

The Nature
Conservancy



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Machu Picchu

Peru: Macaws & Machu Picchu

26 September -11 October 2009

Trip leader: Eric Horvath

Peru has an astounding variety of birds inhabiting many ecosystems and climates. Peru is also the heart of South America's greatest ancient civilization: the Inca. This tour explores both of these interests, with half of our time spent in the Andean highlands, and half in the Amazonian lowlands.

The trip begins at the capital, Lima, on the Pacific Coast. We travel south of Lima to Paracas National Reserve, with incredible seabird colonies amidst the stark Atacama Desert. A boat trip out to the offshore islands will allow us to see Humboldt Penguins and thousands

of Peruvian Boobies, and meet with local Nature Conservancy partners in conservation. The single most important archeological site in South America, Machu Picchu is a spectacular, mysterious ruin perched on a crag above a mighty river gorge. The Inca ruins at Machu Picchu are extraordinarily well preserved, due to the quality of their engineering and construction, and because the settlement was overlooked by the Spanish conquest that systematically destroyed other sites. We will have two days to explore this Inca provincial capital with its agricultural terraces, llama corrals, ritual baths, mountaintop observation platforms, ceremonial temples, and large image stones cut to represent distant sacred mountains.



Window detail, temple of the sun, Machu Picchu

For those interested in natural history, mention of the Amazon basin conjures up images of parrots, toucans, monkeys, and jaguars. The species rich forests at the foot of the Andes in SE Peru are one of the best remaining areas to view these characteristic species. The 3.7 million acre Tambopata Reserved Zone harbors un hunted populations of Giant Otters, monkeys, and flocks of 100 or more macaws. Giant Otters once roamed the South American rainforest from Venezuela to Northern Argentina, but now only a few scattered populations survive due to loss of habitat and intensive hunting. SE Peru has the largest remaining population, and offers the best probabilities for viewing them. Six species of monkeys are likely to be seen on this trip. While they are shy and flee due to hunting pressure in most of the Amazon lowlands, in the reserve they are easily observed. The most spectacular wildlife event of the trip will be visits to the world's largest known mineral clay lick where hundreds of parrots and macaws congregate daily to eat the detoxifying clay, less than 500 yards from our lodge. While nearly all macaw species are declining in much of their range, in the Tambopata-Candamo Reserve they remain common. The rainforest sounds are particularly beautiful. Enchanting flute notes of the Musician Wren, eerie nighttime calls of the Greater Potoo, strange liquid gurgles of the Russet-backed Oropendola, and the resonant song of the Undulated Tinamou entrance all listeners. A canopy platform will allow us to see birds rarely seen from the jungle floor. This trip is flexible with many optional walks, so that one can choose between a fast or slow pace. Peru is now much calmer and safer for tourists than in the past, and we will stay in secure, well-run lodges and hotels.

Itinerary

Day 1.....Saturday, 26 September.....arrival in Lima, Peru

Today everyone will be flying to Lima, the capital of Peru. We will be arriving on different airlines, but most flights arrive late in the evening. Eric will be there at the airport if you wish, to meet you and assist getting to Hotel Antigua in the Miraflores neighborhood of Lima.

Day 2.....Sunday, 27 September.....to Paracas

We begin at 7 AM at Hotel Antigua, where there are some great birds in the hotel garden: Amazilia Hummingbird, Scrub Blackbird, and Vermilion Flycatcher. We'll travel by bus to the seashore and marshes south of Lima, first visiting Pucusana, a small fishing village. In the harbor typically there are dozens of Peruvian pelicans waiting for scraps amid the brightly painted wooden boats. Along the seashore are three species of cormorants, and the spectacular Inca Tern. We will also visit the wetlands of Puerto Viejo. These wetlands are natural pools of fresh water marsh surrounded by dunes, and inhabited by White-tufted Grebes, White-cheeked Pintails, and the Many-colored Rush-Tyrant.



Peruvian Thick-knees

In the afternoon we will enter Paracas National Reserve, the only protected marine area in Peru. Here The Nature Conservancy has supported the local group ProNaturaleza's conservation work for long-term management of the reserve. This is within the Atacama Desert where rain never falls, and so the stark seashore completely lacks vegetation. There are many birds along the shoreline and out at sea. We will look for Chilean Flamingos, migrant shorebirds, and the endemic Peruvian Seaside Cinclodes. Night in Paracas, at Hotel Paracas. This hotel is on the beach, but the Pacific is too cold here for swimming for long without a wetsuit.

