—are marvelously complex in reality. They are home to a web of species inhabiting every imaginable niche, and nearly 600 species of birds have been recorded throughout Napo Wildlife Center's realm. The full array of lowland birds is present, including guans, large raptors, and macaws. Antbirds are numerous and diverse, and mixed-species flocks of a great variety of birds regularly forage through the understory and sub-canopy here. Clay licks along the Napo River and inside the forest attract large numbers of parrots, while blackwater streams that run through seasonally flooded *varzea* forest and river islands add yet another dimension to 'jungle' birding. Three sturdy towers provide exceptional opportunities for viewing the forest canopy and its special inhabitants. Of course, part of the allure of the rainforest lies in the fact that one never knows what might appear. Seeing birds in this environment is not always easy and will undoubtedly challenge us, but we will surely experience many wonderful surprises in this magical place.



This tour has been designed to show you a wide array of bird species, but a few words of caution are prudent. In our many years of birding the tropics, we have found that it is extremely important to get out early, while the birds are singing and more active. On most days we will be up early and occasionally we will be afield all day. Much of our travel and birding in the lowlands will be from boats, especially canoes, or on forest trails. Here we can also expect heat and humidity, while some rain is possible (which, of course, is why these forests are so incomparably lush). The accommodation at NWC is very comfortable and far more than adequate (the best in the region). This trip has been planned to show you some of the best of Ecuador but may be too strenuous for those not in good health or not wishing to spend a good portion of their time in the field.

January 19, Day 1: Arrival in Quito

Participants should plan to arrive in Quito today (airport code UIO; most flights from the United States arrive in the evening). Upon arrival, you will be met at the airport and transferred to the San Jose de Puembo Hotel. Due to the late arrival time, dinner tonight will be on your own.

Those wanting to avoid the risk of misconnecting or who desire more rest time (or to acclimate to the higher elevation of the city) after the lengthy international flight are encouraged to arrive in Quito prior to Day 1. Upon request, VENT will be happy to assist with these arrangements.

NIGHT: San Jose de Puembo, Puembo (near Quito airport)

January 20, Day 2: Morning Flight from Quito to the Amazonian town of Coca; Transfer from Coca to Napo Wildlife Center (NWC)

After breakfast, we'll transfer to Mariscal Sucre International Airport for our 30-minute flight over the eastern cordillera of the Andes and down to the bustling frontier town of Francisco de Orellana, better known as Coca, on the banks of the Rio Napo. From the airport we will make a short transfer to NWC's visitor facility and dock located at the edge of town, along the Río Payamino, where we'll

board our large comfortable covered canoe (complete with powerful outboard motors), and journey downstream, crisscrossing the Río Napo for about two hours to the Añangu Community landing site. Birding along this rapid-flowing river can be somewhat productive as we advance while just taking in the scene as we glide away from civilization is truly fascinating. We disembark and take a brief break to stretch, use the restrooms, and even do some fun birding as our luggage is transferred to a smaller hand-paddled canoe and sent ahead down the blackwater Añanguyaco (Añangu stream). We will then board our hand-paddled canoe to undertake a most unforgettable afternoon wildlife experience as we float and bird our way along the mystical blackwater Añanguyacu, and its densely vegetated banks, to the Napo Wildlife Center. Getting our initial view of this impressive jungle lodge as we exit onto Añangucocha Lagoon is a remarkable experience. The sights and sounds of this *varzea* rainforest domain, teeming with birdlife, primates, caiman, the possibility of an (up-close-and-personal) encounter with a family of Giant River Otters, and who knows what else, guarantees a memorable adventure.

NIGHT: Napo Wildlife Center, Yasuní National Park

January 21-24, Day 3-6: Napo Wildlife Center Surroundings & the Napo River

Based in the unexpected comfort of these ecologically designed accommodations, we'll spend the next four days experiencing this magnificent area. We will quietly paddle and float along in ecologically constructed canoes, exploring the edge of the beautiful Añangucocha lagoon and densely enshrouded blackwater streams in search of parrots, trogons, kingfishers, jacamars, nunbirds, barbets, araçaris and toucans, woodpeckers, flycatchers, and much more. Primates (among the 10 or 11 species found here) are spotted regularly throughout the area, including White-tailed Titi-Monkey, White-fronted Capuchin and Common Squirrel Monkey, Napo Saki Monkey, Silver Woolly Monkey, White-bellied Spider-Monkey, and the special endemic Golden-mantled Tamarin, among others. Three very sturdy towers will give us the chance to spot the denizens of the high canopy. We'll scout trails through low-lying várzea (seasonally-flooded ground) and terra firme (rich and well-drained upland terrain) forests, our ears and eyes attentive to any sound or movement. We will be on the lookout for swarms of army ants with their

attendant antbirds, and mixed foraging flocks in the midstory and canopy. Our local guides are incredibly keen and know the exact territories of many of the more iconic and skulking specialties, and we'll have excellent chances of seeing many of these more "difficult" critters here. There will also be some time to relax back at the lodge during midday breaks. Believe it or not, you can bird from your very own hammock.

