

Peru Wildlife and Birding Trip Report

Lima, Cusco, Machu Picchu and The Amazon

26th June to 10th July 2019

Wilton Farrelly

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Clockwise from top left: Huacarpay Lake, nr Cusco – Machu Picchu – Kapok Tree – The Cloud Forest on Manu Road.

This is a summary of a trip to Peru in 2019. It was not a Birding trip as my wife who is a non birder, wanted to visit Machu Picchu and other tourist locations eg Cusco and the Sacred Valley. For myself I felt that I would take the opportunity to try and do some Birding in the country with the most diverse birding on the planet. With over 1800 species on its bird list, this was going to be a challenge as I also needed to keep Louise happy and not let it turn into a full blown birding trip!

The compromised itinerary that we agreed when organising the tour was as follows:

First three days - around Cusco in the Andes, sightseeing and acclimatising.

Fourth day - Machu Picchu

Fifth to thirteenth days - Manu in the Amazon with a specialist tour operator

Days fourteen and fifteen - Around Lima

In addition to the above, I would arrange some bird guiding around Cusco and Lima.

The local arrangements - internal Peru flights, accommodation, travel, food, guides (except for Lima), were all arranged by Amazon Wildlife Peru (web address: <http://www.amazonwildlifeperu.com/>). I can honestly say that they were excellent. Emails were answered promptly and they facilitated any special requests. They also checked up that all lifts and travel arrangements that they were not in control of, were working to plan.

For the Amazon part of the trip, we booked their 8 day / 7 night package. The cost for this Amazon trip was also reasonable when compared to some of the other operators. As it is an organised general wildlife / nature tour, I had asked if they could provide a Guide who had a strong interest in Birding. The guide provided was Saulo Lima who was excellent and he went out of his way to find us new birds. As this was an organised tour, we would also be joining with any other tour participants. As it was there was one other couple - Leah and Nathan from New Mexico. Fortunately they were great company and Nathan was also a keen birder.

A full day by day Account is set out below. Please note that only species seen are listed. There were about a further 30 species that were heard but not seen. Whilst the Guides picked these up, I decided not to include them on my personal lists. For this reason, a few bird families are missing from the bird lists below eg Tinamous and Manakins.

Day 1 - Wednesday 26th June

Arrived in Lima on BA flight from London Gatwick about 21:00, an hour later than scheduled. Slow traffic from the airport to our hotel in Miraflores was an introduction to the travel challenges in Lima. Overnight at the Mariel Hotel.

Thursday 27th June

Awake from 4am and light at 6:30. A quick walk in the streets around the hotel produced:

Southern Peruvian Dove	Bananaquit	Russet Collared Sparrow
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The drive back to Lima Airport at 8am for our flight to Cusco added:

Andean Gull \ Grey-hooded Gull
Kelp Gull
Turkey Vulture

We took an 11am flight from Lima to Cusco with LATAM. It was a good flight in a nice plane. The flight path was along the Andes and the scenery at times was stunning. I tried to look out a Condor over the Andes but no luck!

Arrived in Cusco and our driver was there to pick us up. We spent the afternoon on a walking tour around the city and watched an amazing carnival associated with Corpus Christi. We also enjoyed a nice rooftop lunch at Marcelo Balata. Birds seen around Cusco were very limited but included:

Andean Gull	Hooded Siskin	Chiguanco Thrush
Bare-faced Dove	Rufous-collared Sparrow	
Eared Dove	Sparkling Violetear	

We stayed at the Amaru Hotel, Cusco which was very pleasant although the night was noisy due to the carnival bands, fireworks and partygoers.....