Day 3.....Monday, 28 September.....Boat trip, Paracas

In the morning we will take an optional 3 hour trip on the Pacific. Our route will take us past the guano-covered Islas Ballestas where there is a large colony of South American Sea Lions, and thousands of Peruvian Boobies. We may see Common Dolphins, and South American Fur Seals. Our boat will allow close approach to the rocky shoreline, where typically dozens of Humboldt Penguins are sitting just above the waterline. The Humboldt Current here is rich in sea life, and we will see thousands of seabirds including possibly Southern Giant Petrels, Pintado Petrels, Peruvian Diving-petrel, shearwaters, storm petrels. Typically the Pacific off of Peru in September is quite calm, with only small ocean swells and light breezes.

In the afternoon one can relax at our comfortable oceanfront hotel, or explore areas of Paracas National Reserve that we did not visit the day before. Night in Paracas, at Hotel Paracas.

Day 4.....Tuesday, 29 September..... return to Lima

We will return to Lima, a 4 hour drive north. We'll have time to look for some interesting endemic birds of coastal Peru such as the Slender-billed Finch which can be found in olive groves along the Panamerican Highway. The Peruvian Thick-knee, an unusual shorebird with large eyes, can usually be found in agricultural

areas. At dinner we can meet with Nature Conservancy staff to hear a short presentation about conservation work in Peru, especially the Paracas reserve. Night in Lima at Hotel Antigua in the neighborhood of Miraflores.

Day 5.....Wednesday, 30 September.....Lima to Cusco

We catch an early flight to Cusco, ancient capital of the Incas. While Cusco is at 11,000 feet, we will pace ourselves for the elevation, and take a city tour of Cusco. A highlight will be the Inca ruins at Sacsayhuaman where the huge angular stones fitted precisely together are fascinating.

In the afternoon we will leave Cusco by van, and travel towards our hotel near Urubamba in the Sacred Valley. Spectacular Andean peaks such as ice-covered Salcantay (20,575 ft) dominate the view for much of the trip. We may have time to visit Huacarpay Lake where we can look for a variety of ducks, marshbirds, and an endemic hummingbird: the Bearded Mountaineer.

Night at Libertador Valle Sagrado Lodge, Yanahuara, Urubamba. This hotel in the Sacred Valley is at approximately 10,000 feet elevation, which is 1,000 feet lower than Cusco, and thus easier for sleeping at altitude.

Day 6.....Thursday, 1 October.....train to Machu Picchu

Before breakfast we can have optional birding around the hotel where we may see Golden-billed Saltator. After breakfast we drive a short distance to the train station at Ollantaytambo, and board the tourist train to Machu Picchu for a 1 1/2 hour journey. In the Urubamba River gorge Torrent Ducks will be visible on boulders. At the town of Aguascalientes we leave the train, check into our hotel, and then take the bus up to the ruins of Machu Picchu. Here we have the opportunity to spend the rest of the day exploring the ruins. Machu Picchu is a huge site, and we will be able to enter many buildings with superb stonework. The setting is fantastic. In the afternoon, one can either take the bus back to Aguascalientes, or walk the trail down to town. The birding can be very good on the lower slopes of the trail, and we will likely see Inca Wrens, Slate-throated Redstarts, and Streaked Xenops, among others. At dusk, on our return walk to Aguascalientes through the Urubamba Gorge, we may see displaying Lyre-tailed Nightjars. Night in Aguascalientes, Hotel Presidente. The elevation here is approximately 7,000 feet.

Day 7.....Friday, 2 October.....Machu Picchu to Sacred Valley

One can choose either to take the early bus up to the Machu Picchu ruins for further exploration at the most tranquil time of day, or spend the morning birding the Urubamba Gorge. Morning birding will involve an early start and level walking of 4 miles along a road and then beside railway tracks. We have a good chance to see the spectacular Andean Cock-of-the-Rock and many colorful tanagers. Along the river White-capped Dippers and Torrent Tyrannulets forage from the rocks. We will have lunch in Aguascalientes, with time to explore gardens with more cloud forest birds. There are some beautiful hummingbirds to be seen here including Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Gould's Inca, and Amethyst-throated Sunangel. Later, we'll catch the mid afternoon train back to Ollantaytambo.



Torrent Duck, Rio Urubamba, Aguascalientes

In Ollantaytambo, we will investigate these Inca ruins with an excellent local guide. Closely fitted pink granite was used at Ollantaytambo, and the site is fascinating. We may see Andean Condors soaring over the ruins, or Giant Hummingbirds visiting flowering shrubs. Night at Libertador Valle Sagrado Lodge, Yanahuara, Urubamba.