We will also take an early excursion back up the Añanguyacu to then explore various areas along the Río Napo, including: two *saladeros* (clay licks) that attract hundreds of parrots, parakeets, parrotlets and even some macaws; a river island or two, to seek out the specialized inhabitants that can only be found in these unique riparian habitats. Possibilities here will be many and we can hope for Spix's Guan; Ladder-tailed Nightjar; Olive-spotted Hummingbird; Gray-breasted Crake; Large-billed Tern; Cocoi Heron; Roseate Spoonbill; King and Greater Yellow-headed vultures; Scarlet-crowned and Gilded barbets; Little and Spot-breasted woodpeckers; Yellow-headed and Black caracaras; Scarlet-shouldered and Riparian parrotlets, Cobalt-winged Parakeet; Orange-cheeked, Blue-headed Parrot, Yellow-crowned, Mealy, and Orange-winged amazons; Dusky-headed and White-eyed parakeets; Castelnau's Antshrike; Black-and-white Antbird; Parker's, White-bellied, and Dark-breasted spinetails; Amazonian Umbrellabird; Spotted Tody-Flycatcher; Mottle-backed Elaenia; River Tyrannulet; Fuscous Flycatcher; Drab Water-Tyrant; Oriole Blackbird; and Orange-headed Tanager; among many other species.

Overall, the species possibilities at Napo Wildlife Center and vicinity are too great to list here, but to put it simply, we will be in the realm of the richest avian diversity on earth, including tinamous; Zigzag, Agami and Capped herons; many raptors, including the magnificent Harpy Eagle (we would be very lucky to see one, but it is possible); guans; a wide array of macaws and parrots; Hoatzin; trogons; jacamars; toucans; Black-necked Red and other cotingas; and a great variety of antbirds, manakins, flycatchers, tanagers and more— the list just goes on and on! Around 600 species of birds have been recorded in this region and we will certainly find a lot of them.

NIGHTS: Napo Wildlife Center, Yasuní National Park



Golden-mantled Tamarin, Napo Wildlife Center © Brian Gibbons

January 25, Day 7: Return to Coca and Flight to Quito.

This morning we will depart from Napo Wildlife Center early and bird our way back to the Río Napo by paddle canoe, transferring to our covered motorized canoe for our return to Coca. We will then transfer to the airport for the return flight to the Mariscal Sucre International airport in Quito.

Departing participants:

Those not continuing on to Ecuador: Eastern Slope of the Andes will be met at the airport and transferred to the San José de Puembo hotel, where you will have a room reserved in your name, and the remainder of the afternoon and evening (including dinner) will be on your own. Those with departing flights scheduled for this evening or the following morning will receive transfer back to the airport accordingly.



Black-necked Red Cotinga © Brian Gibbons

Continuing participants:

Those continuing on to Ecuador: Eastern Slope of the Andes will meet up with newly arrived participants, who spent the previous night at the San José de Puenbo, and together continue by land to Wildsumaco Lodge, in the Andean foothills. Please refer to that itinerary for further details.

NIGHT: San José de Puenbo, Puenbo (near Quito Airport)

January 26, Day 8 Departure for home

Transfers will be provided to the airport in time for this morning's departing flights.

Essential Tour Information

TOUR SIZE: This tour is limited to 10 tour participants. However, VENT reserves the right to increase the tour limit by one to accommodate a couple when only one space is available.

TOUR LEADER(s): This tour is led by **Paul Greenfield** and **Remigio (Remi) Grefa**.



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 a fine arts major at the Tyler School of Art. Since 1972, he has lived in Ecuador where his fascination for birds and art has culminated in the completion of 20 years of work illustrating *The Birds of Ecuador* (Cornell University Press, 2001), which he co-authored with Robert Ridgely. The Spanish version was published in 2006 and *The Birds of Ecuador* App was launched in 2018. Paul is also co-author of *Birds of Western Ecuador, a Photographic Guide* (Princeton

University Press, 2016) with Nick Athanas. He has participated in the discovery of a number a new avian species to science and has painted several frontispiece illustrations of these newly described taxa. Paul is very involved in saving Ecuador’s avian diversity and important habitats through his involvement with various foundations, as well as working with and inspiring local governments and communities to get involved in the protection of “their” biodiversity as a pioneer and promoter of birding tourism throughout Ecuador. He was the lead author of Ecuador’s *National Strategy of Bird Tourism* (2006), and its Update (2010). He has been showing visitors the birds of this fascinating country for nearly five decades and has led many Ecuador bird tours. Paul and his wife, Martha, live in Quito.