Friday 28th June

We had booked a morning Birding near Cusco with Amazon Wildlife Peru and we left for Huracarpay Lake at 5am. Our guide was Rivelino and Will was driving. We were at Huracarpay Lake for 5:45am, before sunrise. We worked our way around the lake and species seen around the area included:

Puna Teal	Puna Ibis	Streak-fronted Thornbird
Yellow-billed Teal	Plumbeous Rail	Rusty-fronted Canestero
Cinnamon Teal	Sparkling Violetear	Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant
White-tufted Grebe	Black-tailed Trainbearer	Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant
Yellow-billed Pintail	Giant Hummingbird	White-browed Chat-Tyrant
Andean Duck	Cinerosus Harrier	House Wren
Slate-coloured Coot	Eared Dove	Band-tailed Seed eater
Common Gallinule	Spot-winged Pigeon	Ground Tyrant
Greater Yellowlegs	Bare-faced Ground-Dove	Yellow-winged Blackbird
Lesser Yellowlegs	American Kestrel	Black-backed Grosbeak
Great Egret	Peregrine Falcon	Blue and Yellow Tanager
Cattle Egret	Mitred Parakeet	Cinerosus Conebill
Black-crowned Night Heron	Many-coloured Rush Tyrant	Golden-billed Saltator
Andean Lapwing	Wren like Rushbird	

We then headed higher up to a height of circa 4300m. We birded some areas along the road and also visited a high Andean Lake. Further species seen included:

Andean Goose	Black-chested Buzzard Eagle	Great Thrush
Crested Duck	Mountain Caracara	Andean Ibis
Silvery Grebe	Black-throated Flowerpiercer	Bar-winged Cinclodes
Bearded Mountaineer	Chestnut-breasted Mountain	Andean Flicker
Variable Hawk	Finch	



Clockwise, from top left: Andean Flicker – Andean Lapwing – Puna Ibis & Crested Duck – Crested Ducks

We arrived back in Cusco for 2:30 and went to Sacsaywaman, a major Inca site on the edge of Cusco. No new birds were seen there.

Night again at the Amaru Hotel, Cusco.

Saturday 29th June

Both of us were now feeling awful. We were suffering from altitude sickness - nausea, vomiting and for me a sore head. The lack of sleep (during the night I kept waking up gasping for air) was making things worse. Getting sick really surprised me as I had been at 4000m for three days last year in Sichuan, with no ill effects.

This day was set aside for sightseeing in the Sacred Valley and our tour bus arrived at 06:45. We got on the bus with sick bags close by. Any birds seen today were going to be a bonus....

We visited a number of historical sites including, Chinchero, Moray, The Salt Mines at Maras and Ollantaytambo. All were impressive.

The few new species that I did manage to see included:

Paramo Pipit
Andean Swift

Black Phoebe
Green & White Hummingbird

We were left at Ollantaytambo where we got our 16:35 train to Aguas Calientes (the latter is the base for Machu Picchu). Our seats were reasonable and fortunately on the side of the river. Species seen on the journey included:

Torrent Duck (11 seen)

White-capped Dipper

Torrent Tyrannulet

Overnight at the Kantu Inn, Aguas Calientes.

Sunday 30th June

This day was for Machu Picchu and thankfully we were now feeling a lot better (Machu Picchu is actually lower than Cusco). We were up for 6 and after a surprisingly good breakfast in our hotel, we headed to the bus 'station' in Aguas Calientes. At the station I had the first birds of the day:

Blue and White Swallows

Tropical Kingbird

The bus trip up was uneventful. We then spent about two hours in and around the ruins and birding was very poor. I tried to get Inca Wren but a major mistake on my part was not having downloaded and taken their call with me. We did walk the Inca Bridge and the actual route itself is impressive and produced a few birds. New species seen were:

Blue-gray Tanager

Chestnut-capped Brushfinch

Slate-throated Redstart

We returned down to Aguas Calientes and had a picnic lunch around the riverside seeing:

Tropical Parula

Cinnamon Flycatcher

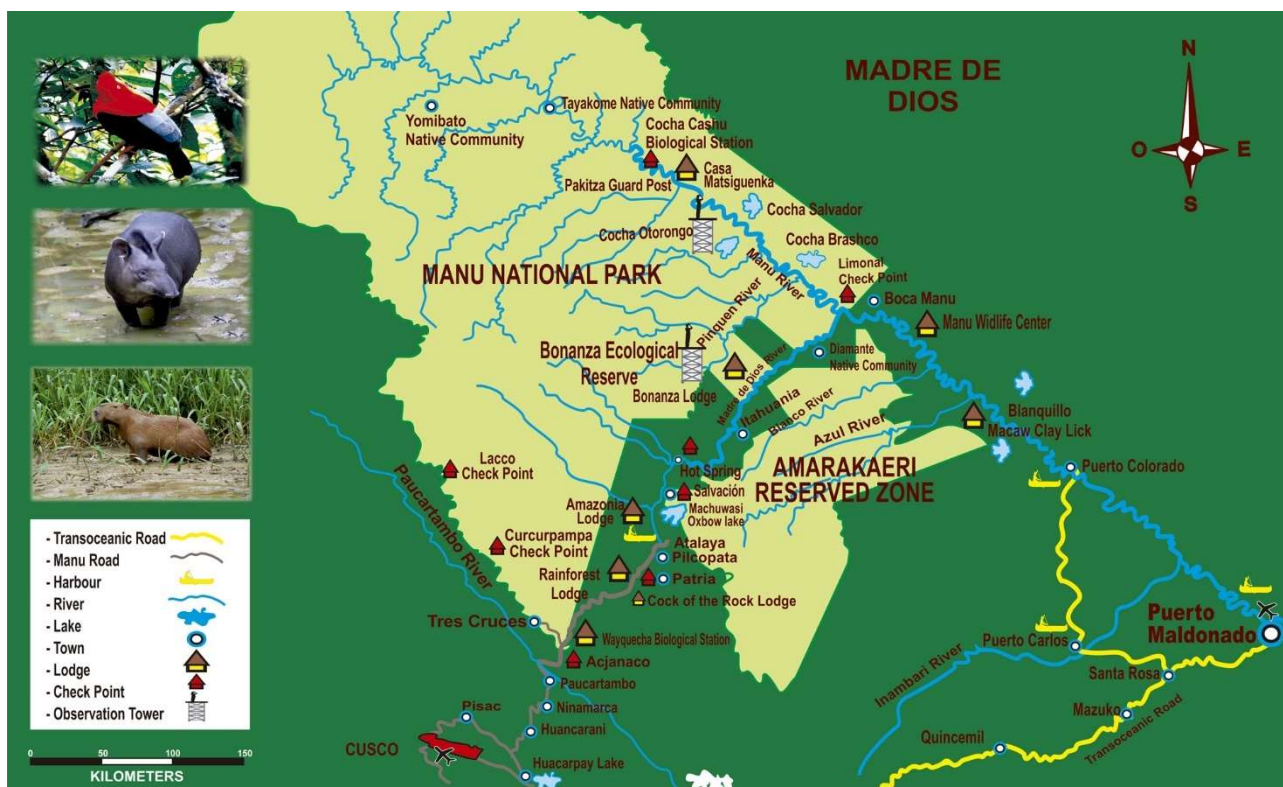
Leaving Aguas Calientes, we travelled on the train back down to Ollantaytambo and I had the worst seat possible for birding on the packed train. You could not even see the river from the seat. The train journey was therefore bird-less and disappointing, unlike the previous evening.

Our driver picked us up at Ollantaytambo and drove us to Cusco (2 hours drive) where we stayed for the night again at Hotel Amaru, Cusco.

Monday 1st July

This was to be the start of our Amazon adventure. We were collected from our hotel at 04:30am by our guide, Saulo Lima, and shortly afterwards we picked up Leah and Nathan – our fellow tour members for the next 8 days. We then drove to Paucartambo where we had breakfast. The first new birds for us in the town were the:

Andean Swallows



Source: Amazon Wildlife Peru: Our lodges were to include Rainforest Lodge, Bonanza Lodge, Casa Matsigenka and Manu Wildlife Centre.