Day 8.....Saturday, 3 October.....Sacred Valley, Malaga Pass

Today we plan a day of birding at Malaga Pass. We'll start early and travel by van over the puna grasslands to the crest of Malaga Pass (14,200 ft). We will visit several different habitats at varying elevations, including the tree-line forest where we may see Stripe-headed Antpitta and Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch. We can hike a high elevation trail into shrubby woodland to look for the Tit-like Dacnis and other interesting species restricted to this rare habitat. Andean Condor, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, and Puna Hawk are possible to see soaring overhead. As we return to the Sacred Valley we can stop in some scrub on the dry side of the cordillera to look for more birds including a hummingbird known as White-tufted Sunbeam. Night at Libertador Valle Sagrado Lodge, Yanahuara, Urubamba.

Day 9....Sunday, 4 October....Cusco to Puerto Maldonado, upriver to Refugio Amazonas Lodge

We catch a scheduled commercial flight from Cusco over the spectacular Andes to Puerto Maldonado (in the Amazonian lowlands east of the Andes). From Puerto Maldonado we board a motorized dugout on the Tambopata River to travel to the lodge. Boats are the main transportation here, and ours is comfortable with padded seats, a roof for sun protection, and open sides for wildlife viewing. After three hours we will arrive at Refugio Amazonas Lodge. The lodge was recently built combining traditional native architecture and materials (wood, palm fronds, wild cane and clay) with modern, low impact, eco-lodge technology. Wide, well-maintained trails radiating from the lodge offer access to different habitats and their characteristic wildlife.

Often seen from trails near the lodge are Dusky Titi Monkeys, Blue-crowned Motmots, and Silver-beaked Tanagers.

Day 10.....Monday, 5 October.....upriver to Tambopata Research Center

At sunrise we plan an optional visit to the canopy tower to see flocks of raucous macaws flying over the verdant forest. This canopy tower provides access to the treetops, and is an easy climb with wide wooden steps, and a platform at the top to enjoy the view. White-throated Toucans often perch in treetops visible from the canopy tower. At daybreak the bellowing Red Howler Monkeys can often be heard proclaiming their territories. The birding is superb from the tower since it allows eye level views of colorful tanagers rarely seen from below.

Following breakfast, we travel up river into the Tambopata National Reserve. Traveling on the river is a great way to see wildlife, and we can expect to see Capped Heron fishing from rocks, Sand-colored Nighthawks roosting on islands, perhaps a Great Black Hawk on a gravel bar, or interesting mammals such as Capybara (the world's largest rodent). One and a half hours into our boat journey, as we cross the confluence of the Malinowski River, we will leave the area of small farms along the river, and enter the reserve where hunting is not allowed. Sightings of large species such as caiman, Orinoco Geese, Razor-billed Curassows, and macaws will increase as we travel upriver. Tonight and the next three nights at the Tambopata Research Center (T.R.C.), in the pristine heart of the 700,000 hectare uninhabited nucleus of the reserve.

Day 11.....Tuesday, 6 October.....Tambopata Research Center (T.R.C.)

At dawn we go to a clay bank along the river to watch hundreds of parrots and macaws fly in to eat clay. This predictable spectacle occurs every non-rainy morning, and was beautifully illustrated in the Jan 1994 *National Geographic*. Macaws and parrots come to the clay lick to obtain minerals that are hard to come by in the rainforest. Also, the clay helps to neutralize the effects of toxic fruits and seeds which they eat. In addition, the macaws come to socialize. As they congregate in the crowns of trees surrounding the clay lick, the parrots spend hours screeching, squabbling, gurgling, and purring at each other before they descend to eat clay. Six species of macaws and eleven species of parrots, parakeets, and parrotlets come to the clay lick at T.R.C.: Red-and-green, Blue-and-yellow, Scarlet, Red-bellied, Chestnut-fronted, and Blue-headed Macaws; Mealy and Yellow-crowned Amazons; Blue-headed, Orange-cheeked and White-bellied Parrots; Dusky-headed, White-eyed, Cobalt-winged and Tui Parakeets, and Dusky-billed and Manu Parrotlets. On a typical morning, hundreds of parrots and small green macaws (Red-bellied and Chestnut-fronted) descend to eat clay. It is common to see 40 or 50 large macaws on the clay lick. We will view the clay lick from the river island below the cliff. Typical viewing distances are 100 yards so we won't disturb the activity. This is the largest known clay lick, where hundreds of parrots and macaws come in daily. The numbers of birds visiting the clay varies throughout the year, and this trip is scheduled to match the time of peak abundance.

