

Birding Lima: The Essential Guide

Six world-class sites within day-trip range of the capital - and how to bird them

Most visitors treat Lima as a stopover. Birders know better: the capital sits on the Humboldt Current, ringed by wetlands, desert lomas and Andean canyons, with 80-plus species possible in a single well-planned day. This guide covers the six sites that repay a visit, season by season.

Pantanos de Villa

Lima's flagship RAMSAR wetland, 45-60 minutes south: reedbeds, lagoons and boardwalks. Typical visit: Half day.

Key birds

Great Grebe, Pied-billed Grebe, Cinnamon Teal, White-cheeked Pintail, Andean Duck, Gray-hooded Gull, Peruvian Pelican, Peruvian Booby.

Ventanilla Marshes

The airport-side secret - 20 minutes from the terminal, dense with rails, herons and rush-tyrants. Typical visit: 2-4 hours.

Key birds

Least Bittern, Andean Duck, Wren-like Rushbird, Yellow-headed Blackbird, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, Junín Rail, Peruvian Meadowlark, Grassland Yellow-Finch.

La Punta & the Callao coast

Esplanade seawatching: Inca Terns, boobies, cormorants and wintering shorebirds. Typical visit: 2-3 hours.

Key birds

Inca Tern, Peruvian Pelican, Vermilion Flycatcher, Scrub Blackbird, Croaking Ground-Dove, Amazilia Hummingbird, Harris's Hawk, Pacific Pygmy-Owl.

Lomas de Lachay

A fog-fed desert oasis north of Lima - miners, canasteros and Andean Condor overhead. Typical visit: Full day.

Key birds

Coastal Miner, Thick-billed Miner, Raimondi's Yellow-finch, Cactus Canastero, Least Seedsnipe, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Peruvian Thick-knee, Burrowing Owl.

Pucusana & the mini-pelagic

A fishing port whose harbour boat ride delivers Humboldt Penguins and point-blank seabirds. Typical visit: Half day.

Key birds

Humboldt Penguin, Red-legged Cormorant, Peruvian Booby, Peruvian Pelican, Guanay Cormorant, Inca Tern, Blackish Oystercatcher, Surf Cinclodes.

Santa Eulalia Canyon

The Andes' front door: a road that climbs from cactus scrub to 3,000 m, stacking endemics all the way. Typical visit: Full day.

Key birds

Great Inca-Finch, Bronze-tailed Comet, White-cheeked Cotinga, Black-necked Woodpecker, Rufous-breasted Warbling-Finch, Black Metaltail, Rusty-bellied Brush-Finch, Rusty-crowned Tit-Spinetail.

When to come

There is no bad season. November to March brings boreal migrants and blue skies; May to October is garua season - grey, cool and atmospheric, with resident specialities unaffected and photography light soft all day. Pelagic trips run year-round, sea state permitting.

Every site in this guide is covered by a Wild Andes day tour with pick-up in Lima - see wildandestours.com/tours for itineraries, or write to sales@wildandestours.com and we will build your Lima days around your targets.