

# Colombia

## Cindy Goeddel Photography Workshop

*18<sup>th</sup> February to 6<sup>th</sup> March 2025 (17 days)*



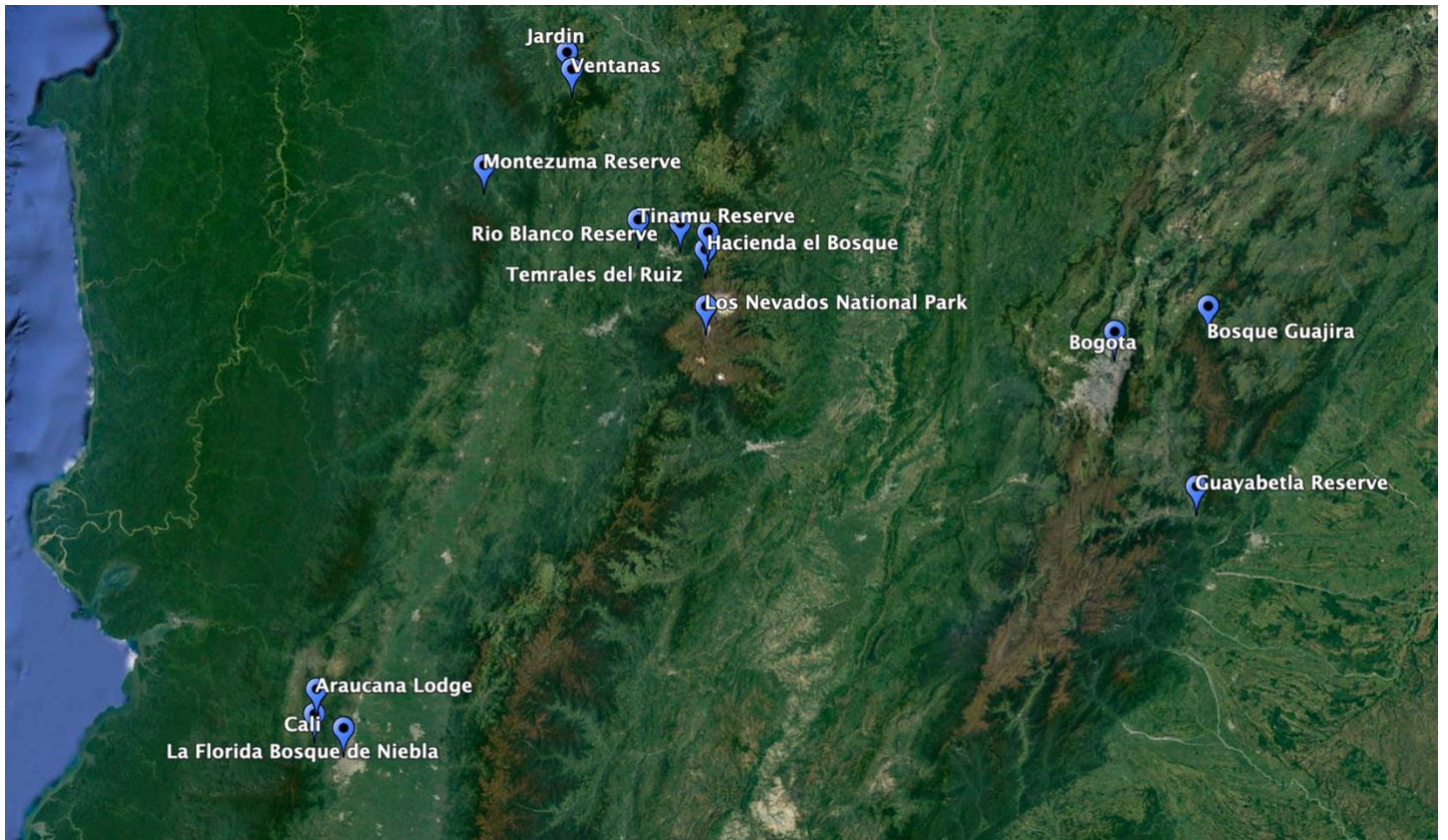
**Andean Cock-of-the-rock by Bobby Wilcox**

