

NORTH PERU TOUR ITINERARY – 20 MAY to 15 JUNE 2026

Tour starts at Tarapoto and ends at Chiclayo

Note that this is an itinerary planned many months in advance of this tour which has not taken place since 2018. There are likely to be changes between now and departure. The birds mentioned are merely examples of those we might see, based on our previous tours.

PRE-TOUR to PLATAFORMA (optional)

Wednesday 20 May - Arrive in Tarapoto. There are several flights a day from Lima, note that internal flights are not included in the price, but this is the only air route needed. Some birding or culture can be arranged for those arriving early. o/n Tucan Suites Hotel. Baggage can be left here.

Thursday 21 May – Tarapoto to Plataforma via Bellavista.

Travel up to Plataforma, southwards from Tarapoto to Bellavista, then a rough road south-eastwards. This road, though unsealed, has greatly improved over the last few years. O/n at a basic hotel for 2 nights.

Friday 22 May – Plataforma. All day birding in the surrounds of the village, part of the Cordillera Azul National Park, a high ridge of forest habitat. Target species are (1) the Scarlet-banded Barbet, discovered in 1996 and endemic to humid highland forest on a ridgetop known as Peak 1538, and (2) Cerro Azul Antbird discovered in 2016 in the vicinity of Flor de Café. Other high quality species should be expected. 2nd night at the hotel.

Saturday 23 May – Return to Tarapoto, retrieve any baggage & transfer to Pumarinri.

MAIN TOUR – TARAPOTO to CHICLAYO

Saturday 23 May – Pumarinri. Guest arrival at Tarapoto Airport (several flights a day from Lima), transfer to Pumarinri Lodge for 3 nights. Early arrivers can start birding in the vicinity of the Lodge. Common tanagers, euphonias, parrots & parakeets, tyrant flycatchers, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, swallows & swifts, Grey-breasted Sabrewing, herons & egrets by the river, perhaps Fasciated Tiger-Heron. Spotlighting in evening. 7 species of owls possible here. o/n Pumarinri.

Sunday 24 May – Pumarinri to Chazuta. Pumarinri eastwards to Chazuta. spotlighting in evening (& each night on demand). Possible birds include oropendolas, Hook-billed Kite, White-browed Purpletuft, Purple-throated & Spangled Cotingas. o/n Pumarinri.

Monday 25 May – River boat from Pumarinri to Shapaja; by road to Juan Guerra. Covered boat from Pumarinri west to Shapaja & back. May land on southern bank. Bus takes us to Juan Guerra for late afternoon. Riverside birds – herons, egrets, swallows, kingfishers, Hoatzin, Pied Lapwing, Collared Plover; dry forest birds include Channel-billed Toucan, Lettered Aracari, Bluish-fronted Jacamar, Great Antshrike, Tody-flycatchers, antwrens. o/n Pumarinri.

Tuesday 26 May – Ricuricochas Wetlands and Juan Guerra dry forests. Bus to Ricuricochas for early search around open water & marshes for crakes etc, then explore dry forests. Back to Pumarinri for lunch & vacate rooms. Leave for Tarapoto & check in to Tucan Suites. Then birding at other Juan Guerra sites. Possible birds include Rufous-sided Crake, Tataupa Tinamou, Grey-necked Wood Rail, Comb Duck, Ashy-headed Greenlet, Plumbeous Kite, Snail Kite. At Juan Guerra – perhaps Plain-crowned Spinetail, Chestnut-capped Puffbird, Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher, Grey-headed Kite. o/n Tucan Suites.

Wednesday 27 May – Tunnel at Cordillera Escalera. Drive north-eastwards from Tarapoto into the forested ridge near the 'Tunnel' at 900m (the highest point). Birding in the cloud forest both sides of the Tunnel. Birds may include Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Green-backed Trogon, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Cliff Flycatcher, Curl-crested Aracari, Plumbeous Euphonia & Black Antbird. o/n Tucan Suites.

Thursday 28 May – La Escalera, Aconabikh, Pongo de Caynarachi. Up to the Tunnel as yesterday, concentrate on sites further east & at lower altitudes. Aconabikh for hummers at feeders (including Gould's Jewelfront & Koepcke's Hermit), perhaps Golden-headed & Blue-backed Manakins. Lowlands, as far as Pongo de Caynarachi and Pelejo area, for Long-billed Woodcreeper, White-shouldered Antbird, Scarlet-crowned & Lemon-throated Barbets. o/n Tucan Suites.

