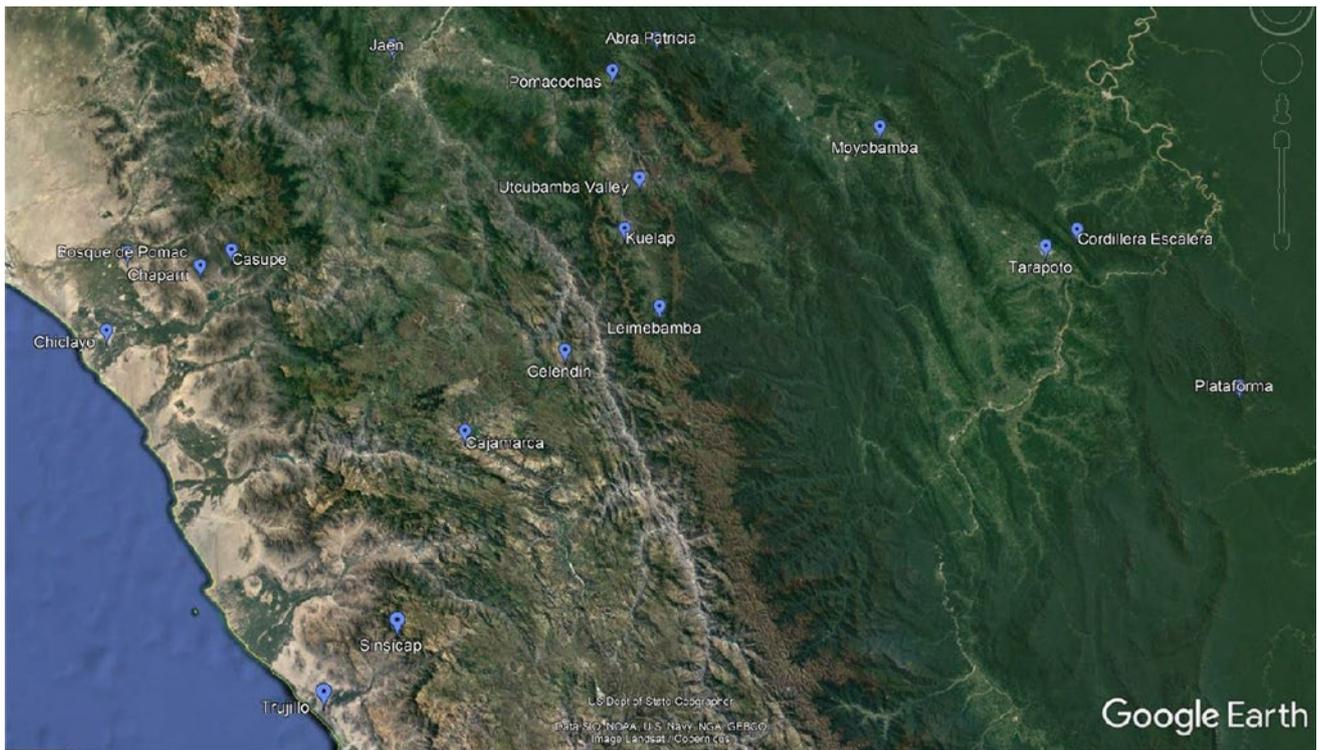


**Tour Northern Peru**  
**March 10 - April 1, 2024**  
**23 days /22 nights**  
**Itinerary specially prepared for**  
**John Sterling**

**TOUR MAP...**



**Day 1, March 10th: Arrival in Lima.**

Night in Lima.

**Day 2, March 11th: Lima - Tarapoto to Plataforma.** Today we take an early flight to the city of Tarapoto, and we will be transferred to Plataforma town, the site to find the Peruvian endemic, highly localized, Scarlet-banded Barbet.

Since being discovered in 1996, the usual expedition to find the Scarlet-banded Barbet involved much hiking and remote camping, simply to reach the general location. Nowadays, visiting Plataforma may be easier, it still poses considerable difficulties when there is rain, so specialized 4x4 vehicles are all that will do. With rain, the 60km drive could take 2-3 hours. Should we have time available along the way, some roadside birding may produce Blue-rumped Manakin, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater or Rose-fronted Parakeet. Depending on weather conditions, we may have time this evening for an owling session.