*Colombia needs no introduction in birding circles, home to over 1900 species, more than any other country. This huge diversity of species results from the equally diverse range of habitats: three Andean Cordilleras (Western, Central and Eastern Andes), two inter-Andean valleys (the Cauca and Magdalena Valleys), the lowland forests of the Amazon and Orinoco regions, the isolated snow-capped Santa Marta Mountains, the Pacific and Caribbean coasts, deserts and lakes, and the rich wet forests of the Chocó all help to make it one of the most exciting countries to bird on Earth!*

*Embark on an avian adventure like never before with our exclusive birdwatching tour in Colombia, meticulously curated for the discerning bird photographer in you! We've partnered with renowned birding experts in Colombia to unveil the country's most captivating avian wonders in carefully selected locations, ensuring unparalleled photo opportunities. Picture-perfect moments await at every turn, from the quirky Manikins, sought-after Antpittas, glittering hummingbirds, to the wondrous tanagers.*

## *Itinerary & Map*

<b>Day 1</b>	<b>Arrival in Bogota and overnight</b>
<b>Day 2</b>	<b>Early departure for Guayabetal Reserve. Return to Bogota and overnight.</b>
<b>Day 3</b>	<b>Early departure for Bosque Guajira – Guasca. Afternoon visit Observatorio de Colibries. Return to Bogota and overnight.</b>
<b>Day 4</b>	<b>Morning flight to Cali. Transfer to Araucana.</b>
<b>Day 5</b>	<b>Early departure for Dona Dora birding Anchicaya. Afternoon explore Alejandria. Overnight in Araucana.</b>
<b>Day 6</b>	<b>Birding Km18 – La Florida Bosque de Niebla. Overnight in Araucana.</b>
<b>Day 7</b>	<b>Depart for Laguna de Sonso. Afternoon birding around Manizales. Overnight at Recinto del Pensamiento.</b>
<b>Day 8</b>	<b>Early departure for Rio Blanco Reserve. Return to and overnight at Recinto del Pensamiento.</b>
<b>Day 9</b>	<b>Depart for Hacienda el Bosque. Return to and overnight at Recinto del Pensamiento.</b>
<b>Day 10</b>	<b>Morning birding in Los Nevados National Park. Afternoon visit Termales del Ruiz. Overnight at Temales del Ruis.</b>
<b>Day 11</b>	<b>Birding Temrales del Ruiz. Laster, transfer to Tinamu. Overnight at Tinamu.</b>
<b>Day 12</b>	<b>Birding Tinamu Reserve. Afternoon transfer to Montezuma.</b>
<b>Day 13</b>	<b>Full day birding around Montezuma Reserve.</b>
<b>Day 14</b>	<b>Full day birding around Montezuma Reserve.</b>
<b>Day 15</b>	<b>Transfer to Jardin, birding en route. Overnight in Jardin.</b>
<b>Day 16</b>	<b>Early departure to Ventanas. Full morning birding Dona Lucia place. Visit Cock-of-the-Rock lek.</b>
<b>Day 17</b>	<b>Transfer to Rionegro Airport for a flight to Bogota. Final departures.</b>



### *The sites in detail*

**Observatorio de Colibries.** Time dependent, we may visit this site with an incredible set of hummingbird feeders. Up to 14 species visit the feeders, including Green-tailed and Black-tailed Trainbearers, Glowing & Coppery-bellied Pufflegs, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Great Sapphirewing, White-bellied Woodstar, Lesser and Sparkling Violetears and Longuemare’s Sunangel amongst others.

