The Northern Peru Birding Route
The Northern Peru Birding Route stretches from the Pacific to the lowland Amazon, crossing the Andes at their lowest point. This encompasses the endemic rich coastal Tumbesian dry forests, Marañon valley, Andean highlands of Cajamarca, the humid montane forests of the eastern Andes, and the megadiverse eastern lowlands. This is probably the most diverse birding route on earth with more than 1500 species having been recorded. This staggering diversity is a result of the complex geography of the region and the varied ecosystems it creates in close proximity. The conventional route starts in Chiclayo and finishes in Tarapoto or Cajamarca, though the extreme north-west, coast and Andes of La Libertad and lowlands near Iquitos are worthwhile extensions.
societal adobe burial pyramids from the Sican culture that rise above the forest. For birders this is the best site to find the endangered endemic Peruvian Plantcutter and a suite of other Tumbesian endemics including Rufous Flycatcher, Tumbes Swallow, Coastal Miner, and Tumbes Tyrant. Local guides are available at the reserve entrance and there are good accommodation and restaurants nearby. The Laquipampa Wildlife Refuge in the La Leche valley has similar birds to Chaparri and Casupe, with a good population of White-winged Guans. Quebrada El Limon is the traditional site for finding the critically-threatened White-winged Guan. The area is also home to a good variety of Tumbesian birds including Pale-browed Tinamou, Ecuadorian Trogon, Whooping Motmot, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Tumbes Tyrant, Saty Becard, and White-tailed Jay and Grey-and-gold Warbler. Members of the local community are available to guide people. There is accommodation available in the nearby town of Olmos. Abra Porculla is the lowest pass over the main Andean cordillera at an altitude of only 2,137 m. West of the pass small fragments of native vegetation remain, with the area above the settlement of Limon de Porculla being one of the best. These secondary ecosystems still support a good range of Tumbesian species including Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, Chapman’s Antshrike, Grey-breasted Flycatcher, Piura Chat-Tyrant, Three-banded Warbler and Black-cowled Saltator.

LOWER MARAÑON VALLEY

The Marañon River Valley bisects the Andes in northern Peru and is dominated by drier forests, with high numbers of cacti. A suite of endemic species have evolved in this isolated area of dry forest, most of which can be found around the town of Jaen. Two private protected areas near town, Gotas de Agua and Bosque de Yanahuanca, both give access to trail networks and local guides are available. The birds are similar with: Tataupa tinamou, Peruvian Pigeon, the leucogaster subspecies of Northern Saty Antshrike, Marañon Crescentchest, Marañon Spinetail, Necklaced Spinetail, the sclateri subspecies of Speckle-breasted Wren, the maior subspecies of Tropical Gnatcatcher, Red-breasted Finch and Little Inca-Finch. Further north Tamborapa / Camino La Coipa is a public-access alternative site with similar species.
and Yellow-scarfed Tanager, White-capped Tanager. **Garcia Ridges**, a series of small ridges with stunted forest and cliffs is the best area to find the Royal Sunangel which can usually be found along the road feeding at flowering shrubs. A side trail here passes through land owned by EcoAn and access should be arranged at Owlet Lodge. The area is very good for tanager flocks. The area around **Alto Nieve** has stunted forest and is particularly good for Bar-winged Wood-wren, and Cinnamon-breasted Tody-Tyrant. A private reserve, **Fundo Alto Nieve**, offers a good chance for these and also has hummingbird feeders and trails. The staff can guide visitors to see