We then headed on to the 'entrance' to Manu Park and the change in habitat as we were now entering the cloud forest on the east side of the Andes. We travelled the Manu Road, all day to our lodge for the night, Rainforest Lodge (it was in the lowlands, past the Cock of the Rock Lodge). It is easy to understand why this is one of the best birding locations in the world. Every stop (which Saulo called due to identifying activity), produced new birds. On the way, we added:

Tufted Tit-Tyrant
Black-throated Flowerpiercer
Masked Flowerpiercer
Moustached Flowerpiercer
Tyrian Metaltail
Puna Thistletail
Three striped Hemispingus
Grey-Breasted Mountain
Toucan
Golden collared Tanager
Hooded Tanager
White-banded Tyranulet

White-throated Tyranulet
Black-faced Brush-finch
Sierran Elaenia
Scarlet-bellied Mountain
Tanager
Montane Woodcreeper
Pearled Treerunner
Golden-headed Quetzal
Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant
Common Bush-Tanager
Blue-backed Conebill
Blue-capped Tanager

Black-backed Grosbeak
White-Collared Jay
Mountain Cacique
Spectacled Redstart
Orange-bellied Euphonia
d'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant
Highland Motmot
Smoke-coloured Pewee
Golden-crowned Flycatcher
Andean Cock of the Rock



Pics Nathan Petersen: Puna Thistletail, Hooded Tanager, Masked Flowerpiercer and White-banded Tyranulet.

We stopped at an Andean Cock-of-the-Rock Lek and had at least five birds.

We then overnighted at the Rainforest Lodge and after dinner, Saulo showed us a Tarantula. We also had:
Rufescent Screech-Owl



Andean Cock-of-the-rock and Golden-headed Quetzal

Tuesday 2nd July

After breakfast we birded briefly around the Rainforest Lodge and had:

Sapphire-spangled Emerald
Blue-winged Mountain
Tanager

Silver-beaked Tanager
Red-bellied Macaw
Russet Backed Oropendola
Violaceous Jay

Blue Headed Parrot
Fork-tailed Palm-Swift
Short-tailed Swift

We headed on to Atalaya for our boat and then to our next stop at Bonanza Lodge. New birds that we added included:

Pale vented Pigeon
Southern Rough-Winged
Swallow
Swallow Winged Puffbird
Stripe Chested Antwren
Roadside Hawk

Fasciated Tiger Heron
Blue-and-Yellow Macaw
Chestnut-fronted Macaw
Emerald Toucanet
Black-tailed Trogon
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher

Great Antshrike
Plumbeous Kite
Yellow Breasted Warbling-
Antbird
Yellow-rumped Cacique
Magpie Tanager

We boarded our boat and started our journey leaving roads behind for the next 6 days. This boat trip to the Bonanza Lodge was stunning and a great introduction to the Amazon. We even had an hour and a quick swim in hot springs. Birds seen along the river journey included:

White-winged Swallow
Sand-colored Nighthawk
White-banded Swallow
Snowy Egret

Cocoi Heron
Greater Yellow-headed
Vulture
Blue-throated Piping Guan

Drab Water Tyrant
Black Vulture
Amazon Kingfisher
Yellow-billed Tern

Purplish Jay

Pied Lapwing

During the day we also had a Sloth and Squirrel Monkeys.

Shortly after arriving at Bonanza Lodge, we set off on the hour walk to the hide at the mammal clay lick. This was to be our accommodation for the night. It is open but we did have mosquito nets and ate our dinner (in the dark) there.

Overnight at the clay lick, we had 3 different Tapir (the first appeared around 9 pm) and 1 Red Brocket Deer. Nathan during his shift picked up a cat but when we were woken and checked the clay lick, it had gone. It was probably an Ocelot.