Remigio (Remy) Grefa was born and raised along the shores of the Napo River in the tiny indigenous Kichwa community of Añangu, in the upper Amazon Basin of Ecuador. As a child of the rainforest, he developed a close tie with the rich biodiversity of the Amazonian jungle, but became especially interested in birds as a young boy when he noticed foreign visiting birdwatchers arriving at a nearby nature lodge. It was then that he promised himself that when he grew up he

would learn the names of the local birds, in English. . . and he eventually did! Throughout his formative years, his community had embarked on a groundbreaking nature tourism project of their

own—the building and co-management (and eventually outright ownership) of the fabulous Napo Wildlife Center—and by the time Remy graduated from high school he was ready to join the ranks of this incredible endeavor. He began working at the lodge from the ground up (odd jobs, dishwasher, laundry brigade, etc.); after a few months he was promoted to waiting tables, and after six months he became one of the lodge’s bartenders for a year-and-a-half. He then graduated to boatman, where he was the second canoe paddler for many, many birding groups, which gave him the perfect opportunity to receive hands-on apprenticeship in birding, as well as English. In 2009, he took a job as a waiter on the *Manatee Amazon Explorer*, a houseboat style vessel that cruises the country’s Napo and Aguarico rivers. He was eventually promoted again as an official birding and naturalist guide at Napo Wildlife Center by 2017 and continues to fill that role exceptionally to this day. Remy and his wife, Lola, along with their two daughters, Kayana and Wita, live in the parish of Dayuma, not far from the frontier town of Puerto Francisco de Orellana (more commonly known as “Coca”).

TOUR COSTS & PAYMENT INFORMATION

TOUR FEE: \$TBC per person based on double occupancy or \$TBC for a person requiring single accommodation. This includes all meals from breakfast on Day 2 through breakfast on Day 7, accommodations as stated in the itinerary, all ground transportation during the tour, and guide services provided by the tour leaders. It does not include airfare to nor from the starting/ending city; however, flights within the tour (if any) are included. The fee also excludes laundry, personal expenses, and other items of a personal nature. For information about gratuities, please see the “TIPPING” sub-section below. If the minimum group size is not met, each participant will be charged a small-group supplement—shared equally and communicated in advance—to allow the tour to proceed.

REGISTRATION & DEPOSIT: You may register for this tour through the VENT [website](#) or by calling our office (512-328-5221). The initial deposit for this tour is \$1,000 per person. At 180 days VENT will collect a second deposit that brings the total deposit amount to 40% of the tour price. We accept MasterCard and Visa for both deposits.

PAYMENTS: All tour payments may be made by credit card (MasterCard or Visa), check, money order, or bank transfer (contact the VENT office for bank transfer information). These include initial deposits,

second deposits, interim payments, final balances, special arrangements, etc. Full payment of the tour fee is due 120 days (September 21, 2026) prior to the tour departure date.

EXTRA ARRANGEMENTS: Should you wish to make arrangements to arrive early or extend your stay, please contact the VENT office at least two months prior to your departure date. We can very easily make hotel arrangements and often at our group rate, if we receive your request with enough advance time.

EXCHANGE RATE SURCHARGES: Tour prices are based on the rate of exchange at the time of itinerary publication. If rates change drastically, it may be necessary to impose a surcharge. If a surcharge is necessary, every effort will be made to minimize the amount. In many cases, these additional foreign exchange rate surcharges have been passed to VENT by its vendors and suppliers.

FUEL SURCHARGES: Our prices are based on fuel prices at the time of itinerary publication. While we will do everything possible to maintain our prices, it may be necessary to institute a fuel surcharge.

TIPPING: An important part of the value of a VENT tour is knowing that tips for local service providers at our destinations—restaurant staff, hotel staff, drivers, local guides, and various other support staff—are included in your tour fee. If you would like to offer any of your local guides an additional tip, \$5 to \$10 a day is a common amount.

Tips for your VENT tour leader(s) are not included, but it is customary to tip one or both if you feel that you have received exceptional service. To assist in your planning, we recommend tipping your VENT tour leader(s) \$15 to \$20 per day, or the equivalent of approximately 2–4% of the tour fee.

If you plan to give tips by cash, they should be given directly to your tour leader at the end of the tour and not sent to the VENT office. Some of our tour leaders use mobile payment applications such as Venmo, PayPal, and Wise. If you would like to use this method, please ask your tour leaders directly whether they can accept tips through such an application.

We emphasize that tipping is optional and that these amounts are only recommendations. The amount you decide to tip is based entirely on your experience and at your discretion.

CANCELLATION & REFUNDS

CANCELLATION BY PARTICIPANT:

- **More than 120 days prior to the tour start date:** A refund of all monies paid will be issued, less 50% of the deposit (including initial and second deposit)
- **120 days or fewer prior to the tour start date:** No refund will be provided.
- **Optional add-ons:** Some tours offer optional add-ons that are designated as non-refundable. Any such add-ons are clearly identified as non-refundable at the time of booking. By selecting and purchasing an optional add-on, the participant acknowledges and accepts its non-refundable status. Fees paid for non-refundable add-ons are not refundable under any circumstances, regardless of when the tour is cancelled.

This cancellation policy applies to all participants and all tours (Pre-Tours and Extensions are considered self-contained tours separate from the main tour). Because unexpected events can occur, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance.