**Days 3, March 12th: Scarlet-banded Barbet site.** We have one full day to target not only the Scarlet-banded Barbet, but many other specialties of the area. We don't have to go far to reach the preferred habitat of the barbets and the newly discovered specie of antbird, the Cordillera Azul Antbird (very rare). On this isolated ridge in the Cordillera Azul, one of the last ranges before the expanse of Amazonia begins, we will be quite literally surrounded by birds seldom seen on any tour, anywhere. While the barbet is the clear prize, numbering fewer than 1000 individuals, there will be plenty of great birds to keep us busy and make this remote experience extraordinary!

Recently observed species at this site include Jet, Golden-headed and Yungas Manakins (an amazingly disjunct, northern population), Fiery-throated, Scarlet-breasted & Scaled Fruiteaters, Andean Laniisoma (Shrike-like Cotinga), Grey-tailed Piha, Roraiman Flycatcher, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Rusty-tinged & Scaled Antpittas, Golden-headed Quetzal, Foothill Schiffornis, Red-necked Woodpecker, Subtropical Pygmy Owl, Curl-crested Aracari, Blackish Antbird, Slaty, Dot-winged, Rufous-rumped & Foothill Antwrens, Buff-tailed Sicklebill, Metallic-green, Blue-browed, Paradise and Saffron-crowned Tanagers, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater and Yellow-throated Spadebill, amongst many, many others.

**Day 4, March 13th: Plataforma to Tarapoto.** We depart Plataforma early this morning to tackle the long drive back to Tarapoto. Depending on our travel status, we will bird some of the diverse habitats along the road. Possible new species here include Stripe-chested and Ornate Antwrens, Rufous Casiornis, the gorgeous Band-tailed Manakin, as well as a few white sand forest specialties like Sulphur-bellied Tyrant-Manakin. There are a number of widespread lowland Amazonian species, as well as those typical of both savannas and secondary scrub throughout the upper Amazon Basin to be found on the lower part of the road. We expect to arrive back in Tarapoto late this afternoon.

**Day 5, March 14th: Early AM departure for Cordillera Escalera.** We depart Tarapoto early this morning and head to the Cordillera Escalera where we will spend most of the day birding. The Cordillera Escalera is a forested ridge north of Tarapoto, and the last outlying ridge before the Amazonian lowlands. This ridge is home to some very localized species such as the endemic Koepcke's Hermit and the recently found Plumbeous Euphonia. We also have a chance of finding White-tipped Swift, White Hawk, Yellow-bellied & Dotted

Tanagers (rare), Red-stained Woodpecker, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, Blackish Pewee, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Cliff Flycatcher and Golden-headed Manakin. With plenty of luck, we may come across some of the region's rarer denizens such as Yellow-cheeked Becard, Chestnut-tipped Toucanet or White-throated Woodpecker. The lower elevations in the area have more classic Amazonian avifauna and we will work our way over the ridge trying to find a good range of species from the Amazon too. We will then go back to Tarapoto later this afternoon.

**Day 6, March 15th: Cordillera Escalera - Tarapoto surroundings and transfer to Moyobamba.** We will head back to the Cordillera Escalera this morning to search for any remaining target species. New species we may find include Great-billed Hermit, Blackish Nightjar, Gould's Jewelfront, Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo, White-necked Thrush and Silver-beaked Tanager. We shall then return through Tarapoto before heading north for a few hours to Moyobamba.

Our lodge near Moyobamba is famed for its hummingbirds, and indeed over 25 species have been recorded here - it really is armchair birding at its best. Rufous-crested Coquette is certainly one of the numerous highlights here, as is White-chinned Sapphire, Black-throated and Great-billed Hermits, Black-throated Mango and Grey-breasted Sabrewing. We shall also stretch our legs around the garden, where we may find the localized endemic Mishana Tyrannulet and Huallaga Tanager along with the recently described Varzea Thrush.

