

# Colombia

## Central Andes and Santa Marta Mountains

Saturday 1<sup>st</sup> – Saturday 15<sup>th</sup> October 2022

NEW: Small group tour led by Carl Downing



The gorgeous Red-headed Barbet is one of the many species we hope to find during our tour to Colombia © Carl Downing

**Limosa's Colombia birding tour** is an adventure that is designed to showcase the extraordinary diversity of birds in this avian-rich country which not only has the largest list of any nation on earth but is also home to over eighty endemics. During our two-week holiday, we hope to see almost one quarter of the 1,900 species which have been recorded in Colombia and at least 45 endemics and near endemics.

Our trip begins with a morning visit to a wetland near the capital Bogotá where we will look for rare specialities such as Bogotá Rail, Rufous-browed Conebill and Silvery-throated Spinetail. We then fly to Pereira and head to the Montezuma Rainforest Lodge where potential endemics include Dusky Starfrontlet, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer and both Black-and-gold and Gold-ringed Tanagers.

Moving on to explore the Otún-Quimbaya Reserve, we should find threatened endemics such as Cauca Guan and Multicoloured Tanager and at the Rio Blanco Reserve hope to see both Brown-banded and Bicoloured Antpittas.

Another flight will then take us north to Colombia's Caribbean coast for the final part of our holiday, where we will travel inland to explore the isolated Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta which is one of the world's major endemic hotspots. There are many more unique species to look for here including Santa Marta Woodstar, Santa Marta Parakeet, Santa Marta Antpitta and Santa Marta Warbler.

Our tour will then conclude with a visit to the dry coastal strip where the final specialities could include Buffy Hummingbird, Chestnut Piculet and Vermillion Cardinal.



There should be opportunities to see several species of antpittas with the highly localised and endemic Brown-banded Antpitta being one of the possibilities © Carl Downing

## Highlights

- A Colombian birding adventure from the High Andes to the Santa Marta Mountains and the Caribbean coast
- A hatful of 'hummers' among 450 or so species to look forward to on this remarkable 15-day tour
- Many Colombian endemic, near endemic and 'must-see' birds with many fantastic names such as Whooping Motmot, Ruby Topaz, Glowing Puffleg, Plushcap and White-tailed Starfrontlet
- Andean endemics such as Gold-ringed Tanager, Brown-banded Antpitta and Cauca Guan
- 2 nights at *El Dorado* in search of Santa Marta endemics such as Santa Marta Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Warbler and Santa Marta Mountain Tanager
- Expertly led by Limosa's Carl Downing and English-speaking local Colombian guides



Chestnut-crowned Antpitta © Carl Downing

## What's Included?

- Limosa Tour Leader and expert English-speaking local Colombian bird guides
- 13 nights accommodation in comfortable but remote jungle lodges and comfortable hotels.
- All main meals and drinking water
- Minibus and 4x4 transport
- Internal flights
- All excursions, entry fees and permits
- All tour-based tips (hotel, meals etc) and taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds

## Outline Itinerary

### Day 1

Depart UK for Bogotá, Peru. Overnight in Bogotá

### Day 2

Morning birding near Bogotá. Lunchtime flight to Pereira. Transfer to the Montezuma Rainforest Reserve (3 nights)

### Days 3-4

Birding Cerro Montezuma

### Day 5

Morning birding at Montezuma. Afternoon drive to Otun-Quimbaya (1 night)

### Day 6

Birding in the Otún-Quimbaya reserve. Transfer to Manizales (3 nights)



Blackish Rail is a possibility on our trip and can, for example, sometimes be found in the gardens of the Montezuma Rainforest Reserve © Carl Downing

### Days 7-8

Birding Rio Blanco Reserve and Los Nevados National Park

### Day 9

Visit to Hacienda el Bosque. Fly to Baranquilla (1 night)

### Day 10

Morning birding at Isla Salamanca. Transfer to Minca (1 night)

### Days 11-12

Transfer to El Dorado Lodge. Birding San Lorenzo Ridge (2 nights)

### Day 13

Birding from El Dorado to La Guajira. (1 night)

### Day 14

La Guajira. Lunchtime flight from Barranquilla to Bogotá with connecting international flights back to the UK.