CANCELLATION BY VENT:

If VENT cancels a tour prior to departure without cause or good reason, VENT will provide the participant a full refund, which will constitute full settlement to the participant.

If VENT cancels or delays a tour or any portion of a tour as a result of any Force Majeure event, VENT will use its reasonable best efforts to refund any payments on the balance of the tour fee to participant; provided that, VENT will have no obligation to provide a participant with a refund and will not be liable or responsible to a participant, nor be deemed to have defaulted under or breached any applicable agreement, for any failure or delay in fulfilling or performing any term of such agreement. A "Force Majeure" event means any act beyond VENT's control, including, without limitation, the following: (a) acts of God; (b) flood, fire, earthquake, hurricane, epidemic, pandemic or explosion; (c) war, invasion, hostilities (whether war is declared or not), terrorist threats or acts, riot or other civil unrest; (d) government order, law or actions; (e) embargoes or blockades; (f) national or regional emergency; (g) strikes, labor stoppages, labor slowdowns or other industrial disturbances;

(h) shortage of adequate power or transportation facilities; and (i) any other similar events or circumstances beyond the control of VENT.

This VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy does not apply to air tickets purchased through VENT or to any special arrangements, such as additional hotel nights, that fall outside of the services described in the tour itinerary.

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.

TRAVEL INSURANCE

MEDICAL EVACUATION INSURANCE/PROTECTION REQUIREMENT: This tour visits remote locations where immediate access to primary medical care may not be available. For this reason, travel insurance/travel protection which covers you for emergency evacuation is required for participation on this tour. This coverage is included in the Ripcord Rescue Travel Insurance™ program. Alternatively, comparable service can be obtained through Medjet and its MedjetAssist plan. If you choose not to purchase insurance/travel protection through Ripcord or Medjet, you are required to obtain it through another provider. Please refer to the TRAVEL INSURANCE/TRAVEL PROTECTION section for additional information.

SUGGESTED OPTIONS: To safeguard against losses due to illness, accident, or other unforeseen circumstances, we strongly recommend the purchase of travel insurance as soon as possible after making a deposit. VENT has partnered with Redpoint Travel Protection as our preferred travel insurance provider. Through Redpoint, we recommend its comprehensive Ripcord plan, which includes a medical evacuation benefit. With this in mind, it is important to note that medical evacuation is not offered by Redpoint as a stand-alone policy or benefit. For travelers not interested in comprehensive travel insurance, VENT recommends Medjet and its MedjetAssist® plan. Medjet is not an insurance company, and Medjet Assist is not an insurance product; rather, Medjet is a membership-based air-medical transport company specializing in moving hospitalized travelers from an admitting hospital to a medical facility of choice. Medjet does not provide medical evacuation

service from the point of injury or illness; yet, the MedjetAssist plan offers robust enough travel protection to satisfy the medical evacuation insurance requirement in place for many VENT tours.

About Redpoint Travel's Ripcord Plan

Ripcord is a completely integrated travel insurance program with single contact for emergency services, travel assistance, and insurance claims. Critical benefits include comprehensive travel insurance for trip cancellation/interruption, medical evacuation from your point of injury or illness to your hospital of choice; medical expense coverage, death of pet, and much more. Optional expanded insurance coverage is available and includes items such as evacuation coverage in case of a natural disaster or political or security reasons, waiver for pre-existing medical conditions exclusion, and a "Cancel for Any Reason" benefit. Ripcord is available to U.S. and non-U.S. residents.*

For a price quote or to purchase travel insurance, please visit: [Ripcord Travel Insurance](#); or click the Ripcord logo on our website (click Help > Preparation and Insurance > Trip Insurance); or call +1-415-481-0600. Pricing is based on age, trip cost, trip length, and level of coverage.

*To be eligible for the pre-existing medical condition exclusion waiver and the optional Cancel for Any Reason (CFAR) upgrade, you must purchase your policy within 15 days of making your first trip payment. The CFAR benefit provides reimbursement for 75% of covered costs, and increases the policy premium by approximately 50%. Policies may be purchased either for the full value of the tour fee at the time of deposit or in segments as individual tour payments are made (deposit, second deposit, final balance, additional arrangements, etc.). The "pay as you go" approach reduces up-front expense and ensures that the amount paid toward your full policy premium is in proportion to the amount paid toward the full tour fee. If you choose to "pay as you go," you must cover each deposit or payment within 15 days, and insure all non-refundable trip costs in order to maintain the CFAR benefit. Please refer to the policy for a full description of coverage.

Redpoint considers COVID-19 illness as any other seasonal respiratory illness. Providing only a positive Covid-19 test result will likely not be considered a covered event per the terms and conditions of the company's policy. Redpoint maintains a [Coronavirus FAQ page](#) on its website that addresses questions

and concerns travelers may have regarding COVID-19 and Redpoint's policy. We strongly recommend that you visit the page for an overview of relevant topics.