We return to the lodge for breakfast. After breakfast we will split our group in half to walk the trails with 6 people and a guide. The local guides are well trained, know hundreds of species by sight and sound, and keep current on where active nests can be viewed. The bird diversity is huge here, but many species are of low abundance, and so we will visit different forest habitats. In the terra firme forest we can visit the display grounds of a group of Screaming Pihás, the loudest birds of the jungle. Midday siesta. In the afternoon we head to the palm swamp to see the Blue and Yellow Macaws, perhaps Spider Monkeys, Fork-tailed Palm Swift and Palm Tanager.



Blue & Yellow Macaws and Scarlet Macaws eating clay



Blue-and-yellow Macaws, Tambopata Research Center

Day 12.....Wednesday, 7 October.....Tambopata Research Center

We return to the clay lick at dawn. The diversity of macaws and parrots is thrilling to watch, and each day there are interesting variations in flock composition and behavior. From the clay lick viewpoint we can also look in the mud along the river bank for mammal tracks since tapirs, capybaras, ocelots, and jaguars often travel along the river's edge.

In the morning we can do more birding on the lodge trails, especially the transitional forests above the clay lick. These were bamboo forests until they flowered and died out a few years ago. Now they are akin to riparian forests but will eventually grow into terra firme forests as they are not affected by yearly floods. Here we will spot White-throated Jacamar, Buff-throated Saltator, Grayish Saltator, Scarlet-hooded Barbet and Piratic Flycatcher. While birding these spots we will have extraordinary views of the Tambopata River winding its way from the highlands. Midday siesta. In the late afternoon we'll go to a nearby pond where there is a somewhat different set of birds such as Sunbittern and Ladder-tailed Nightjar. At this location in 2006 we got nice photos of two Agami Herons. At night we can try some optional night birding, looking for Tawny-bellied Screech Owl, Pauraque, and with luck a Great Potoo.

Day 13....Thursday, 8 October....Tambopata Research Center downriver to Posadas Amazonas

This morning we take the boat down river to Posadas Amazonas Lodge. This boat trip will be our best chance of seeing a jaguar, perhaps sunning itself on a log on the riverbank as we pass by. While scanning the shore, we are likely to see Orinoco Goose, White-necked Heron, and Yellow-billed Tern.

In the afternoon we can explore the jungle trails, where we will especially look for army ant swarms. Associated with these seething hordes of raiding ants we may see "professional" ant followers such as the Black-spotted Bare-eye, and White-throated Antbird. These fascinating birds typically forage only with raiding army ants, capturing insects that the ants flush from cover. Sunset may find us at the 110 foot high canopy tower, at treetop level. Bat Falcons are frequently seen at this time, sometimes zipping close to the tower, other times perched on a snag. On the return walk, nightbirds including the Ocellated Poorwill are possible. In addition, night walks provide the best opportunity for macrophotography of insects and frogs.

Day 14.....Friday, 9 October.....Posadas Amazonas Lodge

This morning we take a boat trip at dawn on a calm oxbow lake. A family of Giant River Otters lives here, and we have excellent chances of seeing them. At times the otters approach the boat, but more likely we will use binoculars to get good looks at them as they bob up, eating fish. Nearly 6 feet long, Giant River Otters are one of the most delightful animals to watch in the Amazon basin. Since we will be paddling quietly around the lake on a wide, stable catamaran, we will see many interesting birds as the forest wakes up. The Hoatzin, a large peculiar bird with a blue face and spiky crest, is easy to see. Along the water's edge, Sungrebes, Azure Gallinules, Red-capped Cardinals, and Horned Screammers may be seen. The lake is also a prime spot to see birds of prey. King Vultures and Harpy Eagles sometimes fly by, but more likely are Black-collared Hawk, Crane Hawk, and Plumbeous Kite.



Agami Heron, Tambopata Research Center

In the afternoon we bird trails around the lodge, perhaps taking a trail through the primary rain forest to a giant kapok tree. Alternatively we could visit a garden in the native community to see how the indigenous people farm their crops. Often there are colorful birds in the garden such as the Troupial.

Day 15.....Saturday, 10 October.....Posadas Amazonas Lodge to Lima

We will take the boat at dawn downriver to Puerto Maldonado, where we will catch a midday flight to Lima, in time to catch flights back home. The trip ends at mid-afternoon in Lima at the airport. Participants can either catch a flight out later in the day or continue on their own travel plans. For those whose flight out is in the evening, we can take an optional afternoon trip to visit the colonial center of Lima, followed by a final trip dinner.