If I was not tired enough, I was now feeling absolutely shattered!



Giant Snail – Tapir – Moth species (not a butterfly!) – Black Caiman



Black Skimmer – Large-billed Tern and Sand-coloured Nighthawk – White-winged Swallow – Pied Lapwing

Wednesday 3rd July

We left the clay lick hide around 5am and walked back to Bonanza Lodge where we got a much needed shower and then immediately left on the boat. This was to be a day travelling on the river. However we added many new birds including:

Horned Screamer
Large Headed Flatbill
Large-billed Tern
Southern Lapwing
Red and Green Macaw

Dusky-headed Parakeet
Little Blue Heron
King Vulture
Southern Caracara
Giant Cowbird

Little Ground-Tyrant
Collared Plover
White-throated Toucan
Cobalt-winged Parakeet

We changed river and headed upstream towards Manu and had:

Tui Parakeets

Black Skimmer

Great Black-Hawk

We checked in to Manu at the Control Point. From there on we picked up:

Ornate Hawk Eagle
Anhinga
Pale-rumped Swift
Capped Heron
Swallow-tailed Kite

Common Pauraque
Red-capped Cardinal
Osprey
Lesser Kiskadee
Orinoco Goose

Bat Falcon
Muscovy Duck
Blue-headed Parrot

In terms of mammals, today we had:

Spectacled / White Caiman
Black Caiman
Squirrel Monkeys

We arrived at Casa Matsiguenka, our accommodation for the next 3 nights. It was reasonably basic but enjoyable.

A night walk around a trail here produced Bullet Ants, Fire Ants, Poison Black Frog, but no new birds.



Common Parakeet – Capped Heron – Collared Plover – Horned Screamer



Howler Monkey – Poison Black Frog – Hoatzin – Giant River Otter

Thursday 4th July

After my first good nights sleep, we awoke to the fantastic sound of the Howler Monkeys at 05:30. This sound is straight out of Jurassic Park!

We went down river for an hour's walk and had:

Pale-legged Hornero

Razor-billed Currawong

Striated Heron

We visited the Oxbow Lake at Cocha Otorongo and had:

Black-faced Antbird

Wattled Jacana

White-throated Toucan

Slate-coloured Hawk

Black-capped Donacobius

White bellied Parrot

Blue-crowned Trogon

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper

Long-winged Antwren

White-flanked Antwren

Swallow Winged Tanager

Scarlet Macaw (seeing

Macaws fly over the river in the Amazon is a fantastic experience).

White-Winged Shrike Tanager

We also seen Woolly Monkey and Black spider monkey

That afternoon, we went to Concha Salvador to look for Giant Otters. We went on a small catamaran onto the Oxbow Lake and had a single Giant Otter and quite a few Black Caiman - some a bit too close for comfort!

New birds seen included:

Screaming Piha (a bird
representing the sound of the
Amazon)
Great Kingfisher
Amazonian Streaked Antwren

Hoatzin
Limpkin
Grey-necked Rail
Sunbittern
Ringed Kingfisher

Black fronted Nunbird
Purple Gallinule
Green Ibis



All pics Nathan Peterson: Three striped Hemispingus - Tufted Tit-Tyrant - Pygmy Antwren - Black-tailed Trogon

Overnight at Casa Matsiguenka.



Clockwise from top left: Oxbow lake in the evening – Black Caiman – Downriver from Atalaya – Saulo and our crew

Friday 5th July

Back to the Ox-bow Lake of Cocha Salvador at 6am in the hope of more Giant Otter views. We were not to be disappointed with a family group of circa 10 seen feeding. It was a fantastic experience been on the water seeing the adults interact with the young and feeding on Piranha.