### Day 14

Arrive in UK

## Tour Overview

As a birdwatching destination, Colombia has become one of the “must do” countries in South America and its bird list of more than 1,900 species is the largest of any country in the world! Among these are a quite remarkable array of Colombian endemic or near endemic species. Limosa’s exciting, 15-day tour focuses on the two key areas of central and northern Colombia giving us the possibility of seeing a spectacular range of specialities.

We start our holiday with a morning visit to a wetland near the capital Bogotá where we will look for Bogotá Rail, Rufous-browed Conebill and Silvery-throated Spinetail before flying to Pereira and then driving to the Montezuma Rainforest Lodge at Cerro Montezuma. Here on the higher slopes, we will look for the endemic Gold-ringed Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Dusky Starfrontlet and Munchique Wood-Wren.

Lower down, we hope to find another highly desirable endemic, the stunning Black-and-gold Tanager plus Parker's Antbird, Crested Ant-Tanager and Tatama Tapaculo (all endemic). We will also look for Beautiful Jay, Black Solitaire, Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Glistening-green Tanager, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Club-winged Manakin and many other species which are endemic to the Chocó region of southern Colombia and northern Ecuador.



Munchique Wood-Wren is endemic to Colombia and was only discovered in 2008 © Carl Downing



The smart Black-and-Gold Tanager has a highly restricted world range and is endemic to the Andes of Colombia © Carl Downing

The Otún-Quimbaya Reserve is where we will find ourselves listening for the predawn calls of the endangered Cauca Guan. It was at this site that this previously thought-to-be-extinct species was rediscovered during the 1990s and as the sun rises, we shall try to locate this Colombian speciality along with the furtive Wattled Guan.

Dense brush at the forest edge at this reserve holds the inconspicuous Stiles's Tapaculo (endemic) and whistles from the forest understory could indicate the presence of the smart Chestnut-breasted Wren, which is probably more numerous here than almost anywhere else in the species' range. The reserve is also an excellent place for hearing, and then hopefully seeing, the secretive Chestnut Woodquail and equally elusive Hooded Antpitta and we will need to scrutinise any mixed foraging flocks we find for the localised Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet and Rufous-breasted Flycatcher.

Searching the tanager flocks, we have a chance to find the appropriately named and endemic Multicoloured Tanager with this site offering us a further opportunity to see the crimson-red Crested Ant-Tanager.

More widespread species we could also find include the impressive Golden-plumed Parakeet and Inca Jay and along a nearby river, we are likely to find the superb Torrent Duck.

Moving on to the Rio Blanco Reserve, there is a chance of observing several species of antpittas as these regularly come to feeding stations with the possibilities including Brown-banded, Chestnut-naped, Slate-crowned and Bicoloured. Dusky Piha, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan and Ocellated, Spillmann's, Ash-coloured and Blackish Tapaculos are all possible and we will also need to be alert for the jay-like calls of fancy White-capped Tanagers.

Another feature of the reserve is the amazing set of hummingbird feeders where we should see Tourmaline Sunangel, Speckled Hummingbird, Buff-tailed Coronet, Green Violetear and White-bellied Woodstar.

Other species that we will hope to see here include Masked Trogon, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Black-banded Woodcreeper, Streak-headed Antbird, Rufous-crowned Tody-tyrant, Black-capped and White-tailed Tyrannulets, Pale-edged and Golden-crowned Flycatchers, Mountain Wren, Citrine and Russet-crowned Warblers, Masked and Glossy Flower-piercers, Capped Conebill, Grass-green Tanager, Grey-hooded Bush-Tanager and Black-winged Saltator. We will also seek out bamboo specialists such as Black-eared Hemispingus and Plushcap and after dark may have an opportunity to go out in search of White-throated Screech-Owl, Rufous-banded Owl, Rufous-bellied Nighthawk and Band-winged Nightjar.