About Medjet's MedjetAssist Plan

MedjetAssist is a membership program that functions like AAA for motorists. The company's primary service is air medical transport. Critical benefits of MedjetAssist include a staff on call and ready to provide assistance 24 hours a day, 7 days a week; all-expenses-paid air medical transport in the United States and internationally to medical facility of choice, regardless of medical necessity; repatriation of remains; and no exclusions for pre-existing conditions.

For travelers under 75, MedjetAssist may be purchased as Short-Term Memberships of 8, 15, 21, and 30 days, or Regular Annual Memberships from 1 to 5 years. For travelers 75–84, Medjet offers a Diamond Membership that is the same program but with a few additional conditions.

For a price quote or to purchase MedjetAssist, please visit: [Medjet.com/VentBird](https://www.Medjet.com/VentBird) or call 1-800-527-7478. Pricing is based on type and term of membership.

GETTING THERE & REQUIRED TRAVEL DOCUMENTS

AIR TRAVEL: 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. Per person fees apply for each set of travel arrangements: \$50 domestic; \$75 international.* Many of our travelers choose to make their own air travel arrangements, but we emphasize the benefits to using our services. If you book your air arrangements yourself, Victor Emanuel Travel is unable to provide support in managing any flight delays and/or cancellations that could occur before and during a tour. When you purchase air tickets through Victor Emanuel Travel, our staff has ready access to your air ticket record and can provide assistance as problems arise. Please feel free to call the VENT office to confirm your air arrangements. Please be sure to check with the VENT office prior to purchasing your air ticket to confirm that the tour is sufficiently subscribed to operate. VENT cannot be held responsible for any air ticket penalties.

*An air ticket will be purchased by Victor Emanuel Travel on behalf of the traveler with the traveler's consent. A purchase is considered final upon receipt of payment. If a ticket is subsequently reissued at

the behest of the traveler (i.e. voluntary change of plans), the same fee rates apply for the reissue process, in addition to any fees that may be charged by the airline.

BAGGAGE: Please limit baggage to one piece of luggage and one carry-on. The airlines now strictly enforce baggage regulations. Excess baggage charges, which can be substantial, are the personal responsibility of each participant. Please consult your pre-departure materials and/or airline to find out specific weight restrictions.

As a precaution against lost luggage, we suggest that you pack a change of clothes, toiletries, medications, important travel documents, optics, and any other essential items in your carry-on bag. Due to ever-changing circumstances in the government's attempts to improve airport security, we recommend that you check the website of the [Transportation Security Administration \(TSA\)](#) for information pertaining to permissible carry-on items.

TRAVEL DOCUMENTS:

PASSPORTS: A passport valid for at least six months beyond your planned departure from Ecuador is required.

VISAS: Visas are not required for U.S. citizens traveling to this destination. If you hold a passport from another country, please check with your consulate or embassy for the most accurate guidance.

IMPORTANT: The visa details above are current for U.S. citizens as of June 18, 2026. Because entry requirements can change without notice, we kindly remind all participants to double-check the latest information before traveling. Travelers using non-U.S. passports are responsible for confirming any entry requirements that apply to their home country.

WHAT TO BRING

CLOTHING: The Best of Amazonia (Napo Wildlife Center) Short Tour is "staged" in the neotropical lowlands which is generally warm/hot and humid. Dress is casual or informal throughout. Please wear darker colors, not whites, and avoid startling patterns that could frighten birds and other wildlife.

San José de Puenbo, where you will be staying on your first and last nights, is located in the interAndean valley (2415 mts./7923 ft. above sea level). It is usually quite pleasant (spring-like

temperatures) during the day (20-22° C/66-72° F), but can be chilly at night (10-12° C/50-52° F), so a light jacket or sweater is recommended.

Lightweight Field Clothing: long-sleeved shirts that dry quickly (although long sleeves are not essential, they do offer additional protection from the equatorial sun and biting insects).

Hat: for sun protection.

Rain jacket or poncho: for rain protection (or bring an umbrella)

FOOTWEAR: Napo Wildlife Center provides mud boots in most sizes, but be aware that these can become uncomfortable after an hour or two of jungle trail walking, so packing an extra pair of insoles for extra support is highly recommended.

A good trail-walking shoe or lightweight hiking boot when in the field. Athletic shoes are acceptable but will not keep your feet dry and can become soiled from muddy conditions.

Lighter pair of shoes: for downtime at the Napo Wildlife Center and San José de Puenbo

Sandals or other open-toed shoes: appropriate around the lodges (but beware of biting insects at NWC)

Waterproof hiking boots or mud boots

EQUIPMENT: Having the right equipment makes the travel experience more enjoyable. Below is a list of items that will ensure you are well-prepared:

- Sunscreen, lip balm, skin lotions
- Umbrella: optional
- Daypack: Good for carrying extra clothing, field guides, supplies, and optical equipment during all land excursions
- Polarized sunglasses: with good UV protection
- Ample supply of all personal medication: it is a good idea to bring copies of all prescriptions
- Insect repellent: see INSECT REPELLENT section below
- Notebooks and pens

- Travel alarm clock
- Personal toiletries
- Collapsible walking stick: A highly recommended item for those who have trouble walking
- Tissue packs
- Lens cloth
- Flashlight or headlamp
- Water bottle: Napo Wildlife Center usually supplies an aluminum water bottle for guests
- Cameras, lenses, memory cards, and extra batteries
- Charging equipment for cellphones, laptops, tablets/iPads

Binoculars: We strongly recommend you bring a pair of good binoculars of 8x32, 8x42, or 10x42 magnification. Please do not bring mini-binoculars of any kind. Some people like them because they are small and lightweight; but they have an extremely small field of view and very poor light gathering power. You will find that 8x32 binoculars are compact and light enough.

