



BIRDWATCHING & PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Antisana & the Andean Condor

Open páramo and a snow-capped volcano ninety minutes from Quito — the best nearby site for the Andean Condor, on paved roads with almost no walking.

Photo © Debbie DAJ Photos

DURATION

Full Day (~9 hours)

DEPARTURE

6:00 AM from Quito

ELEVATION

3,800–4,100 m

GROUP SIZE

1–4

FROM

\$175

per person

1 pax \$340 · 2 pax \$210 · 3+ pax \$175

Our Antisana tour is a relaxed day in the high-Andean páramo of the Antisana Ecological Reserve, between 3,800 and 4,100 metres. It is one of the easiest and most photogenic day trips from Quito: we skirt the La Mica lagoon, scan the cliffs where condors roost, and finish beside hummingbird feeders with the 5,753-metre Antisana volcano behind us on a clear day.

The reserve is the classic condor site near Quito, and the open grasslands make for easy, low-altitude-effort birding. The lagoon holds Silvery Grebe, Andean Ruddy Duck and Andean Gull; the grasslands give Carunculated Caracara, Andean Lapwing, Stout-billed and Chestnut-winged Cinclodes and Ecuadorian Hillstar at the highest flowers; and the cliffs and thermals bring Andean Condor, Variable Hawk and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle.

TARGET SPECIES

Andean Condor
Silvery Grebe
Andean Lapwing
Chestnut-winged Cinclodes

Ecuadorian Hillstar
Carunculated Caracara
Andean Ibis
Variable Hawk

DAY BY DAY

6:00 AM — Pickup in Quito

We collect you from your hotel and leave the city while it is still quiet, driving southeast toward the Antisana Ecological Reserve. There is no rush and no rough road — the whole route is paved — so you can settle in and watch the landscape change as we climb.

The climb to the páramo

As the farmland and eucalyptus give way to open grassland we make our first roadside stops, scanning the fence lines and wet ditches for Andean Lapwing, Stout-billed Cincloides and the first raptors of the day. This gradual gain in altitude also helps you acclimatise before we reach 4,000 metres.

Reserve entrance & the high grasslands

Inside the reserve the páramo opens out beneath the snow-capped Antisana volcano (5,753 m). We work the grasslands slowly from the vehicle and on short strolls for Carunculated Caracara, Black-faced Ibis, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Chestnut-winged and Stout-billed Cincloides, and Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, with Variable Hawk quartering overhead.

Laguna La Mica

We skirt the shoreline of this high-Andean lake for waterbirds — Silvery Grebe, Andean Ruddy Duck, Andean Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail and Andean Gull — while Andean Lapwings and Baird's Sandpipers work the muddy edges. The reflection of Antisana on the water on a clear morning is one of the great sights of the northern páramo.

Scanning the condor cliffs

We position ourselves below the cliffs where Andean Condors roost and ride the mid-morning thermals — this is the most reliable site near Quito for the species. With the scope we pick out birds on the rock face and follow them as they lift off, and watch for Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and Aplomado Falcon hunting the same slopes.

The highest flowers — Ecuadorian Hillstar

At the upper edge of the reserve we search the Chuquiraga bushes for the Ecuadorian Hillstar, a hardy hummingbird that survives here by going torpid at night. Nearby cushion bog and Polylepis edges can add Andean Tit-Spinetail, Many-striped Canastero and Tawny Antpitta calling from the grass.

Lunch beside the feeders

We break for a relaxed lunch at a páramo lodge with hummingbird feeders and the volcano as a backdrop, adding Giant Hummingbird and Shining Sunbeam, and giving time for photographs of both the birds and the scenery.

Afternoon — return to Quito

We make the easy paved descent back to the city in the early-to-mid afternoon, arriving in good time for the rest of your day. The tour pairs naturally with a Yanacocha or Papallacta day to cover both the high páramo and the cloud forest.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED

- Private transportation from Quito
- Expert local birding guide
- Reserve entrance fees
- Boxed breakfast
- Picnic lunch

NOT INCLUDED

- Dinner
- Accommodation
- Tips

Ready to book, or want it tailored?

wildandestours.com/antisana-condor-birding-tour/ · sales@wildandestours.com

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