We plan to spend our second day in this region in the high temperate zone of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano, where patches of forest give way to paramo. Here, our primary target is the endemic and very localised Rufous-fronted Parakeet.

Flowering bushes also attract many colourful hummingbirds including Rainbow-bearded and Purple-backed Thornbills, Viridian Metaltail, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Buff-winged Starfrontlet and Shining Sunbeam and these are occasionally joined by the nomadic and threatened Black-thighed Puffleg which is sometimes present in good numbers, but at other times is entirely absent.

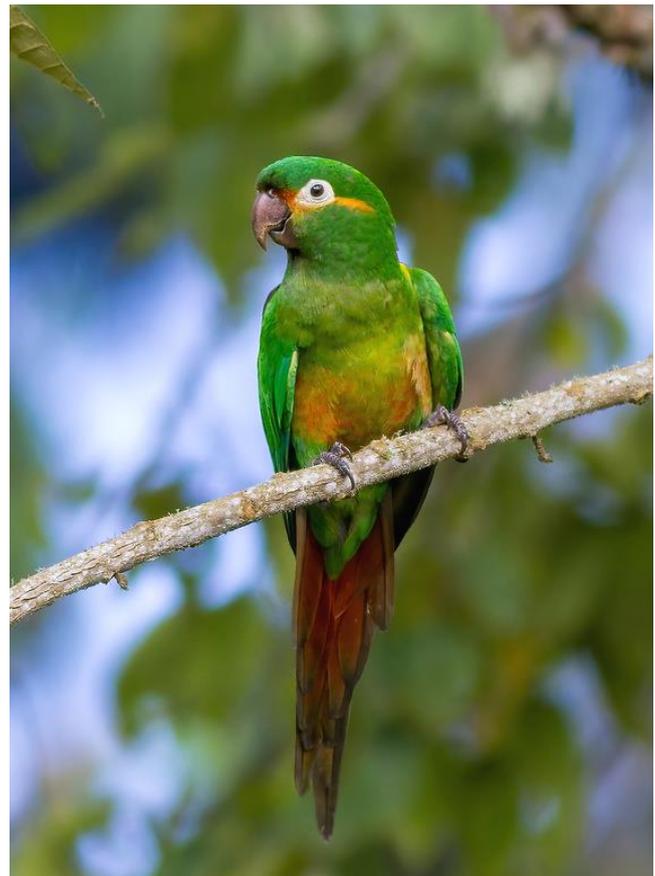
In the forest patches, we will look for Paramo Tapaculo, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Golden-fronted Whitestart, Blue-backed Conebill, Blue-and-Black Tanager, the gorgeous Golden-crowned Tanager, Lacrimose, Hooded and Buff-breasted Mountain Tanagers, Black-backed Bush-Tanager and Slaty Brushfinch, whilst more open areas and nearby wetland are home to Andean Teal, White-tailed Hawk, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Many-striped Canastero, White-chinned Thistletail, Grass Wren and Pale-naped Brushfinch.

Our final morning in the Central Andes will be spent visiting a private hacienda where we hope to find Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan and the patchily distributed and extremely handsome Crescent-faced Antpitta.

Leaving Manizales, a flight then takes us 700km north to Colombia's Caribbean coast, where we will start our exploration with a visit to Isla Salamanca in search of the critically endangered Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird, as well as Chestnut-winged Chachalaca and Bronze-brown Cowbird (all endemic).

We will then leave the coastal lowlands and start to climb up into the hills on our way to the magnificent *El Dorado* Lodge. Russet-throated Puffbird, Whooping Motmot, Scrub Greenlet and Black-crested Antshrike are possible, as well as chances of Black-backed Antshrike, Cinereous Becard and (with a little luck) Military Macaws coming to their roost – we have occasionally seen a flock of up to 100 birds!