**Days 7, March 16th: Waqanki Lodge & Morro Calzada.** We have a full day to bird Waqanki, and Morro Calzada. This site has an assortment of species particular to the base of the eastern Andes and we are in for a real treat. Spot-winged Parrotlet, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Painted, Green and Blue-rumped Manakins, Chestnut-throated Spinetail and Foothill and Ash-throated Antwren are some of the rare species that are possible here! All we have to hope for is good weather, and we will be seeing some of the most desired foothill species in the entire Peruvian Andes.

We plan also to visit Morro de Calzada, which offers another completely new set of birds to the previous locales - making today, perhaps, the most diverse day of the entire tour! Species of the scrub at Calzada may include Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Black-billed Seed Finch and Pale-eyed Blackbird, Point-tailed Palmcreeper is another possibility, while the forests could turn up Buckley's Forest Falcon, Bluish-fronted Jacamar, Mishana Tyrannulet, White-bellied Pygmy Tyrant and the stunning Fiery-capped Manakins! Perhaps the highlight bird here is the recently described Painted Manakin, endemic to the Loreto and San Martin departments of Peru. Given such an elevation range, the species listed here represent less than one-fortieth of the birds in the area, so we must remain on our toes for whatever might turn up! This is still an exciting area for discovery where new sites for rare species, as well as actual new species, are still being found by researchers on a regular basis. Today's motto should perhaps be this: Expect the unexpected!

**Day 8, March 17th: Arenas Blancas and Rioja to Abra Patricia.** We leave Moyobamba early this morning, heading north towards the fabled Abra Patricia and the Owllet lodge. Our first stop will be at the Arenas Blancas Preserve not far from Aguas Verdes. Owned by a former logger turned conservationist, this is probably the best site worldwide to locate some incredibly tricky to view birds. Rufous-breasted Wood Quail (rare) will be at the top of our priority list, while Little and Cinereous Tinamous (rare) make up a trilogy of species far more frequently heard than seen. With the aid of seed feeders, we stand a very good chance of getting fabulous looks at these species. We shall continue to bird the grounds for the remainder of the morning, possibly

adding other such mouth-watering species as Speckle-chested Piculet, Lined Antshrike, Rufous-winged, and Yellow-breasted Antwrens, Spectacled Bristle-Tyrant, Plumbeous-crowned and Ecuadorian Tyrannulets, Red-shouldered, Huallaga and Vermilion Tanagers – and many more! After lunch, we shall continue northwards to Abra Patricia for the next three nights.

**Days 9 & 10, March 18 and 19th: Abra Patricia.** We have the next two full days to thoroughly explore the Abra Patricia area, home of some of the least known of Peruvian birds. We will be hoping for mixed bird flocks that should contain radiant Blue-browed and Metallic-green Tanagers, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Spotted and Rusty-winged Barbtails and the recently described Lulu's Tody-Flycatcher (Tody-Tyrant). We will be birding several elevation zones between 1,000 and 2,200m (3,300 to 7,200 ft) and along the way, we hope to encounter the difficult and endangered Ash-throated Antwren (rare) as well as Cinnamon-breasted Tody-Tyrant, endemic Bar-winged Wood Wren, near endemic Royal Sunangel, Equatorial Graytail (rare), White-capped and Scaly-naped Parrots, Emerald-bellied Puffleg, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Montane Woodcreeper and the outrageous, but scarce, White-capped Tanager. During this time, with some persistence, we also hope see the endemic Ochre-fronted and Rusty-tinged Antpittas as well as Yellow-scarfed and Silvery Tanagers – the list of possibilities seems endless!

Our list will certainly grow as we sift through the various habitats, other birds we will be looking out for include White-throated Hawk, Peruvian, Sulphur-bellied and Ecuadorian Tyrannulets, Barred and Scaled Fruiteaters, perhaps the spectacular Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Speckle-chested Piculet, Barred Becard, the very scarce Lanceolated Monklet, White-collared Jay, Sharpe's Wren and, in addition, we will also search for a newly described species related to Bicolored Antvireo.