Ochre-fronted Antpitta and Rusty-tinged Antpittas that they feed daily, and Long-whiskered Owlet at night. Lodging and food are available. **Venceremos** is the park rangers control point for the Bosque de Protección Alto Mayo. There is a short trail and some hummingbird feeders which sometimes attract Royal Sunangel, Tawny-bellied Hermit and Greenish Puffleg. The area of forest along the road near a small restaurant and tyre repair shop, known as **Llanteria**, is particularly good for mixed flocks. There are feeders and a trail behind the restaurant. the feeders attract Ecuadorian Piedtail. Sharpbill and Ash-throated Antwren have been recorded on the trail. Flocks here can hold a staggering variety including Versicoloured Barbet, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Equatorial Greytail, Ash-browed Spintail, Rufous-rumped Antwren, Yellow-breasted Antwren, Olivaceous Greenlet, Grey-mantled Wren, Orange-eared Tanager, Silvery Tanager, Green-throated Tanager, Metallic-green Tanager and Blue-browed Tanager. The lowest elevation forests around **Aguas Verdes** support a more lowland avifauna. Roadside birding in this area can give good flocks including antbirds. Highlights in this area include: Lyre-tailed Nightjar, Festive Coquette, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Amazonian Umbrellabird and Black-bellied Tanager. **Arena Blanca Reserve** is a private reserve is owned by an enterprising and innovative local man. He has developed an ingenious viewing hide for Little and Cinereous Tinamou,
TARAPOTO AREA
The eastern end of the main route, the city of Tarapoto gives access to humid forest on the eastern-most ridges extending from the Andes, the dry forest of the Huallaga valley, and the humid forest of the Cordillera Azul National Park. Regional Conservation Area Cordillera Escalera is a forested ridge that is protected as the water source for the city of Tarapoto. The road to Yurimaguas provides good birding as it winds up through a tunnel and down over the ridge. Highlights here include Koepecke’s Hermit, Curl-crested Aracari, Orange-breasted Falcon, White-plumed Antbird, Hairy-crested Antbird, Blackish Pewee, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Plumbeous Euphonia, Dotted Tanager, and Carmiol’s Tanager. A few km beyond the ridge is a private reserve. Aconabikh, with hummingbird feeders. Laguna Rucuricocha near Tarapoto is a good site for Comb Duck and other waterfowl and rails. The dry woodlands nearby have Planalto Hermit and Ashy-headed Greenlet. The Huallaga river valley is a good site for lowland riverine birds including Black Skimmer, Large-billed Tern and Sand-coloured Nighthawk. Comb Duck is regular on sandbars. The riverside vegetation has Hoatzin and Greater Ani. The forest patches near Juan Guerra hold a range of lowland and dry forest birds including Stripe-chested Antwren and Rufous Cassiornis. Quebrada Upaquihua is an area of dry forest in the Huallaga valley is easily accessed from the road south to Juanjui. Planalto Hermit, Rufous-capped Nunlet, Buckley’s Forest-Falcon, the huallagaes subspecies of Northern Slaty Antshrike, the kaenigorum subspecies of White-browed Antbird, Chestnut-throated Spinetail, Greenish Elaenia, Mishana Tyrannulet, White-bellied Pygmy-Tyrant, Rufous Cassiornis, Sulphur-bellied Tyrant-Manakin, Ashy-headed Greenlet. The site is also one of the best places to see the endangered San Martin Tití Monkey. Flor de Cafe (Plataforma) is a remote village in the Cordillera Azul mountains is surrounded by hill forest interspersed with coffee plantations and pastures. Accessed via a rough and often muddy road and with a basic hotel and restaurant as accommodation. The difficult access is rewarded by the birds - this being the only accessible site for the recently described Scarlet-banded Barbet and Cordillera Azul Antbird. Other good species include: Subtropical Pygmy-Owl, Western Striolated-Puffbird, Rufous-capped Antthrush, Short-tailed Antthrush, Grey-throated Leaffoosser, Buff-throated Tody-Tyrant, Yellow-throated Spadebill, Roraiman Flycatcher, Sharpbill, Grey-tailed Piha, Jet Manakin, Yungas Manakin, Foothill and Schiffernais.

UTCUBAMBA VALLEY
The Utcubamba valley is a side valley of the Marañon and is a good place to find many of the more humid forest Marañon endemics and some localised
MID-MARAÑON VALLEY

The spectacular deep canyon of the Marañon valley contains a variety of arid scrub-like ecosystems and agricultural areas near the town of Balsas. The dry cactus scrub of the lower valley is home to Buff-bridled Inca-Finch and Black-necked Woodpecker. Yellow-faced Parrotlet and Peruvian Pigeon favour the more humid areas around the village. Grey-breasted Inca-Finch and Chestnut-backed Thornbird are best found in higher altitude scrub near Limon village and Jelski’s Chat-Tyrant and White-winged Black-Tyrant can be found in the highest areas of scrub on the west side of the valley.

CAJAMARCA HIGHLANDS

The highlands around Cajamarca are largely intensive farmland but small relicts of natural vegetation remain and are the main birding interest, with
LAMBAYEQUE COAST