**Anchicaya.** We will spend the entire day birding the various trails and forested stretches of road between km’s 48 and 77 of the Old Buenaventura Road. The habitats will range from lower subtropical to Choco foothill forests and secondary forest, ranging from 1,400 to 500m in elevation. This is THE ideal birding transect in the heartland of the Choco-Pacific! More than 400 species have been recorded between Cali and Buenaventura. While neither time nor interest will take us all the way to the lower elevations at Buenaventura, the majority of the species we will encounter today are highly sought-after and stunning birds.

Baudo Guan, Semicollared Hawk, Dusky Pigeon, Pallid Dove, Purple Quail-Dove, Violet-bellied, Purple-chested and Tooth-billed Hummingbirds, Lanceolated Monklet, Rose-faced Parrot, Spot-crowned Barbet, White-whiskered Hermit, Choco Woodpecker (rare), Choco Trogon (rare), Zeledon’s and Esmeraldas Antbirds, Choco Tapaculo, Spot-crowned



Crested Ant Tanager by Dušan Brinkhuizen

Barbet, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Green, Club-winged, and Golden-collared Manakins, White-headed and Sooty-headed Wrens, Rufous-brown Solitaire, Choco Warbler, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Golden-chested, Scarlet-and-white, Blue-whiskered, Scarlet-browed, Grey-and-gold, and Dusky-faced Tanagers, Crested Ant Tanager and Yellow-green Tanager (Yellow-green Chlorospingus) are all regularly recorded in this insanely bird-rich area. Night birding might turn up Rufescent Screech Owl or Cloud Forest Pygmy Owl, as well as some fancy reptiles and amphibians, in which a proportionate level of endemism is displayed!

**KM18.** We shall depart the city early drive into the mountains west of the metropolis to the famed Bosque San Antonio, also known as KM 18, and other spots en route. This is the area where many well-known Choco endemic species were first described to science! Superb forest still exists here, despite recent expansion into the area, and we will spend the day birding a few choice sites. The list of possible species is huge, some 300+ (!), so we will focus on specialities: Colombian Chachalaca, Chestnut Wood Quail, Grey-headed Dove, Scaled Fruiteater, Chestnut-breasted Wren, and both Purplish-mantled and the mind-blowing Multicolored Tanagers, among many others.

We will start the tour off with some time at the famed Finca Alejandria. This is, without doubt, the single best feeding station and setup in the country, and as impressive as any place, anywhere, on Earth. With just a couple hours' time at the hummingbird feeders we are likely to see Green and Tawny-bellied Hermits, the stunning



**Crescent-faced Antpitta by Forrest Rowland**



**Choco Woodpecker by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

Long-tailed Sylph, Greenish Puffleg, Bronzy Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, adorable White-booted Racket-tail, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Purple-throated Woodstar, Western and Andean Emeralds, Crowned Woodnymph, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and the scarce stunner Blue-headed Sapphire. That's just the hummingbirds! Several species feed on the fruit laid out on trays, and even more come through regularly in massive mixed flocks! Of particular interest we might get views of Golden-headed Quetzal, Andean Motmot, Red-headed Barbet, White-throated and Crimson-rumped Toucanets, Uniform Antshrike, Plain Antwren, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Streaked Xenops, Rusty-winged Barbtail, Lineated Foliage-Gleaner, Streak-capped Treehunter, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant, Barred Becard, Andean Solitaire, Ashy-throated Chlorospingus, White-naped Brushfinch, Flame-rumped Tanager, Blue-capped, Golden-naped, Black-capped, Scrub, Beryl-spangled, Metallic-green, Saffron-crowned, and Golden Tanagers all. An amazing opportunity this morning to enjoy some productive, easy birding netting some wonderful species.

There are several nooks and crannies en route to Anchicaya, and we will make a few stops gleaning some species less likely encountered at the lower elevations of Anchicaya. These include Pacific Tuftedcheek, Narino and Choco Tapaculos, Olivaceous Piha, Black-billed Peppershrike, and both Glistening-green and Crested Ant Tanagers, all of which are species endemic to the Choco bioregion!