The highest mountains in all of Colombia are also found here, with permanently snow-capped peaks rising to 5,700m (18,700ft), although we shall only be birding up to c.2,800m (9,200ft). Completely isolated from the Andes, the slopes of the impressive Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta range are a noted hotspot for endemic species and our destination is *El Dorado*, a reserve set up specially to protect the unique birds of this region.



Golden-plumed Parakeet is a cloud forest parrot we hope to see during our tour © Carl Downing

The famous San Lorenzo Ridge on the edge of the Santa Marta Mountains is where we shall go in search of the many endemics that the reserve has to offer including White-tailed Starfrontlet, Santa Marta Woodstar, Santa Marta Parakeet, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Streak-capped Spinetail, Santa Marta Antpitta, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant, Santa Marta Brushfinch, Santa Marta Warbler, White-lored Warbler, Yellow-crowned Whitestart, Santa Marta Seedeater and Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager, whilst after dark we will hope to find the elusive and only recently described Santa Marta Screech-Owl.

Other species could include White-tipped Quetzal, White-rumped Hawk, Black-fronted Wood-Quail, Golden-breasted Fruiteater and Lined Quail-Dove.

Heading back down from the mountains, we plan to stop at selected spots to look for Santa Marta Tapaculo, Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner and Santa Marta Blossomcrown before concluding our tour in the dry coastal habitats at La Guajira where our focus will be on Coro endemics (which are shared with western Venezuela). Those we hope to see include Chestnut Piculet, Tocuyo Sparrow, Vermillion Cardinal and Buffy Hummingbird. Other possibilities include Double-striped Thick-knee, Bare-eyed Pigeon, White-whiskered Spinetail, Black-crested Antshrike, Russet-throated Puffbird, Venezuelan Flycatcher and Orinocan Saltator before we reluctantly return to the airport to fly home via Bogotá.

Limosa Guide **Carl Downing** has spent the last 30 years birding and travelling throughout Colombia and has led over 60 tours across the country. Carl will be assisted throughout our holiday by English-speaking local Colombian bird guides.

Colombia is a magnificent and incredibly bird-rich country, with much to see so join us for an amazing experience for a trip packed with colourful birds and endemics.

## Daily Itinerary

### DAY 1: FLY TO BOGOTÁ

Our birdwatching tour to Colombia begins in Bogotá with an evening arrival and a short transfer to a nearby hotel. *Night in Bogotá*

### DAY 2: BOGOTÁ AND TRANSFER TO MONTEZUMA RAINFOREST RESERVE

Our birding in Colombia begins with a morning excursion to a nearby wetland, where we will look for our first endemics, Bogotá Rail and Silvery-throated Spinetail, along with Rufous-browed Conebill which only occurs in Colombia and extreme western Venezuela. We should see plenty of other species before returning to the airport for a lunchtime flight to the city of Pereira where we transfer to the Montezuma Rainforest Reserve. *Three nights at Montezuma Rainforest Reserve*

### DAYS 3-4: CERRO MONTEZUMA

We have two full days to explore this fantastic area and on the upper slopes we will look for the endemic Gold-ringed Tanager, Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer, Dusky Starfrontlet and Munchique Wood-Wren.

Another highly desirable endemic is the stunning Black-and-gold Tanager, with Parker's Antbird, Crested Ant-Tanager and Tatama Tapaculo all possible. We will also look for Beautiful Jay, Glistening-green Tanager, Club-winged Manakin and many other Chocó endemics (which are shared with northern Ecuador).



Green-and-Black Fruiteater © Carl Downing

Around the lodge itself, there are several bird feeders where large numbers of tanagers and hummingbirds can often be seen and we may find Blackish Rail, as this is known to visit the gardens on a regular basis.

### Day 5 CERRO MONTEZUMA TO OTÚN-QUIMBAYA RESERVE

After a final morning birding at Cerro Montezuma, we will drive to the Otún-Quimabaya Reserve for one night where we should arrive in time for some initial exploring in the late afternoon.