Day 16.....Sunday, 11 October.....arrival home

Most flights scheduled to leave Lima late on 10 October will arrive in the USA on the morning of the 11th.

Leadership

Eric Horvath holds a degree in zoology from Oregon State University, and has written a number of scientific papers on birds and mammals. He has led tours since 1990 for The Nature Conservancy, and has travelled widely in South America, including 7 previous trips to Peru. His interests also include geology and botany. Eric lives in coastal Oregon with his wife Claire and their children, Zachary and Phoebe.

Lodgings, Meals, and Transportation

In the Amazonian lowlands, we will be spending six nights in total at Posadas Amazonas Lodge, Refugio Amazonas Lodge, and the Tambopata Research Center. All of these lodges offer simple but clean

accommodation consisting of elevated wooden buildings with thatched roofs in the tradition of the native community. Beds at these lodges have mosquito netting so one can sleep undisturbed. At Posadas Amazonas, each room has a private bath. At the Tambopata Research Center a separate building houses several showers and bathrooms. In Lima, the Sacred Valley near Cusco, and at Machu Picchu, we will be staying at comfortable hotels with private bathrooms. All meals are included in the trip price, and the lodges offer vegetarian meals. Group size: 12 participants.

Rigors

Temperate climate in the Andes on days 2-7, warm humid climate in the Amazonian lowlands from days 8-14. Our daily schedule will usually involve one or two morning walks, lunch at the lodge, a rest period (siesta during the heat of the day), a late afternoon outing, and an evening foray. Outings are typically optional, allowing one to choose between a fast paced or slower paced trip. Air travel in Peru is very similar to the U.S.—large Boeing jets and tight airport security. It is possible that our internal flight schedule may change (weather sometimes causes cancellations). In this case we will make every attempt to go to the same places, but in a different sequence.

Preparation

Participants will be sent maps, bird lists, an equipment list, information regarding medical requirements, and copies of selected articles.

Reservations

Reservations are made on a first-come, first served basis. A deposit of \$500 per person is required to reserve one space. The final payment and contribution to The Nature Conservancy are due 1 June 2009.

Cost

Included: All lodging, meals from breakfast on day 2 through lunch on day 15, land transport, flights within Peru, all guiding, and all entrance fees.

Not Included: International air travel to Peru, airport taxes, alcoholic beverages, personal items, and gratuities averaging \$8 per day to the Peruvian bus driver and local guides.

Reservation deposit	(made payable to Eric Horvath)	\$500
Final Payment	(Due 1 June 2009, made payable to Eric Horvath)	\$3,895
TNC Contribution	(Due 1 June 2009, made payable to The Nature Conservancy)	\$500
Total trip cost (not including airfare from the U.S. to Lima):		----- \$ 4,895

(The fair market value of this trip is \$4395. The difference between the fair market value and the price of the trip constitutes a suggested tax-deductible contribution to The Nature Conservancy.)

Send all checks to: Eric Horvath
P.O. Box 721
South Beach, OR 97366

Tel. 541-867-6791

Single Supplement

If you prefer to have your own private room and do not want to share it with a roommate, you may specify this and pay an additional \$600. Single rooming may not be available on nights 9--15, in which case the supplement will be \$400.

Refunds

The contribution to The Nature Conservancy is non-refundable, but may be applied to a future trip. If you cancel and a replacement is found, you will be refunded the amounts paid to Eric Horvath. Any cancellation for which a suitable replacement is found receives a full refund, less a \$100 non-refundable handling fee. Otherwise the following conditions apply: If you cancel prior to 1 June 2009 you will receive a full refund. If you cancel between 1 June 2009 and 1 August 2009, you will forfeit 80% of ground costs. If you cancel after 1 August 2009, you will forfeit the full trip cost. The non-refunded portion of the trip helps defray non-recoverable expenses. If for any reason The Nature Conservancy cancels a trip, you will be fully refunded the amounts paid to Eric Horvath. **Participants are encouraged to buy trip cancellation insurance through a travel agent in case you cannot attend due to unforeseen circumstances.**

Questions? Contact the Field Trip Program Manager at The Nature Conservancy of Oregon at 503-802-8100, or email Rudy Dietz at excursions@tnc.org

821 SE 14th Ave., Portland, OR 97214

The trip leader, Eric Horvath, can be contacted at 541-867-6791, or eric@erichorvathnaturetours.com



Ceremonial Fountain, Ollantaytambo



Long-tailed Potoo, Refugio Amazonas Lodge