Aside from the fabulous birding (including the occasionally mind-numbing mixed flock that defies reason), the scenery here is stunning, and the privilege of birding such an ornithologically famous area is undeniable. Due to a recent invasion of wealthy landowners from Cali constructing their mansions in the vicinity of KM 18, after we turn onto the Old Buenaventura Road and continue some 40kms, we will enter some of the best birding in the region.



**Bicolored Antpitta by Clayton Burne**

**Laguna del Sonso.** This a well-known hangout of Horned Screamer, though due to recent changes in water level maintenance, viewing this bizarre creature has become more difficult. Nevertheless, with dozens of hovering Snail Kite, roosting Common Potoo, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow Oriole, Dwarf Cuckoo and a number of other great species are possible at this interesting site!

**Rio Blanco Reserve.** Today we will explore the Rio Blanco Nature Reserve, situated above the city of Manizales. Here there are over a dozen active hummingbird feeders along a wooden balcony that is lined with flowers. The myriad of hummingbirds could include gems such as Long-tailed Sylph, Buff-tailed Coronet, Speckled Hummingbird, the boldly patterned Collared Inca and Tourmaline Sunangel. Finding an Andean Guan or even the oversized monotypic White-capped Tanager that can sometimes be seen from the balcony of the lodge would be a typical way to start the morning in Rio Blanco.



**Golden-headed Quetzal by David Hoddinott**

Our main quest for the day, however – and certainly one of the highlights of the entire trip – will be the rarely-seen antpittas, which have been patiently habituated to come to earthworm feeding stations that are active early in the morning. The reserve features several of these ‘antpitta feeders’ where worms are placed out every day to attract these secretive birds, and here we have a chance to marvel at these fascinating but normally extremely difficult understory dwellers – sometimes only at an arms-length away! Ornately patterned Chestnut-crowned Antpittas and Brown-banded Antpittas are usually dominant, but we might also have a visit from the tiny vine-loving Slaty-crowned Antpitta, Chestnut-naped Antpitta, and occasionally even the vocal but sneaky near-endemic Bicolored Antpitta. As these special birds are accustomed to human presence at these sites, we often obtain exceptional studies (and photographs!) not just of the antpittas themselves, but also of their

interesting behaviour as they stuff their bills with worms to feed hungry chicks or sometimes even hop across our feet! Other species that regularly visit the antpitta feeders include Grey-browed Brushfinch, the beautiful Green-and-black Fruiteater and Great Thrush.

The wide pathways within the reserve offer excellent access to the pristine cloud forest, where we will watch for the secretive Tawny-breasted Tinamou crossing the track, scarce East Andean Antbird, Golden-headed Quetzal perched motionlessly on a fern-covered branch, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker (arguably the world's most beautiful woodpecker!), and peer into the undergrowth for skulking Blackish, Spillmann's and Ash-colored Tapaculos.



**Buffy Helmetcrest by David Hoddinott**

We might also locate a fruiting tree where several species of parrots could be in attendance, including the scarce Golden-plumed Parakeet, Scaly-naped Amazon and the endangered Rusty-faced Parrot (this being its type location where it was first discovered). Mixed flocks here are sometimes composed of fifty plus species all swarming together in excited movements with intense sound at all levels of the mossy forest, and have the potential to leave us dizzy! Just a few of the possibilities include Buff-breasted and Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers, Yellow-billed Cacique, Pearled Treerunner, Black-eared Hemispingus, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Dusky Piha, Smoke-colored Pewee, the bright Plushcap that prefers dense bamboo, Handsome Flycatcher, Grey-hooded Bush Tanager, Smoky Bush Tyrant, White-banded and White-tailed



**Rufous-fronted Parakeet by Clayton Burne**

Tyrannulets, the white capped form of Capped Conebill, bright Blue-and-black Tanager, Sepia-browed Wren creeping through the vines, Streaked Xenops, Slaty-backed and Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrants, and a wide range of other warblers, tyrants, spinetails, and tanagers.

