



BIRDWATCHING & PHOTOGRAPHY TOURS IN SOUTH AMERICA

Papallacta & Guango

The eastern slope in a day — from the wet páramo of Papallacta Pass down to the temperate forest of Guango, with a completely different avifauna.

Photo © Jess Findlay

DURATION

Full Day (~11 hours)

DEPARTURE

5:30 AM from Quito

ELEVATION

2,700–4,100 m

GROUP SIZE

1–4

FROM

\$195

per person

1 pax \$390 · 2 pax \$240 · 3+ pax \$195

Crossing the continental divide to the east, this day combines the high páramo of Papallacta Pass (up to ~4,100 m) with the feeders and river of Guango Lodge lower down. High-elevation specialities with almost no walking up top, and hummingbirds and mountain-tanagers of the eastern cloud forest below.

The pass can give Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Giant Conebill and Andean Tit-Spinetail in the Polylepis; at Guango the feeders swarm with Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, Long-tailed Sylph and Collared Inca, while the river holds Torrent Duck and mixed flocks bring mountain-tanagers and a chance of Torrent Tyrannulet.

TARGET SPECIES

Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe
Ecuadorian Hillstar
Torrent Duck
Viridian Metaltail

Giant Conebill
Sword-billed Hummingbird
Tourmaline Sunangel
Tawny Antpitta

DAY BY DAY

5:30 AM — Pickup in Quito

We collect you early and drive east out of the city, crossing the continental divide toward the Amazonian slope. The change is dramatic: within a couple of hours we go from Quito's dry inter-Andean valley up into the wet, misty páramo of the eastern cordillera.

Papallacta Pass & the antennas road

At the pass (~4,100 m) we turn up the gravel Cayambe-Coca antennas road into pristine high páramo. Walking short, level stretches we search the cushion bog for the day's great prize, the Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, along with Andean Tit-Spinetail, Many-striped Canastero and Paramo Pipit.

Polylepis & the highest hummingbirds

Among the twisted Polylepis and Chuquiraga we look for Giant Conebill working the bark, Ecuadorian Hillstar and Viridian Metaltail at the flowers, and Tawny Antpitta and Andean Tit-Spinetail in the grass, with Carunculated Caracara and Variable Hawk overhead.

The lake & páramo shrubbery

Dropping slightly to the Papallacta lake and marsh we scan for Andean Teal, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Coot and Silvery Grebe, and work the shrubby edges for Red-crested Cotinga, Black-backed Bush-Tanager and Blue-backed Conebill before we begin the descent.

Descent to Guango

We drop east into the temperate forest zone (~2,700 m), a completely different world of dripping, moss-hung trees. On the way down we watch for the first eastern-slope mixed flocks and stop wherever activity is high.

Guango feeders

Guango Lodge's feeders are among the best on the eastern slope: Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, Long-tailed Sylph, Collared Inca, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Buff-tailed Coronet and Mountain Velvetbreast come in close, an outstanding session for both watching and photography, usually over a warm lunch.

The river trail — Torrent Duck

We walk Guango's forest and river trails for Torrent Duck on the rushing Papallacta river, Torrent Tyrannulet and White-capped Dipper on the rocks, and temperate mixed flocks with mountain-tanagers, Grey-hooded Bush-Tanager, Pearled Treerunner and Turquoise Jay.

Late afternoon — return to Quito

We climb back over the pass and return to the city in the late afternoon, having birded two utterly contrasting habitats — high wet páramo and eastern temperate forest — and their two very different sets of birds, in a single day.

WHAT'S INCLUDED

INCLUDED

- Private transportation from Quito
- Expert local birding guide
- Boxed breakfast
- Feeder-station access

NOT INCLUDED

- Lunch
- Accommodation
- Tips

Ready to book, or want it tailored?

wildandestours.com/papallacta-guango-birding-tour/ · sales@wildandestours.com

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