Friday 29 May – Quiscarrumi Bridge, Moyobamba, Morro de Calzada, Rioja ricefields. Leave Tarapoto c.7 am for Moyobamba, the main town in the San Martin region. Stop at Quiscarrumi Bridge for the Oilbird roost in the ravine below. Birding at Morro de Calzada (very varied selection of birds) and Rioja ricefields (west of Moyobamba). Late afternoon canoe trip from Santa Elena along the backwaters of the Rio Romero. Look for rarer kingfishers, woodcreepers & woodpeckers, River Otters & up to 5 species of monkeys. Overnight at Hotel Puerto Mirador, Moyobamba.

Saturday 30 May – Mishquiyacu, Waqanki, lowlands. Morning at Waqanki, just south of Moyobamba. Early walk up Mishquiyacu trail, then look at hummingbird feeders before lunch. Forest birds may include Chestnut-throated Spinetail, Striped Manakin, Wing-barred Piprites, Blue-crowned Trogon, Fiery-throated Fruit-eater, White-plumed Antbird. Expect 12+ species of hummers at the feeders & perhaps Mishana Tyranulet. Roadside sites for open country birds (e.g km 476) Look for crakes & rails, Donacobius, Pale-eyed Blackbird. Spotlighting for Band-bellied & Stygian Owls. 2nd night at Hotel Puerto Mirador.

Sunday 31 May – Aguas Verdes, Afluente, Abra Patricia. Leave early for Aguas Verdes for birding from hides; hope for Little & Cinereous Tinamous & Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail. Various stops on the steady climb into the cloud forest including Afluente. Roadside forest birds – perhaps Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Flame-faced Tanager, Masked Trogon. Arrive Owlet Lodge (c.2300m) for late lunch. Birding around Lodge in the afternoon. Walk down from c.5 pm for some evening day-birds, then for Long-whiskered Owlet. Nightjars & Potoos possible. 3 nights at Owlet Lodge.

Monday 1 June – Abra Patricia trails all day. Swallow-tailed Nightjar often around the Lodge at dawn. Look for high altitude tanagers like Yellow-scarfed & Grass-green; mountain tanagers, brush-finches, flowerpiercers, tapaculos; spend time on antpittas (Chestnut, Ochre-fronted & Rusty-tinged); Crimson-bellied Woodpecker possible, hummingbirds at feeders (no overlap with Waqanki). Spotlighting for Cinnamon Screech Owl, perhaps Rufous-banded Owl. o/n Owlet Lodge.

Tuesday 2 June – Abra Patricia, further afield, roadside stops to east & back. Trails & roadside stops, look for Royal Sunangel, Bar-winged Wood-wren, Yellow-throated Tanager, Equatorial Greytail. Spotlighting. o/n Owlet Lodge.

Wednesday 3 June – Abra Patricia to Gocta. Birding Abra Patricia in morning, then travel to Gocta for 4 nights. Go as far as the Trout Farm (for lunch) & check for Maroon-belted Chat-Tyrant (now split from Slaty-backed); also Torrent Duck. Overnight Gocta Lodge (4 nights).

Thursday 4 June – Huaylla Belen. All day up Huaylla Belen for cloud forest birds, especially bamboo specialists like Plushcap, Hemispingus (including Rufous-browed), Russet-mantled Soft-tail, Plain-tailed Wren and others – Unstreaked Tit-Tyrant, Red-crested Cotinga. Also good for Antpittas (Pale-billed, Chachapoyas, Chestnut-crowned). o/n Gocta Lodge

Friday 5 June – Gocta Falls. Drive down hill and up other side to San Pablo. Walk San Pablo trail to centre of Falls, back mid-afternoon. Hummingbird feeders at Cocochimba, especially for Marvellous Spatuletail. Check roadside sites for Marañon Crescentchest. Listen in the evenings for the elusive Buff-fronted Owl, try waterfall trail near the Lodge. o/n Gocta Lodge.

Saturday 6 June – Gocta & Pedro Ruiz area

Visit other sites in the Gocta area, perhaps the lower trail to the Falls & trails leading from it; depending on what we still want to see, e.g White-capped Dipper, Black-streaked Puffbird, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Speckle-chested Piculet, Marañon Thrush, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Buff-bellied & Blue-browed Tanagers. o/n Gocta Lodge

Sunday 7 June – Gocta to Leymebamba. Leave Gocta Lodge and travel up the valley southwards to Leymebamba. Visit Kuelap Archaeological Site in the morning, an ancient fortress built by the

Chachapoyas culture in the 6th century AD. Since our last visit, the settlement is accessed by cable car from Nuevo Tingo in the valley below. Later, birding along the Utcubamba River, e.g for Torrent Duck, Fasciated Tiger-Heron, Scarlet-fronted Parakeets, Pale-vented Pigeon. o/n Refugio Bosque Azul, Leymebamba, 3 nights.