There are several further endemics which can be found here including the stunning and appropriately named Multicoloured Tanager which has a somewhat restricted range in the Andes of central Colombia. Almost as impressive and also endemic is Crested Ant-Tanager, and we will check any passing tanager flocks for both these species.

Whilst not as colourful as the tanagers, another potential endemic is Stiles's Tapaculo which was only described in 2005. *Night in Pereira*

### Day 6 OTÚN-QUIMBAYA RESERVE

We will need to make an early start to be out before first light to listen for the predawn calls of the endangered Cauca Guan. This relative of the Common Turkey was thought to be extinct until it was rediscovered at this site during the 1990s.

As the sun rises, we shall try to locate this Colombian endemic along with the somewhat furtive Wattled Guan, whilst the booming calls of lekking Red-ruffed Fruitcrows are likely to fill the air.

As we explore the trails, we will need to be alert for the whistling calls of Chestnut-breasted Wrens as they move through the forest understory. Indeed, this handsome bird is probably more numerous here than anywhere else in its range.

This reserve is also an excellent place for hearing, and hopefully seeing, the secretive and endemic Chestnut Wood-quail and we could also find the poorly known (and near endemic) Hooded Antpitta.

As mixed foraging flocks pass by, we shall scrutinise these for the localised Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet and Rufous-breasted Flycatcher and more widespread species we may well see include the impressive Golden-plumed Parakeet, Collared Trogon, Slaty Antwren, Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant and Inca Jay.

With the chance for Torrent Duck, Black Phoebe and Torrent Tyrannulet on a nearby river, there should be plenty to see before we depart for Manizales where we will spend three nights. *Night near Manizales*

### Day 7-8 RIO BLANCO AND LOS NEVADOS

We will make an early start for a full day visit to the nearby Rio Blanco reserve where we can look for many new species.

One of the potential highlights is a visit to some feeders where several species of antpittas come for mealworms with the possibilities including Brown-banded, Chestnut-naped, Slate-crowned and Bicoloured.



*Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer is an extremely range restricted Colombian endemic which is only known from a few places in the Andes © Carl Downing*



Buff-throated Saltator © Carl Downing

Another feature of the reserve is an amazing set of hummingbird feeders where we can expect to see an excellent range of species which could include Green Violetear, Tourmaline Sunangel, Speckled Hummingbird, Buff-tailed Coronet and White-bellied Woodstar.

As we explore the reserve, there will be plenty of other birds to look for with the possibilities including Dusky Piha, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Ocellated Tapaculo, Masked Saltator, Rusty-faced Parrot and Golden-plumed Parakeet. We will also need to be alert for the jay-like calls of the extremely smart White-capped Tanager.

Other species that we will hope to find here include Masked Trogon, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Tyrannine and Black-banded Woodcreepers, Streak-headed Antbird, Blackish Tapaculo, Rufous-crowned Tody-tyrant, Black-capped and White-tailed Tyrannulets, Smoke-coloured Pewee, Pale-edged and Golden-crowned Flycatchers, Mountain Wren, Citrine and Russet-crowned Warblers, Masked and Glossy Flowerpiercers, Capped Conebill, Grass-green Tanager, Grey-hooded Bush-Tanager and Black-winged Saltator.

We will also seek out several bamboo specialists with the possibilities including Black-eared Hemispingus and Plushcap whilst after dark we may have an opportunity to go in search of White-throated Screech-Owl, Rufous-banded Owl, Rufous-bellied Nighthawk and Band-winged Nightjar.

On our second day in this area, we plan to visit the high temperate zone of the Nevado del Ruiz volcano, where patches of forest give way to the paramo.

Our primary target here is the endemic and very localised Rufous-fronted Parakeet but we will also want to check any flowering bushes as these attract several colourful species of hummingbird including Viridian Metaltail, Golden-breasted Puffleg, Buff-winged Starfrontlet and Shining Sunbeam.