The traditional starting point for the Northern Peru Birding Route. The cold off-shore waters teem with marine life and create the arid onshore conditions. The inland forests here are the southern limit of the Tumbesian region and home to several of its rarest endemics. Puerto Eten wetlands south of the mouth of the Chancay river. Increasingly degraded and drained but still holds good birds: Chilean Flamingo, White-tufted Grebe, Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant, Plumbeous Rail, Least Bittern. Beach and off-shore is good for seabirds and gulls: Inca Tern, Peruvian Booby, Peruvian Pelican, Peruvian Tern, Grey Gull, Belcher’s Gull. Nearby fields and dunes (including those south of the village of Santa Rosa) can be good for Tawny-throated Dotterel, Least Seedsnipe and Coastal Miner. Chaparri Ecological Reserve is a private protected area managed by community owners. In this reserve, local people preserve 34,412 ha of semi-desert and gallery woodland. Following re-introduction, the reserve is now home to a population of approximately 100 White-winged Guans and also one of the best places to see Sulphur-throated Finch, amongst a variety of Tumbesian species including Tumbes Hummingbird, Short-tailed Woodstar, Collared Antshrike, Elegant Crescentchest, Tumbes Tyrant, Baird’s Flycatcher, White-tailed Jay, White-headed Brush-Finch, Tumbes Sparrow. Accommodation is available in the reserve and local community and community guides must be used. Tinajones Reservoir is a reliable site for many water birds and wetland species including Great Grebe, Black-faced Ibis, Spotted Rail, Many-coloured Rush-tyrant. It attracts migratory waders and Chilean Flamingo, Wood Stork and Black Skimmer are all annual. Casupe is a community-owned forest accessed along a public road. The semi-deciduous forest here supports several sought-after Tumbesian birds including: White-winged Guan, Ochre-bellied Dove, Ecuadorian Trogon, Ecuadorian Piculet, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, Chapman’s Antshrike, Grey-breasted Flycatcher, Piura Chat-Tyrant, Three-banded Warbler and Black-cowled Saltator. Basic accommodation and food available and the community ask for visitors to register. Bosque de Pomac Historical Sanctuary is a protected area, with the last remnant of ground-water sustained Prosopis forest and also has
CORDILLERA COLAN
This National Protected Area contains a mountain range that forms the extreme northern part of the eastern Andes. Much of the humid forests here has been cleared along the road but there are a few remaining areas with some very special birds. Huembo, a roadside visitor centre administered by the NGO EcoAn, is one of the best places to see the Marvellous Spatuletail, which visits feeders. The grounds also attract Little Woodstar, Rufous-capped Antshrike and Speckle-chested Piculet. The privately-owned land across the road is good for several species of owls, including Stygian Owl, White-throated and Cinnamon Screech-Owls; access can be arranged at the visitor centre. A mountain trail climbs from the village of San Lorenzo, where a fee should be paid to the local community. The trail passes through pastures and remnant forest patches. This is the most accessible site for the stunning Pale-billed Antpitta. Other notable birds found here include: Powerful Woodpecker, Russet-mantled Softtail and Johnson's Tody-Flycatcher. Pomachochas Lake supports some interesting birds, mostly in the surrounding fields and reeds. Plumbeous Rail and Subtropical Doradito can be found in the reeds from the pier. The flooded fields hold Puna Snipe and Andean Lapwing.

ABRA PATRICIA
One of the best birding areas in the world. The road descends through humid forest from Andean Cloud forest to the tropical lowlands. The whole route teems with birds and the mixed species flock birding can be spectacular. Birding can be good anywhere but some of the main sites are Owlet Lodge, run by the NGO EcoAn which is conserving much of the area. The comfortable lodge has a good network of trails passing through mature forest and hummingbird feeders at the lodge. They also feed Chestnut and Rusty-tinged Antpittas. The main target bird here for many is the enigmatic Long-whiskered Owlet. Other highlights include: Cinnamon Screech-Owl, Rufous-banded Owl, Swallow-tailed nightjar, Ochre-fronted Antpitta, Johnson’s Tody-Flycatcher.
Rufous-breasted wood-quail and a few other shy understory species. A set of hummingbird feeders attract a good variety including Napo Sabrewing, Wire-crested Thorntail, Black-throated Brilliant, Green-fronted Lancebill and Blue-fronted Lancebill. The white sand forest here has a number of other interesting birds.