Spotting Scopes: Your tour leaders will have scopes available for group use throughout the trip, but if you have one and wish to bring it, please feel free to do so.

DESTINATION INFORMATION & LOCAL CONDITIONS

CLIMATE & WEATHER: Napo Wildlife Center and surroundings are in the tropical lowlands at around 250 meters above sea level. Here, you should be prepared for warm nights and warm to hot midday temperatures (the normal daily temperature range is the low 70s to upper 80s or low 90s). All cabins are equipped with ceiling fans as is the dining hall, and around the lodge at least there is often a nice breeze that comes off Añangucocha Lagoon. Humidity is always high, especially within the forest. We may also get caught in an occasional rain shower.

CONDITIONS: The ecologically designed cabañas at the Napo Wildlife Center are spacious (450 square feet) with tall thatched roofs, featuring private porches with lake views, electricity, ceiling fans, a safety deposit box, and window screens. Each cabaña has one king-sized bed and a twin bed with excellent mosquito netting. Modern bathrooms provide flush toilets and 24-hour hot water showers.

The large dining hall contains a library and bar with internet access (somewhat irregular) at a reasonable price.

Getting around and birding at NWC is done in fiberglass paddle canoes along narrow blackwater streams and around Añangucocha lagoon as well as on foot along forest trails through terra firme (over mostly well drained terrain) and varzea (through flatter low-lying, often seasonally flooded terrain); the jungle trails (earthen in nature, which can be muddy in certain areas, thus the idea of mud boots) vary depending on the terrain they pass through, some being relatively flat while others are a bit more hilly (especially the 'Tiputini Trail, which follows along low ridge-tops and drops occasionally through low-lying sections, crossing a couple of forest streams along the way).

Alternative options will be made available for participants that would prefer less walking or less time in the field. Also, we will spend a few hours atop two or three (up to four) towers that offer amazing opportunities to see dozens of species that inhabit the forest canopy. The typical daily schedule calls for a 5:30 am breakfast, 6:00 am departure for our morning outings, usually returning to the lodge for lunch and a midday downtime break until about 3:30–4:00 p.m. when we will set out again for an afternoon bout of birding. We will weigh options to stay out in the forest a bit longer on one or two days, with a hot lunch brought to us in the field, if conditions and goals seem logistically viable.

Birding by paddle-canoes is more relaxed, of course, and we will have several opportunities to enjoy this style of birding and nature-watching in the daytime and perhaps on one or two evenings. Our local paddlers are experts at maneuvering the canoes silently and carefully to give everyone a chance to see the birds and other animals we will spot. Our Napo River birding will be somewhat different, aboard a large, covered motorized dugout canoe; we will observe one river-edge saladero (parrot clay lick) from our 'river vantage point' and disembark on one or two river islands that hold a somewhat strange combination of habitats (grasses, shrubs, cane, Cecropia stands and woodland, etc.) that are home to an interesting ecosystem with a handful of special bird species that are unique to them. We will also visit an interior forest saladero, walking along a half-mile paved trail to a large blind/hide where we will hope to see hundreds of parakeets, smaller parrots and parrotlets along with the chance to observe Scarlet Macaws (and the occasional mega-mammal!), all at eye-level!

Note: Our two-hour transfer between the town of Francisco de Orellana (Coca) and the Añangu Community landing site (which accesses the Napo Wildlife Center Lodge) on our first and last days of the trip will be aboard a long, covered dugout motorized canoe fitted with comfortable seats.

CURRENCY & SPENDING: The official currency of Ecuador is the US Dollar. Your Best of Amazonia Short/Eastern Slope of the Andes tours include all necessary expenses. You may want to bring enough cash to cover personal expenses not included in the program, such as bar bills, laundry, souvenirs and gifts, extra gratuities, meals on your own, and other personal items. It is strongly advised that your money be in U.S. Dollars and in smaller denominations of cash, as many places we visit may be unable to provide change for large bills. Major credit cards (MasterCard, Visa, American Express, and Diner's Club) are widely accepted in and around Quito. Napo Wildlife Center accepts Visa and MasterCard. Note that traveler's checks are no longer accepted in Ecuador. ATM service is available in the Quito-Puembo area and (in a pinch) at local banks in Coca. If your home currency differs from the US Dollar you can check the latest currency conversion rate by visiting "XE-The World's Favorite Currency Site" at: <http://www.xe.com/>.