On some occasions, the nomadic Black-thighed Puffleg can be present in good numbers, but at other times it is completely absent.

Other hummingbirds we will hope to see include the appropriately named Rainbow-bearded and Purple-backed Thornbills both of which are truly stunning when seen well.

The forest patches can be a good place to locate the superb Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Paramo Tapaculo, White-banded Tyrannulet, Brown-backed Chat-tyrant, Golden-fronted Whitestart, Blue-backed Conebill, Blue-and-black Tanager and the gorgeous Golden-crowned Tanager. Other colourful tanagers we could see here include Lacrimose, Hooded and Buff-breasted Mountain Tanagers. *Two further nights near Manizales*

### Day 9 MANIZALES, HACIENDA EL BOSQUE AND TRAVEL TO BARANQUILLA

Leaving our hotel on the outskirts of Manizales, we will make an early morning visit to nearby Hacienda El Bosque which is a private reserve that protects some remanent forest. This area can be good for the fancy Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan but it is also a known stakeout for the patchily distributed Crescent-faced Antpitta. As well as this gorgeous little antpitta, we will also hope to see Equatorial Antpitta which has been upgraded to a full species as part of the recent taxonomic revision which split 'Rufous Antpitta' into twelve species.....

We will need to leave the area by mid-morning and returning to the airport from where we will fly north to Baranquilla on Colombia's Caribbean coast. *Night in Baranquilla*



Crescent-faced Antpitta was first collected in 1923 but it was almost another 50 years before it was recorded again. It is now known to have a patchy distribution in the Andes of both Colombia and Ecuador and there are a couple of sites where we could encounter it on our tour © Chris Collins

### Day 10 ISLA SALAMANCA AND MINCA

We will make an early departure for Isla Salamanca where we will look for several endemics including Chestnut-winged Chachalaca and Bronze-brown Cowbird. We will also make a special effort to find Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird which is primarily a bird of mangrove forest and nearby scrub. This species has an extremely small world range and is classified as critically endangered.

We then move inland to Minca where we start by looking for lowland species such as Russet-throated Puffbird, Whooping Motmot and Black-crested Antshrike. There are also some hummingbird feeders here where there is a good chance of finding the highly localised Coppery Emerald.

We plan to end our day with a late afternoon visit to a site where we hope to see up to one hundred Military Macaws coming in to roost. *Night in Minca*

### Day 11-12 MINCA TO EL DORADO RESERVE

Minca is located at the base of the Santa Marta mountains which have the highest peaks in all Colombia, are permanently snow-capped and rise to an impressive 5,700m (18,700ft). Completely isolated from the Andes, the slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta range are a noted hotspot for endemic species, and we have two full days to look for many of these.

We will make an early departure by jeep for *El Dorado*, a reserve set up specially to protect the unique birds of this region, with our destination being the famous San Lorenzo Ridge, which is located at c.2,500m. There is a spectacular lodge here and this will be our base for two nights as we go in search of many of these specialities. Those we hope to find include White-tailed Starfrontlet, Santa Marta Woodstar, Santa Marta Parakeet, Rusty-headed Spinetail, Santa Marta Antpitta, Santa Marta Bush-Tyrant, Santa Marta Brushfinch, Santa Marta Warbler, White-lored Warbler, Yellow-crowned Whitestart, Santa Marta Seed-eater and Santa Marta Mountain Tanager.



Santa Marta (or Black-cheeked) Mountain Tanager is, as its name suggests, endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and we stand an excellent chance of seeing this endemic during our trip © Carl Downing

Other species could include White-tipped Quetzal, White-rumped Hawk, Black-and-chestnut Eagle, Black-fronted Wood-Quail, Golden-breasted Fruiteater and Lined Quail-Dove. In the evening, we will look for the elusive and only recently described Santa Marta Screech-Owl. *Two nights at El Dorado Reserve*

#### **Day 13 EL DORADO RESERVE TO LA GUAJIRA**

We will have time for some final birding around the San Lorenzo Ridge before we begin our descent back to the lowlands. We plan to make various stops and new endemics could include Santa Marta Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Tapaculo and Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner.