Luck and persistence may even deliver the otherwise scarce Barred Antthrush, White-faced Nunbird or Chestnut-crested Cotinga. We won't ignore night birds either and will work after dark to find goodies such as Rufous-banded Owl, Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Rufous-bellied Nighthawk and Cinnamon Screech Owl. This is also the type locality for Long-whiskered Owlet, which has become regular of late! We stand a good chance of finding this bizarre and tiny endemic that, until 2011, was virtually unknown.

**Day 11, March 20th: Abra Patricia and transfer to Pomacochas/Huembo lodge.** We have most of the morning to bird our surrounds for any species we are still searching for, or desire better views of before travelling the relatively short distance to Pomacochas and then Huembo lodge At 2400m (+8,000ft) elevation, Pomacochas is the highest site of the tour to date. Birds around Pomacochas include many high-Andean species new to the trip such as Andean Lapwing, Rufous-capped Antshrike and, with luck, Puna Snipe or Plumbeous Rail.

Once We get to Huembo lodge, we will start the birding around in the area, looking for mainly the most beautiful hummingbird on earth: Marvelous Spatuletail day!!! It is hard to say anything more because nothing can top viewing these stunning, unique birds in full. We will likely view the males from the very site that the BBC film crew captured the iconic footage we have no doubt all enjoyed. The day will then be spent seeking out several elfin/high-temperate forest species for both Pale-billed Antpitta\* and Purple-throated Sunangel, two strikingly good birds that can only be found on very few mountaintops in far northern Peru. Other species will abound in this lush forest, and we hope to encounter a few of the following: Speckle-faced Parrot, Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Inca Flycatcher, and Grass-green Tanagers. We will have access to similar forest later in the tour, though this is our best chance for the two headline species mentioned above.

*\* Sept 2021 - There are NO currently accessible reliable sites for Pale-billed Antpitta at this time. Sites are being searched for, but we cannot guarantee that any new sites will be found in time for this tour.*

**Day 12 & 13m March 21st and 22nd: Huembo lodge to Jaen.** Today we will embark on one of the more scenic drives of the tour, though we will enjoy several lovely journeys as we cross high passes and plummet into deep valleys over the course of the next week. As we near Jaen, the habitat will change dramatically. Though we will have an opportunity for most of the following species over the next day, we will certainly make the most of the afternoon, stopping in suitable habitat as weather and time permits. Some of the more prominent species we are searching for include Chinchipe Spinetail, the Marañon form of Northern Slaty Antshrike, Tataupa Tinamou, Red-crested Finch, and if we have time to scour some of the rice fields and local irrigated fields, we might even find Spotted Rail or Paint-billed Crake! We might stay out this evening for a spot of owling, where we may find West Peruvian Screech Owl or Anthony's Nightjar.

The full day around Jaen will be spent mostly looking for specialties around this dry valley such as: Marañon Spinetail, Little Inca Finch, Spot-throated Hummingbird, Marañon Thrush, Buff-bellied Tanager, Marañon Crescentchest and more.

**Day 14, March 23rd: Jaen and drive into the Utcubamba Valley and Leimebamba.** Today is a travel day when we depart Jaen and start heading into the Utcubamba Valley. We shall continue to bird in suitable habitat, with possibilities including Black-necked Woodpecker and Marañon Thrush (again) although we do have some distance to travel. We hope to end the day with views of the localized endemic Koepcke's Screech Owl, which is often staked out on its roost! Night in Leymebamba.

**Day 15, March 24th: Abra Barro Negro and Rio Atuen.** Today we will have an entire day to bird the Leimebamba area and the famed Abra Barro Negro. Here we will slowly bird the remnant patches of cloud forest and farmlands while making several planned stops for species such as the beautiful endemic Coppery Metaltail and the scarce Russet-mantled Softtail, the latter of which makes its home in the high patches of bamboo. Other birds we will be searching for include White-chinned Thistletail, endemic, Yellow-scarfed Tanager, the recently split Chachapoyas Antpitta, Shining Sunbeam, the threatened Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan, and possibly Chestnut-crowned Antpitta as well as the localized Rusty-breasted Antpitta. In the afternoon we will visit the dramatic Atuen Valley. Wild enough to still be home to Andean Condors, we will also search for Large-footed Tapaculo, Northern Mountain Cacique, White-collared Jay and Red-hooded Tanager amongst others. Night in Leimebamba.