Continued birding inside this fantastic reserve throughout the day could produce specialities such as the tiny, but colourful Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Mountain Wren, Powerful Woodpecker (giving its distinctive double tap), Masked Trogon, and/or the furtive but exquisitely patterned Ocellated Tapaculo sneaking through the vine tangles. Although we will need considerable luck on our side, we also have possibilities for rarities such as Masked Saltator and the enigmatic Hooded Antpitta.

**Hacienda el Bosque.** Our primary targets are a number of otherwise tricky *Grallaridae*, in the form of Equatorial and Crescent-faced Antpittas. As we head into the forest, we'll also be keeping our eyes open for other desirable species

to be found here – including Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Banded Fruiteater, Grey-browed Brushfinch, Black-thighed Puffleg and Sword-billed Hummingbird.

**Los Nevados del Ruiz.** Though species diversity dwindles markedly as one rises in elevation, the species become more visibly adapted to their niches in the harsh environments near, and above, the treeline. The elfin forest and paramos of this massive park are home to endemic species including the rare and local Rufous-fronted Parakeet and near-endemic Black-thighed Puffleg. Starting in the elfin forests, we will look for these two species along with Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Viridian Metaltail, Glowing and Golden-breasted Pufflegs, Great Sapphirewing, Crowned Chat-Tyrant, Black-backed Bush Tanager, Paramo Tapaculo and a slew of beautiful tanagers, including one of the most gorgeous birds on the continent – Golden-crowned Tanager!



**Yellow-headed Manakin by Dubi Shapiro**

Once above the treeline, in the alpine grasslands dotted with *Espletia* Sunflowers (known locally as *frailejones*) and Puya Yuccas, Andean Condors and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles soar overhead, the delightful Buffy Helmetcrest flits from flower to flower, and various skulkers like Stout-billed Cinclodes, Andean Tit-Spintail, Many-striped Canastero and Tawny Antpitta call from the scrub. It will be a unique experience to walk this high, over 12 000ft in elevation, amongst the highest peaks and volcanoes in the country. We'll ward off the typically cold outside temperatures with a cup of Coca tea or a hot Sugar Cane drink. Thereafter, we'll begin our descent from the mountain – taking a quieter route down with excellent road side birding.

**Termales del Ruiz.** High altitude hummingbird feeders are generally scarce anywhere in South America, but here they will help us see many otherwise difficult species including Golden-breasted and Black-thighed Pufflegs, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill and Viridian Metaltail, as well as provide photographic opportunities for commoner species such as Great Sapphirewing, Buff-winged Starfrontlet and Shining Sunbeam.



**Rufous-gaped Hillstar by Dušan Brinkhuizen**

**Tinamu Reserve.** This is an excellent site to see the rarely recorded Cocoa Thrush, as well as actually see Little Tinamou rather than just hear it! We'll also be looking for Rufous-breasted and Green Hermits, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Grey-headed Dove, White-vented Plumeleteer and Golden-collared Manakin.

**Montezuma Lodge.** Near a small school perched atop a rural mountain ridge, the stunted forest around Apia is home to both Yellow-headed Manakin and Turquoise Dacnis – two exceptional endemic species! Recent reports of Hooded Antpitta in the region might be worth a follow up, and with great luck we might run into Yellow-headed Manakin, among other exciting possibilities.

**Cerro Montezuma** rises up from the valley beside our homestead, and we have two full days to immerse ourselves in the avian riches of this under-explored wilderness.