Moving down to the coast at La Guajira, we will be able to look for several Coro endemics (some of which are shared with extreme western Venezuela) and are restricted to this very different and dry habitat.

Those we hope to see include Chestnut Piculet, Tocuyo Sparrow, Vermillion Cardinal and Buffy Hummingbird. We will also look for Double-striped Thick-knee, Bare-eyed Pigeon, White-whiskered Spinetail, Black-crested Antshrike, Northern White-fringed Antwren Russet-throated Puffbird, Venezuelan Flycatcher, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, Orinocan Saltator and Glaucous Tanager. *Night in La Guajira*

#### **Day 14 LA GUAJIRA, FLY TO BOGOTA AND ONWARDS TO UK**

We will have a few hours to look for any of the specialities of La Guajira that we may have missed the previous day and then it will be time to head to the airport for an afternoon flight back to Bogotá with an onward international flight back to the UK.

### **Trip Information**

#### **GROUP SIZE**

10 participants plus one UK leader and English-speaking local Colombian bird guides.

#### **WHAT TO EXPECT**

Limosa's Colombia birding tour focuses on finding a fantastic range of the endemic and near endemic species in this bird-rich country. We will visit a range of habitats from the high paramo in the Central Andes, lush cloud forest, the remote mountains of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and the Caribbean coast at Isla Salamanca and La Guajira. The list of potential species is spectacular, and we hope to see at least 450 species and potentially 45 endemics and near endemics.

We will be making early starts most days as bird activity in Colombia is at its best during the first three hours of daylight. These will be tempered with leisurely lunches, afternoon siestas (where possible) and occasional relaxed afternoons, plus some early finishes in the evenings.

Breakfasts and dinners will generally be taken at our lodge/hotel and lunches may be picnics in the field or at a hotel/lodge/restaurant depending on the plans for that particular day.

All the lodges and hotels we have selected provide comfortable accommodation with private facilities.

Laundry services will be available at some of the locations for a modest fee but it would probably be advisable to bring enough quick drying clothes with you as many locations rely on lines to dry washing.

At Los Nevados, we will be birding for a short time at up to 4,100m (13,450 feet) but most of our birding will be done at lower elevations. The highest elevation we will stay at is in Bogotá at c.2,600m (8,500 feet).

Colombia has a tropical to temperate climate (due to the effects of altitude) and our October tour runs during one of the two Colombian 'dry seasons'. Rainfall can (and does!), of course, occur year-round in the mountains and rainforests. It can often be cool and misty in the mountains and cloud forest, and it will be cold and breezy in the early morning on the paramo at Los Nevados, where warm, waterproof clothing including gloves, scarves and a warm hat will be required.

In contrast, our birding on the Caribbean coast near Barranquilla and La Guajira will be in hot to very hot conditions (26-32C/79-90F) although in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta (at Minca and El Dorado Lodge), where most of our time in the north will be spent, we will enjoy pleasant to cool upland temperatures with a likely high of c.25C/77F.

Bird photography is generally tricky in the forests due to low light levels but there will be good to excellent photographic opportunities in more open habitats especially at feeders around the lodges and at the coast.

**BIRDS** 450+ species

**ACCOMMODATION** 13 nights accommodation at good, medium grade hotels and lodges in Colombia. All rooms have private facilities.

Our hotels at Minca and Santa Marta are especially characterful and geared up for wildlife watchers. *Hotel Minca* is newly refurbished and has a fine view and setting, with numerous hummingbird feeders to enjoy whilst *El Dorado Lodge*, our base in the Santa Marta Mountains, is fairly simple with accommodation in cabins accessed down a flight of stairs and a path. The rooms are lovely and kept very clean and the birding here is out of this world!