ELECTRICITY: 110 volts is the standard (the same as in the U.S.), as are all electrical outlets throughout Ecuador. If you have equipment that uses 220-240V, you will need an adapter to plug in your appliances as well as an all-purpose transformer if your appliances are not suitable for lower voltage or if they use a different style plug. Most computers provide plugs that accept both 110-120V and 220-240V simultaneously, though you may need a plug adapter that fits the US outlet system.

INTERNET ACCESS: Free Internet and Wi-fi access is available as follows: Quito (San José de Puembo) and Napo Wildlife Center (available at a reasonable cost, but somewhat irregular).

LANGUAGE: Spanish is the primary language spoken in Ecuador; the Añangu community at Napo Wildlife Center primarily speaks Kichwa (a dialect of Quechua) and Spanish, but many of the lodge employees speak various levels of English. Our naturalist guides at NWC speak English.

TIME: Ecuador is on Ecuador Time (ECT) and is 1 hour behind Eastern Daylight Time (EDT) at this time of year.

LAUNDRY SERVICE: Excellent one-day laundry service is available and recommended at Napo Wildlife Center at a reasonable cost, greatly eliminating the need to bring lots of extra clothing.

HEALTH & SAFETY

HEALTH: VENT follows Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommendations for standard travel precautions, which includes vaccination against a variety of preventable diseases. Among these so-called Routine Vaccinations are measles/mumps/rubella (MMR) vaccine, diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DPT) vaccine, poliovirus vaccine (boosters for adult travelers), and Varicella (Chickenpox). You should also be up-to-date with Hepatitis A and Hepatitis B vaccinations. Although Yellow Fever is decidedly rare at Napo Wildlife Center, those who have not had a Yellow Fever vaccination might want to consult your physician about this.

If you are taking personal medication, prescription or over-the-counter, 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.

COVID-19: We continually emphasize that our number one priority is the health and safety of our customers and employees. Although VENT no longer maintains any of its COVID-era prevention protocols, we strongly recommend best practices for protecting yourself and your fellow travelers against COVID-19 illness. These measures include receiving the primary series vaccinations for those eligible, staying “Up to Date” with COVID-19 booster shots, wearing high filtration N-95 or KN-95 masks when in airports and on airplanes, and avoiding risky social settings in the lead-up to your tour. These recommendations are firmly rooted in CDC guidance for avoiding COVID-19.

SUN EXPOSURE: The sun’s ultraviolet rays are dangerous under prolonged exposure (sometimes only a matter of minutes), even in winter and early spring. Anytime you are outdoors you will want to protect your skin, including your lips, eyes, nose, and ears. A severe sunburn is potentially very painful and will affect your level of enjoyment. Always protect yourself when outdoors and be sure to bring

an ample supply of high SPF sunscreen and lip balm. We strongly recommend the use of ultra-violet blocking, polarized sunglasses.

INSECT REPELLENTS: There are insect repellents for the skin and an insect repellent used to treat clothing that should not be applied to the skin.

Insect repellents for the skin are commonly available in three forms:

- DEET: (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide): A chemical compound that is marketed under various brand names (OFF!®, Cutter™, Ultrathon™, etc.) and offered in a variety of formulations including sprays, lotions, time-release preparations, and disposable wipes. The formulations will state a percentage of the active ingredient DEET on the packaging. DEET may be applied to exposed skin directly and/or sprayed on clothing. **Please be careful when applying DEET as it can damage plastics and lens coatings.**
- Picaridin: A synthetic formulation that is derived from piperine, a substance found in plants that produce black pepper.
- Herbal insect repellents: Various mixtures of organic ingredients such as oils from eucalyptus, citronella, cedar, and other herbs. The herbal repellents are more difficult to categorize because of the difference in ingredients from one brand to another. There is considerable variation in their effectiveness.

Insect repellent for clothing is marketed in one approved formulation:

- Permanone® (Permethrin): is an odorless spray-on repellent that may be used for pre-treatment of clothing, gear, and tents. It should not be used directly on the skin or sprayed on clothing while being worn. The pre-treatment process requires a number of hours to complete and must be done outdoors, so it is best completed in advance of travel. Do-it-yourself pre-treatment must be repeated more often than commercial treatment using Insect Shield® technology. It is available at various outdoor stores and can easily be found online.
- Insect Shield® apparel: Clothing pre-treated with Permanone is made by a variety of manufacturers. It is available for purchase from some sporting goods suppliers. The clothing is advertised as retaining its repellency for up to 70 washings.

The US EPA offers a search tool to help choose a repellent that is best for a particular situation. For example, some repellents work for mosquitoes, but not for ticks.

<https://www.epa.gov/insect-repellents/which-insect-repellent-right-you>

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 Georgia. The CDC operates a 24-hour recorded Travelers' Information Line at 800-CDC-INFO (800-232-4636), or you can check their website at 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 (click on travel health).