**Golden-breasted Puffleg by Stephan Lorenz**

We aim to reach the Choco vegetation at around 2,000 metres in elevation. Here the dawn chorus will greet us and one of the first birds we will likely see is the gaudy Gold-ringed Tanager, a species with an extremely limited distribution. Localized hummingbirds, endemic to the Choco region are also well in evidence, including the oversized Empress Brilliant, Brown Inca, Choco Tyrannulet, Choco Vireo, Purpled-bibbed Whitetip, White-whiskered Hermit, and lovely Violet-tailed Sylph. Bird activity will have us all watching the moss-covered trunks for the scarce Star-chested Treerunner that can often be found associating with other flocking activity. Some of the other Choco endemics that we will be sifting through in such flocks include the critically endangered Munchique Wood Wren, erratic Dusky Starfrontlet, bright Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Uniform Treehunter, Pacific Tuftedcheek, Black-and-gold Tanager, Choco Warbler, Dusky Bush Tanager, Glistening-green and Rufous-throated Tanagers and maybe even the rarely-seen Black Solitaire that sometimes gives away its presence with its ethereal song. Conspicuous movement might also give away the presence of another Choco endemic in the form of Beautiful Jay although we will have to concentrate on small mouse-like movements in the undergrowth to catch a glimpse of Choco and Nariño Tapaculos, also both specialties of the Choco. While rare, we have recorded the localized Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer here on previous tours.



**Brown-banded Antpitta by Clayton Burne**





Gold-ringed Tanager by David Hoddinott

Birding our way into the lower elevations, we can continue looking for fruiting trees that attract frugivores such as Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-collared Chlorophonias, Black-billed Peppershrike, Scaly and the stunning Orange-breasted Fruiteaters, Ochre-breasted Tanager, Bicolored Antvireo, and the Choco endemic Toucan Barbet. Two difficult species that occur here that we might be able to lure into view are the scarce Cloud-forest Pygmy Owl that is normally found in the high canopy, while in the darkest undergrowth we can try our luck with the elusive Yellow-breasted Antpitta. The sparkling Rufous-gaped Hillstar generally prefers to be along riverside vegetation, which is also the preferred habitat of Bay

Wren and the localized Choco Brushfinch.

**Jardin and surrounds.** We'll visit one of the most accessible lekking sites on earth of the exquisite Andean Cock-of-the-rock. This can be an overwhelming frenzy of more than twenty eye-searing males in full raspy song and ostentatious display, while we marvel from only a few feet away! In the river below, we will scan for White-capped Dipper feeding along the rocks, plus several possible tanagers including the boldly patterned Saffron-crowned, Lacrimose Mountain, vivid Grass-green and near-endemic Flame-rumped.

### Tour Grading & Key

<b>Overall Ease</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Undemanding to moderate.
<b>Birding Ease</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate. Several low-density species. Typical forest birding difficulties of visibility & lighting.
<b>Accommodation</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Comfortable, some lodgings are simple.
<b>Walking / Trails</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Moderate, mostly on flat ground with variable substrate. High altitude walking is mostly downhill or kept to short distances.
<b>Vehicles / Roads</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Several drives, some impacted by city traffic. Mostly sealed roads between towns, changing to dirt in remoter areas. Mountain passes & eroded dirt roads can be bumpy. Risk of landslides & road closures.
<b>Photography</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Good. Typical forest lighting difficulties. Several feeders.
<b>Annoyances</b>	<input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Temperatures vary from hot & humid to cold at altitude. Rain is to be expected.

## ***Get to know your expert Rockjumper Tour Leader***



**Forrest Rowland** took his first trip to the Neotropics at the tender age of 9 and this has blossomed into a lifelong love affair with the region's birds and wildlife. Forrest has a technical education in Genetics but has since spent many years in the field, honing his birding skills throughout the Americas. He is now Rockjumper's primary tour leader in this exciting region.

Forrest's first extended stint to South America involved several weeks at Tiputini Biological Research Station, in the Upper Amazonian region of Ecuador. This encouraged him to ship all his earthly belongings to Quito, where he became a resident after realising that he wanted to dedicate his career and life to bird guiding. Since this move in 2003, Forrest has guided over three dozen tours, and participated in numerous scientific excursions, in South America, including working

with ProAves and other local conservation entities in Colombia. Forrest considers South America the world's best birding destination and looks forward to sharing his vast experience and enthusiasm with you!