New birds around the Ox-bow Lake included:

Rufescent Tiger Heron
Green Kingfisher

Spectacled Chachalaca
Least Grebe

We then did a late morning walk along a trail and added:

Blue-crowned Motmot
Casqued Oropendola
Gray Antwren
Cream-coloured Woodpecker
Red-Crowned Ant-Tanager

Hairy-crested Antbird
Plain Winged Antshrike
Bluish fronted Jacamar
Spix's Guan
Black Caracara

Squirrel Cuckoo
Chestnut-winged Foliage-gleaner
Bluish-slate Antshrike

We also managed to see Woolly Monkeys again.

We headed out at 3pm to go north on the river to look for Jaguar but had no luck. Many of the common river birds were also not on show as it was cold and we also experienced heavy rain showers. The only new bird seen on the river was Wood Stork.

Overnight again at Casa Matsiguenka.



Capybara – Woolly Monkey, Cream-coloured Woodpecker, Casqued Oropendola.

Thursday 4th July

A 5am start to try and maximise our chances of bumping into a Jaguar. However it was unbelievably cold. I figured that it was around 10 - 12 degrees and travelling by boat, it was not warm at all. Birds were extremely thin on the ground and there were no Jaguar to be seen. The only new birds seen were:

Chestnut-eared Aracari

Lineated Woodpecker

We did however have our first Capybara - 1 in alt Madre del Dios and then later, 10+ on the Madre del Dios. Travelling down the river we also briefly had our first mobile phone signal for 5 days. We arrived at our next stop for the night, Manu Wildlife Centre, at circa 3pm. New birds came thick and fast and included:

Goulds Jewelfront

Fork-tailed Woodnymph

Golden-bellied Euphonia

Olivaceous Woodcreeper

Buff-throated Woodcreeper

Yellow-Breasted Warbling

Antbird

Pale Winged Trumpeter

Collared Trogon

Black billed Thrush

White-browed Antbird

Plumbeous Antbird

Red-throated Caracara

Amazonian Pygmy Owl

We also spent circa 30 minutes at their Scarlet Macaw Clay Lick and had a superb 60+ birds which provided a truly wonderful spectacle.

Manu Wildlife Centre which was nice. It was the highest quality forest lodge that we stayed at and even had hot showers! However we went to bed with blankets on our bed as it was cold. We had not anticipated this in the Amazon!



Bullet Ants, Scarlet Macaws, Pale-winged Trumpeter, Scarlet Macaw.

Sunday 7th July

It started out cool and we went for breakfast at 6:30 followed by a walk around Manu Wildlife Centre. We added Saddle-backed Tamarin Monkeys to the trip list.

We went to the top of the Platform \ Canopy tower (circa 20m up and not for the faint hearted). Birds seen included:

Yellow-tufted Woodpecker	Gray-crowned Flycatcher	Turquoise Tanager
Plum-throated Cotinga	Dusky-capped Greenlet	Gray-crowned Flycatcher
Red-eyed Vireo	Swainsons Flycatcher	Long-tailed Hermit (Great Billed)
White-shouldered Tanager	Black-capped Becard	Reddish Hermit
Forest Elaenia	Thick-billed Euphonia	Festive Coquette
White-necked Jacobin	Thrush like Wren	
Pygmy Antwren	Buff-throated Saltator	
Gilded Barbet	Green-and-Gold Tanager	

Back at the lodge Louise also had a Paradise Tanager with Saulo and Nathan – my dip of the trip! I have to say that the Manu Wildlife Centre was my favourite lodge in the Amazon. It had a great ambience and the birding was superb. It even has a free roaming tame Tapir that had been raised from when it was a baby. We left at 09:45 for our journey down river towards our destination of Puerto Maldonado. The only new bird seen on the boat journey was White-collared Swift. We were dropped off in Colorado village. We then had a drive for an hour and then a boat across the main river. On the way I managed to get Sungrebe on a small pool.

On the other side of the river, taxi drivers were more interested in the upcoming football game than taking us the last few hours to Puerto Maldonado - Peru were in the final of the Copa America. We eventually made it to Puerto Maldonado for 4:30pm, watched the end of the football and went for a walk around the town square.