SUGGESTED READING & TRIP PREPARATION

A number of traditional booksellers and online stores list excellent inventories of field guides and other natural history resources that will help prepare you for this tour. We recommend www.amazon.com which has a wide selection; www.buteobooks.com and www.nhbs.com which specialize in ornithology and natural history books; and www.abebooks.com for out-of-print and hard-to-find titles.

FIELD GUIDES:

Birds

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. *The Birds of Ecuador*. Cornell University Press, 2001. This two-volume set is the "Bible" for anyone interested in Ecuador's birds. The Field Guide, with 96 color plates, include illustrations of basically all the species found in the country. The informative text, designed to help species identification, includes distribution maps for all 1,600 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.

Additional Reading:

Hilty, Steven. *Birds of Tropical America*. Shelburne, VT: Chapters Publishing Ltd, 1994. 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, 1989.

Mammals:

Emmons, Louise H. *Neotropical Rainforest Mammals: A Field Guide*. Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1997. Second edition.

CLO Apps

eBird. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Among the largest and most successful citizen science projects in existence, eBird is an essential tool in promoting bird study and conservation. Among a range of benefits, eBird allows users to keep a variety of lists in a single application. When taxonomic splits are incorporated, lists are automatically updated. Additionally, trip leaders can share daily lists, so one only need accept a shared list and it will upload to your files. **Highly recommended.**

Merlin Bird ID. Cornell Lab of Ornithology. Merlin is an app designed as a birding coach for beginning and intermediate birdwatchers. Excellent for use in the field, Merlin asks the observer a series of questions about his or her bird sighting, including date and location, and color, size, and behavior of a bird. Merlin then processes the viewer's responses to present a shortlist of possible identifications, from which the user can choose the likely bird. Species profiles include a brief physical description, photographs, and sound samples. The Photo ID feature allows anyone with a camera to snap a photo and obtain a list of suggestions. Merlin's Sound ID feature allows identification of birds through audible recognition. To use Merlin, download the app and the appropriate regional "pack." For this trip, please download the pack Ecuador: All. Highly recommended.

Ridgely, Robert S. and Greenfield, Paul J. Birds of Ecuador—Field Guide. Birds in the Hand LLC. This App is an updated version of The Birds of Ecuador, including nearly 1,700 species now recorded in this tiny South American country. It can be downloaded through the App Store or Google Play. For more information, connect to the following link: [BirdsEye-Birding](#)
Or connect directly to: [Apple's App Store](#) or to [Google Play](#).

TERMS, CONDITIONS & RESPONSIBILITIES

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours, Inc., a Texas corporation, and/or its agents (together, “VENT”) act only as agents for the participant in regard to travel, whether by railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, 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 participant or in carrying out the arrangements of the tour. VENT accepts no responsibility for losses or additional expenses due to delay or changes in airfare or other services, sickness, weather, strike, war, quarantine, terrorism, or other causes. All such losses or expenses will be borne by the participant, as tour rates only provide for arrangements for the time stated.

VENT reserves the right (i) to substitute hotels of similar category, or the best reasonable substitution available under the circumstances, for those indicated and (ii) to make any changes in the itinerary that are deemed necessary by VENT or which are caused by third party transportation schedules (i.e. railroad, motorcar, motorcoach, boat, airplane, etc.).

VENT reserves the right to substitute leaders or guides on any tour. Where VENT, in its sole discretion, determines such substitution is necessary, it will notify tour participants.

VENT reserves the right to cancel any tour prior to departure with or without cause or good reason. See the VENT Cancellation & Refunds policy set forth above.

Tour prices are based on tariffs and exchange rates in effect on , 2026 and are subject to adjustment in the event of any change thereto.

VENT reserves the right to decline any participant's Registration Form and/or refuse to allow any participant to participate in a tour as VENT deems reasonably necessary, in its sole discretion. VENT

also reserves the right to remove any tour participant from any portion of a tour as VENT deems necessary, in its sole discretion, reasons for such removal include but are not limited to, medical needs, injury, illness, inability to meet physical demands of a tour, personality conflict or situations in which such removal is otherwise in the best interest of the tour, the tour group and/or such participant. A participant may also voluntarily depart from a tour. If a participant is removed from a tour or voluntarily departs from a tour, such participant will be responsible for any expenses associated with such removal or departure, including but not limited to, transportation, lodging, airfare and meals, and VENT will have no obligation to refund or reimburse any such removed or departed participant for any tour payments or deposits previously paid by such participant.

Baggage is carried at the participant's risk entirely. No airline company, its employees, agents and/or affiliates (the "Airline") is to be held responsible for any act, omission, or event during the time participants are not on board the Airline's aircraft. The participant ticket in use by any Airline, when issued, will constitute the sole contract between the Airline and the purchaser of the tickets and/or the participant. The services of any I.A.T.A.N. carrier may be used for VENT tours, and transportation within the United States may be provided by any member carrier of the Airlines Reporting Corporation.

View the complete [Terms and Conditions](#) on our website.

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