### **How did you get into birding?**

When I was 9 years old, my family and I took a tour to the island nation of Trinidad. We stayed at the Asa Wright Nature Center, from which most birding on the island occurs. Though not a birder at the time, being exposed to all those wonderful trogons, toucans, bellbirds and manakins got me hooked. Within a month of being home, bird feeders were up, field guides were strewn about the living room, and I was watching everything that flew with my new pair of binoculars!

### **What led you to choose a career in tourism?**

Getting to share experiences with other people certainly enhances those experiences. What better way to get to enjoy seeing the birds of the world than with other birders? Plus, I find people fascinating, while Rockjumper's diverse and dynamic clientele certainly adds much to any experience.

### **What are your other hobbies and interests?**

I like to read and write. Said as simplistically as that might belie my true enthusiasm for this, but I probably go through 2 books a week, on average, and try to write as many essays and articles as I can find the time for. I like to hike, run trails, and do anything and everything that involves water. I could swim before I could walk, and I love diving, snorkelling, or just swimming in a lake or river. My life has a soundtrack, too. It is dictated by what I come across on music blogs, record label press, and so forth. I play a few instruments as well, though my favourite (piano) isn't quite as portable as I wish.

### **What do you enjoy most about being on tour?**

The newness of it all! I can return somewhere 10 times, but it's never the same as if I was returning there on my own. I get to show people what I've learned over the years, but, and perhaps more importantly, I get to see it as new through the clients' eyes. I learn much from them; in fact, I always want to be learning.

**What are your strengths as a tour leader?**

I have a great memory and I learn fast. Experience says a lot, but if you are constantly trying to learn new sites, then it is the ability to pick up on bird calls, shapes, habitat preferences and so on that really counts. In terms of guiding, people and logistics represent the lion's share of the work. I enjoy people, and I work at recognising the interests of both the individual and the group. I put these together and am proficient at meeting these interests with thorough planning and by thinking on my feet.

**Are you a keen bird photographer?**

Yes, but I can always improve.... I look forward to continuing my interest in bird photography, as I am already very keen in other aspects of the hobby.

**Are you a lister and if so, which lists are your main focus?**

Of course! The only competition I feel in this regard is with myself. I keep the lists as a challenge to myself to get to more places, find more interesting birds in the places I visit and continue to learn more about migration and vagrancy patterns etc. Do I know the exact number of birds I've seen in the World? No. But I know how many I've seen in each country I've been to.

**What are your future goals as a birding tour leader?**

To enjoy every single tour I lead! With our clientele, this isn't a tall order. Maybe, too, I'd like to see every bird family on the planet. Seeing every species would require such a monumental effort that I'm not sure the reward would be worth it. But seeing every family....that would be fascinating, rewarding, and get me to every end of the Earth in the process.

**What is your favourite place/country to guide?**

Colombia... I can't choose definitively, as different places hold different mysteries, but Colombia is unrivalled, in my mind, as having the most interesting, most beautiful, and simply MOST birds of any place I've guided or could possibly even fathom. Peru rivals in numbers, but to me, Colombia is simply more mysterious. Any major migration point in both hemispheres also gets my attention. Migration is the most wonderful natural phenomenon, and I can't keep my eyes off it.

**What is your advice to people who want to go to....?**

For people who want to go to Colombia, try to spend as much time there as possible. Preparatory tours to other Neotropical countries are highly recommendable as well. Being a first-timer in the New World, Colombia would simply blow your mind. On the last tour I led there we logged 212 species on the first day alone! By the end of 24 days, we had netted 765 species seen, and another 30+ heard. Literally mind-blowing, unless you've had some experience in the general region. Costa Rica, Panama, and Ecuador are all wonderful places to start.