**MEALS** All main meals are included in the tour price, commencing with dinner on arrival in Bogotá on Day 1 and concluding with lunch there prior to our flight home again on Day 14.

Food is generally good in Colombia, with large portions! Try a traditional Colombian *Paisa* lunch with beans and rice, pork and banana. Steaming mugs of hot chocolate are another a great Colombian tradition to look forward to!

**WALKING** Colombia is a mountainous country so expect some trails to be steeper in parts but these are always taken slowly, at normal birding pace with frequent stops to bird. Wherever possible, we aim to drive uphill in our vehicle and walk back down the slope.

The walking effort is mostly easy, but moderate at times due to the terrain and the altitude.

As one would expect, rainforest trails can sometimes be wet, muddy and/or slippery underfoot, so sturdy waterproof walking shoes or lightweight boots with stout corrugated soles for grip are essential.

**TRAVEL** Due to the pandemic, it is proving extremely difficult to predict future flight prices and schedules, especially when a trip is scheduled for beyond the period when flights can be booked. As a result, we have taken the decision to price our holidays as excluding all flights.

To keep the process as simple as possible for our clients, however, we are now working closely with a dedicated agent at Travel Counsellors who will be able to advise you which flights we are recommending and he will be able to book these for you.

Our tour price does, however, include three domestic flights within Colombia.

**GROUND TRANSPORT** Minibuses, driven by local drivers, and equipped with air-conditioning.

At the Montezuma Reserve and in the Santa Marta Mountains, we must use 4x4 Toyota Land Cruisers or similar as the unmade roads are **very rough** in places. Please note that rides in these will be bumpy and can be a little uncomfortable at times, and the going is slow, but the distances to be covered are not great.

### Tour Cost

#### 2022 (15-day tour):

Land only cost: £4,595

Deposit: £1,000

Single Supplement: £595

#### Cost includes

- Limosa Tour Leader
- Expert English-speaking local Colombian bird guides
- 5 nights accommodation in comfortable but somewhat remote jungle lodges and 8 nights in hotels.
- All main meals
- Minibus and 4x4 transport
- All excursions, entry fees and permits
- All tour-based tips (hotel, meals etc) and taxes
- Limosa checklist of birds

#### Cost excludes

International flights, insurance, drinks, airport meals/snacks and other items of a personal nature.

### About Your Guide

**Carl Downing** began bird watching in 1973 at the age of seven. His first foray onto the international scene was in 1980 with a trip to the Austrian Alps. Since then, he has travelled extensively in Europe and the USA with trips to Southeast Asia and Africa.

In 1991 Carl was part of a successful conservation expedition to Colombia which resulted in the discovery of the Choco Vireo and this experience developed his love of the country.

He has since spent the last 30 years travelling and guiding throughout Colombia; his first tour being back in 1995 and since then has led over 60 further tours around the country. His experience in Latin America also extends to Venezuela, Brazil and Costa Rica.

Carl is also an award-winning sports and wildlife photographer and runs local workshops on the subject.

### How to Enquire

Due to the considerable uncertainty created by the pandemic, Limosa Holidays are not currently accepting bookings for any trips, however, you are welcome to contact us either by email or phone to register your interest in any of our holidays.

Whilst some tour companies may be willing to take a deposit from you and say a trip is a “confirmed departure”, our approach is going to be to wait a little longer as we consider this both honest and realistic.

Once we are confident that the trip can run, we will be in touch to confirm your place and ask for a deposit.

We do encourage you to register your interest as we are expecting considerable demand, once the consensus is that it is safe to travel again.

### Any Questions

Please do not hesitate to contact us by email or phone. Our office is generally open from 09:30-17:30 but you are welcome to contact us outside these times too. We are happy to take calls in the evening and at weekends but if no one is available the call will go to our answerphone.

***Thank you for your interest in our tours. We do hope that you will be able to join us once the pandemic is over and we look forward to hearing from you.***