**MOYOBAMBA AREA**

The Mayo valley has a highly diverse avifauna as Andean and lowland faunas mix and there are a large variety of ecosystems and soil types. The rice fields, rivers and remnant woodlots near Rioja attract a good variety of birds. Spotted Rail, Masked Duck, Pale-eyed Blackbird and the local Black-billed Seedfinch. Areas of palm swamp are worth checking for Point-tailed Palmcreeper and Sulphury Flycatcher. Woodlands on sandy soils have Varzea Thrush, Mishana Tyrannulet and Buckley’s Forest-Falcon. Quebrada Mishquiyaquillo / Waqanki, just above Moyobamba forested hills interspersed with coffee plantations provide very good birding. A nice lodge and orchid garden has a fantastic set of hummingbird feeders and is the starting point for the trail and a reliable site for species including: Rufous-crested Coquette and Amethyst Woodstar. The wider area has a large avifauna with highlights including: Spot-winged Parrotlet, Foothill Screech-Owl, Ash-throated Antwren, Zimmer’s Antbird, Chestnut-throated Spinetail, Buff-throated Tody-Tyrant, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Firey-throated Fruiteater, Painted Manakin, Lemon-chested Greenlet, Varzea Thrush and Red-shouldered Tanager. Morro de Calzada is a prominent limestone hill, its surrounding forest and an area of sandy-soil scrub are protected as a municipal reserve, adjacent are pastures and fields. The area has a rich avifauna with highlights including Blackish Nightjar, Rufous Nightjar, Stygian Owl, Rusty-backed Antwren, Cinereous-breasted Spinetail, Painted Manakin, White-browed Purpuletuft, Mishana Tyrannulet, Varzea Thrush, Wedge-tailed Grassfinch. Tingana Wildlife Refuge and Santa Elena Reserve protect isolated areas of flooded forest in the central Mayo valley is owned by local communities who operate visits and
Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Maraño Thrush and Buff-bellied Tanager. There are several hotels. Kuelap, is a globally important archaeological site from the Chachapoyas culture. This impressive walled citadel has quite a lot of trees on it and is surrounded by Andean scrub. There area is very good for Purple-throated Sunangel, Sword-billed Hummingbird and the local grey and white form of Superciliaried Hemispingus. The scrub holds Chestnut-crowned Antpitta and Black-throated Flowerpiercer. The Utcubamba valley below is a good site for Torrent Duck and Koepcke’s screech-Owl occurs. Just above the town of Leymebamba near the museum, hummingbird feeders attract Marvellous Spatulatail and Rainbow Starfrontlet. The Rio Atuen valley is a reliable site for Andean Condor and the humid forest patches here support Golden-headed Quetzal, Mountain Avocetbill, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Russet-mantled Softtail, White-collared Jay, Red-hooded Tanager. The river here is a reliable site for Torrent Duck and White-capped Dipper. A quiet road over Abra Calla Calla (Barro Negro) pass allows access to a good-range of ecosystems including montane forest, paramo grassland and agricultural areas. Birding all along the road can be good and the forest areas often provide good mixed-species flocks. Highlights include: Coppery Metaltail, Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Leymebamba Antpitta, Undulated Antpitta, Large-footed Tapaculo, Neblina Tapaculo, Russet-mantled Softtail, Moustached Flowerpiercer and Paramo Seedeater.
some highly localised and rare species. The scattered woodlots and scrub near Cruz Conga is the best site for the *cajamarcae* subspecies of Rufous Antpitta that likely deserves species status. White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant also occurs. The Cañon de Sangal on the Rio Chonta is now the only reliable site for the endangered Grey-bellied Comet. Other notable species include: Plain-tailed Warbling-Finch, Black Metalail, White-tailed shrike-Tyrant and White-winged Cinclodes. A high altitude lake of Laguna San Nicolas supports a good range of Andean waterbirds. The arid fields and grassland have ground-tyrants and finches and the dry scrub patches are home to the localised endemic Great Spinetail. Remnant ravines of natural vegetation at Abra Gavilan hold the localised Unicoloured Tapaculo and scarce Rufous-backed Inca-Finch.

**ADDITIONAL ROUTES**

In addition to the main route areas to the north-west, north-east and south have additional species.

**NORTH-WEST COAST**

The tropical coast of Tumbes and Piura has semi-deciduous forest inland, Cerros de Amotape National Park is home to many Tumbesian endemic bird species. Los Manglares de Tumbes National Sanctuary protects an extensive area of mangroves, the southernmost in the eastern Pacific. The warm coastal waters offer a variety of seabirds.

**SOUTHERN ANDES**

The arid coast near Trujillo, famous for its archaeological sites, offers good sea-watching. Lomas de Cerro Campana is one of the northernmost areas of lomas vegetation. Andean scrub near the village of Sinsicap is a good site for Russet-bellied Spinetail. Overlooking the Marañon valley, El Molino is the only reliable site for the endangered Purple-backed Sunbeam. For the adventurous, the remote and hard to access Rio Abiseo National Park is one of the only sites to find the endangered Yellow-browed Toucanet.

**NORTH-EAST LOWLANDS**

The megadiverse lowlands of Loreto near Iquitos have a wide variety of ecosystems both north and south of the Amazon river. Amazon River Islands support a variety of successional vegetations and these are home to a number of specialist species. The flooded forests south of the Amazon around the Rio Yanayacu and Rio Tahuayo are the best area to find the endangered Wattled Currasow. Near Iquitos, the Allpahuayo-Mishana National Reserve is best known for its white sand forests where a suite of species new to science were discovered in the 1990s including: Iquitos Gnatcatcher, Allpahuayo Antbird, Mishana Tyrannulet and Ancient Antwren. North of the Amazon there are extensive terre firme forests and some areas of flooded forest near the Rio Napo.