Monday 8 June – Rio Atuen, north side of Abra Barro Negro. Birding up the Rio Atuen, private garden with hummingbird feeders, Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Golden-headed Quetzal etc. Later, travel up the lower slopes of the road up to Abra Barro Negro (not as far as the ridge-line). Look for Rusty-breasted Antpitta & Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant. Mummies museum in the afternoon if time. o/n Refugio Bosque Azul, Leymebamba.

Tuesday 9 June – Abra Barro Negro & Marañon River at Balsas. Drive to top of Abra Barro Negro, crossing at 3600m, birding along the high ridge & elfin forest in morning. Birds from previous trips - Shining Sunbeam, Tyrian & Coppery Metaltails, White-chinned Thistletail, Rusty-crowned Tit-Spinetail, Blue-backed Conebill, Many-striped Canastero, flowerpiercers, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager. Spectacular scenery, long route down to Balsas for lunch. Look for Buff-bridled Inca-Finch & Yellow-faced Parrotlet & more. Back to Leymebamba in the evening. Spotting for Koepcke's Screech Owl, nightjars etc. o/n Refugio Bosque Azul, Leymebamba.

Wednesday 10 June – Leymebamba to Gocta. Leave Leymebamba and drive back along Utcubamba River to Gocta. Stops for any interesting sightings on route. Relaxation, birding, etc at Gocta, Cocochimba. o/n Gocta Lodge.

Thursday 11 June – Gocta westwards to Jaen via Pedro Ruiz. Birding sites at Bagua Grande, Corral Quemado and near the Marañon River on route. Roadside quarry for dry scrub birds such as Little Inca Finch, Marañon Crescentchest, Short-tailed Field Tyrant. Later around the town of Jaen. If time in the evening, a short drive to the river valley not far east of Jaen for open country & marshland birds. Spotted Rail & Paint-billed Crake possible. o/n Hotel El Bosque, Jaen.

Friday 12 June – Jaen to Tamborapa. Day trip to Tamborapa on the road north from Jaen & along La Coipa Road, dry forest & roadside birding. Look for Marañon & Chinchipe Spinetails, Northern Slaty Antshrike among others. Tuk-tuks into the city square in the evening for a meal at Lactobac restaurant. o/n Hotel El Bosque.

Saturday 13 June – Jaen to Olmos. Today we cross the Andes at one of its lower passes. Birding at Limon de Porcuya in the Andes (where we cross at relatively low altitude) and drive up to Abra de Porcuya (2137m) for morning birding. Andean Condor & other raptors likely on route. Possible birds at Abra de Porcuya – Piura Chat-Tyrant, Chapman's Antshrike, Grey-breasted Flycatcher, Grey & Gold and Three-banded Warblers, Cinereous Conebill, White-winged & White-headed Brush-finches. Descend the west side of the Andes, much drier habitat generally, some stops for birding. Arrive in Olmos in the afternoon, o/n Hotel Maracuya.

Sunday 14 June – Olmos to Chiclayo. Birding in the Olmos area at various altitudes (new sites). Leave Olmos & head down the Pan American highway towards Chiclayo. Birding on route at Bosque de Pomac for Peruvian Plantcutter, Rufous Flycatcher, Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Necklaced Spinetail, Collared Antshrike, Cinereous Finch and more. Other sites in the Tucume area, can visit the Pyramids. Other possible birds on route – White-winged Guan, Tumbes Hummingbird, Short-tailed Woodstar, Elegant Crescentchest, Tumbes Tyrant, Parrot-billed Seedeater, Sulphur-throated Finch. o/n in Chiclayo, perhaps Hotel Andina.

Monday 15 June – Coast at Puerto Eten & Morro Rock. Morning birding the coast west of Chiclayo for a variety of gulls, terns, waders, wildfowl, grebes, coastal specialities like Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant, Tawny-throated Dotterel, Peruvian Thick-knee & perhaps Least Seedsnipe. Morro Rock for Inca Terns, colonies of cormorants, Blue-footed & Peruvian Boobies, even Waved Albatross is possible from here.

End of main tour. To Chiclayo airport for flight back to Lima, and home.

KARANA BIRD TOURS
Brisbane, Australia