**Day 16, March 25th: Leimebamba to Celendin.** We have another early start in order to make a short pass at any of the Abra Barro Negro birds we might have missed yesterday, before plummeting down the switchbacks, deep into the driest portion of the Marañon Valley. Early stops should offer ample opportunity for Buff-bridled Inca Finch, a charismatic endemic that inhabits the dry, cactus-covered slopes and often gives great views to birders seeking it out. Birding through the riverine and agricultural vegetation, we will have further opportunity to find Marañon (Peruvian) Pigeon should we have missed it previously, while in the Bombax woodlands we will seek out the endangered endemic Yellow-faced Parrotlet. Afterwards, we will slowly bird our way up the valley searching for specialties of this area, specifically targeting two very localised endemics - Chestnut-backed Thornbird and Grey-winged Inca Finch, among other more widespread Andean species.

During the afternoon, we will then devote time searching for the endemic Jelski's Chat-Tyrant before continuing to our hotel in Celendin for the night.

**Day 17, March 26th: Celendin to Cajamarca and Rio Chonta Valley.** We will set out early this morning, birding through the remnant humid forest and Polylepis scrub. We will be searching for Andean species we may not have seen so far, including Peruvian Sierra Finch, Shining Sunbeam, Black-crested Warbler, the Maranon sub-species of Black-crested Tit-Tyrant and Many-striped Canastero, among other possible cinclodes, pipits, and ground-tyrants in the high Puna grasslands. We will also make a special effort to see the newly split and critically endangered Cajamarca Antpitta. In the Polylepis scrub, we will search for Line-checked Spinetail, Striated Earthcreeper and Rusty-crowned Tit-Spinetail. This stretch of road is also one of the best places to see the rare White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant. In the afternoon, we will then head to our stakeout for the endemic Grey-bellied Comet, picking up Black Metaltail along the way before heading to our hotel in Cajamarca. *If time permitting*, we will head over to the "City of Rocks" at Cumbemayo. This high-elevation site is a great place to pick up several species of Sierra-Finch, Ground-Tyrant, and three real stunners: Stripe-headed Antpitta, Giant Hummingbird, and Green-headed Hillstar. It will be another incredible day chock-full of endemics and beautiful Andean landscapes!

**Day 18, March 27th: San Marcos and Cajamarca.**

This morning will be devoted to perhaps the greatest Furnariid (if not at least the greatest by name), in all the land – Great Spinetail! This endangered bird continues to disappear along with its habitat, and we will work hard to try and find one. In the afternoon, we will bird what's left of the scrub at Abra Gavilan. Two more endemics await us here, and with luck we hope for views of Rufous-backed Inca Finch and Unicolored Tapaculo, back to Cajamarca for the last night.

**Day 19, March 28th: Cajamarca to Chaparri Lodge.**

We will leave Cajamarca early in the morning and make a quick stop at Abra Gavilan once again to get some birds missed the day before. Then we will descend the Andes to reach the coastal plain, and we will head North on the Pan-American Highway to Mocupe, a place called "rafan", a fine remnant of coastal forest that is home to Peruvian Plantcutter, Rufous Flycatcher, Necklaced Spinetail, and many more! We should have sufficient time to bird both the productive Santa Rosa fields and the lush Puerto Eten wetlands. The Santa Rosa fields offer a good opportunity to search out a few species that are more difficult to encounter away from the coastal littoral, such as Least Seedsnipe (rare), Tawny-throated Dotterel (rare), Peruvian Thick-knee and Short-tailed Field Tyrant, as well as some of the commoner species of the Tumbes scrub. The Puerto Eten wetlands offer up a lot of diversity, with a wide variety of waterfowl present, including White-cheeked Pintail and White-tufted Grebe. Both Wren-like Rushbird and the flashy Many-coloured Rush Tyrant inhabit the marshes here with good numbers of Chilean Flamingos. Later in the day we will be transferred to our lodging at the Chaparri Private reserve.

**Day 20, March 29th: Chaparri Lodge.**

Today we will put our efforts into exploring the Chaparri preserve's trails and microhabitats for all the low-elevation Tumbesian endemics. This preserve occupies a large area of semideciduous and dry scrub endemic to the foothills and lowlands of the Tumbes region. We'll have a great day familiarizing ourselves with localized species, including Andean Tinamou, Montane Solitary Eagle, Tumbes Hummingbird, Tumbesian Tyrannulet, Grey-and-gold Warbler, Short-tailed Woodstar, Grey-and-white Tyrannulet,

Tumbes Tyrant, Rufous Flycatcher, Baird's Flycatcher, Necklaced Spinetail, Collared Antshrike, Elegant Crescentchest, White-tailed Jay, Superciliated Wren, White-headed Brushfinch, White-edged Oriole, and both Cinereous and Sulphur-throated Finches all making their home here on the grounds! Night birding will no doubt also be productive, as we will search for Peruvian Pygmy Owl (also seen by day), West Peruvian Screech Owl, Striped Owl and the scarce Anthony's Nightjar. With luck, several extraordinary mammal opportunities could be in store for us too, with Tayra, Southern Tamandua and Spectacled Bear all being possible.

**Day 21, March 30th: Chaparri to Chiclayo city via Tinajones.** This morning we will depart early from Chaparri and head towards the Pacific Ocean to get the coastal city of Chiclayo. We will first arise early this morning to make the most of our time in the higher elevation forest near the village of Casupe, which will likely produce a whole host of endemic species we have yet to encounter in the lower, drier climes. In this broadloom-laden, misty forest we will search for such specialties as Ochre-bellied Dove, Ecuadorian Piculet, Ecuadorian Trogon, Rufous-necked and Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaners, Grey-breasted Flycatcher, Chapman's Antshrike, Three-banded Warbler, Tumbes Pewee, isolated porcellae sub-species of Grey-chinned Hermit and Black-cowled Saltator, amongst others. The headline species for the day, however, is the critically endangered White-winged Guan, which is also established as a re-introduction at Chaparri. Here, at Casupe, with some luck, we will observe one of the few native, wild populations of this critically endangered poster-bird! Getting hot by mid-morning, we return to the foothills and also stop for a few minutes birding the Tinajones reservoir where, with a bit of luck, we might find Black-faced Ibis, Spotted Rail, Black-lored Yellowthroat and an array of migrant shorebirds and waterfowl. Transfer to Chiclayo city for the night.

**Day 22, March 31st: AM, Travel to Trujillo via Cerro Campana.** Today we will head towards Trujillo, if time allow us we will stop at Bosque Pomac -a mesquite forest reserve- to try for Rufous Flycatcher and the Tumbesian endemic Tumbes Swallow, then we will be stopping for some delicious seafood and a bit of light birding in route to Cerro Campana, where we will end the day looking for disjunct populations of Cactus Canastero, Streaked Tit-Spinetail, and our 5th...and final... Inca-Finch: Great Inca-Finch! Time permitting, we might have an evening sea watch as the sun sets. Near Trujillo, good seabirds often come closer to shore.

**Day 23, April 1st: Sinsicap AM to Trujillo and depart.** Our final day of the tour will begin with a final foray into the high Andes, above Trujillo, in search of Russet-bellied Spinetail and Piura Chat-Tyrant, among others. This mountain town is surrounded by a mixture of fields, scrub, and forest, frequented by a good number of interesting birds, and we might also come across Piura Hemispingus, as well as having another shot at Rufous-backed Inca Finch and Unicolored Tapaculo, should we have missed them coming from Cajamarca. We will return to Trujillo for checkout and lunch, before transfers to the airport, and departures home.  
End of our services.

*Internal flights included.*

*Price per person base on a group of 06 people: **USD\$ 9000***

*Price per person base on a group of 08 people: **USD\$ 8000***

*Single Supplement: **USD\$ 600***