Overnight at Hotel Cabina Quinta, Puerto Maldonado.



All pics Nathan Peterson: Yellow-rumped Cacique – Cocoi Heron – Purplish Jay – Rufescent Tiger-Heron

Monday 8th July

We had arranged an additional morning's guiding with Saulo around Puerto Maldonado as our Flight to Lima was not until 17:15. After breakfast we left the hotel at 06:45, to go to Pastora, and started Birding near the river. New birds seen included:

Bran-coloured flycatcher	Amazonian Antpitta	Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet
Cobalt winged parakeet	Barred Antshrike	Little woodpecker
Cinnamon-throated	Plain-crowned Spinetail	Dusky-headed Parakeet
Treecreeper	Ruddy Ground-Dove	Chestnut-bellied Seedeater
Purus Jacamar	Straight-billed Woodcreeper	Gray Hawk
Vermillion flycatcher	Double-collared Seedeater	Yellow-browed Sparrow
Solitary Cacique	Hooded Tanager	Rusty-margined Flycatcher
Greyish Saltator	White-winged Becard	Short-crested Flycatcher
Brown-chested Martin	Dusky-chested Flycatcher	White-throated Jacamar
Riparian Antbird	Black-crowned Tityra	Black-faced Dacnis

Saulo also picked out a Sloth at the top of a tree - our second of the trip.



Vermillion Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Barred Antshrike, Smooth-billed Ani



Rose-fronted Parakeet, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Sloth, White-throated Jacamar

We then stopped for a coffee and orange cake in Puerto Maldonado on our way to another site outside the town. This area was largely Brazil nut / banana plantations and the habitat seemed to be heavily degraded. New birds were few but there included:

Palm tanager

Laughing falcon

Boat-billed Flycatcher

Finally, we went to the local market and bought Brazil nuts and coffee to take home!

Our flight to Lima was at 17:15 so we got to the Puerto Maldonado Airport for 16:00. It's a small and busy airport for the only flight and very, very expensive.....

We arrived into our hotel in Lima around 20:00.

Overnight at Hotel Mariel, Lima.

Tuesday 9th July

I had arranged for a Lima guide (Jesus Cieza) from South Birding Peru (<https://southbirdingperu.com/>), to pick us up and lead us for the day to Villa Marshes, Puerto Viejo & Pucusana Fishing Port.

We headed off at 6am. First stop was the marshes and the new birds for the trip included:

Long-tailed Mocking bird

Peruvian Meadowlark

Killdeer

Least Bittern

Peruvian Pipit (Yellowish Pipit)

Shiny Cowbird

Amonzillia Hummingbird

Yellow crowned night heron

Yellow-hooded Blackbird

(introduced)

Grassland Yellow-Finch

American Oystercatcher

Gray-hooded Gull

Franklin's Gull

Belchers Gull

Great Grebe

Gray Gull

Harris Hawk



Peruvian Meadowlark, Many-coloured Rush Tyrant, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, Andean Ruddy Duck.



Franklin's Gull, Belcher's Gull, Grey-hooded Gull, Great Grebe.

Next we headed south to Pucusana where we boarded a small boat and toured the harbour and sailed around the island. This was a great experience with new coastal species seen including:

Peruvian Booby
Inca Tern (numerous)
Peruvian Pelican

Surf Cinclodes (seen in the
inner harbour)
Humboldt Penguin

Guanay Cormorant
Red-legged Cormorant
Blackish Oystercatcher

We also had great views of Southern Sea-lions.



Peruvian Pelican, Surf Cinclodes, Humbolt Penguin, Blackish Oystercatcher.



Red-legged Cormorant, Peruvian Booby, Guanay Cormorant, Inca Tern.

We had lunch overlooking the harbour and from Pucusana we continued south to an area of dry scrub which had been well degraded due to dumping and other activities. However we managed to add to the list a few endemics and other birds including:

Black necked-Stilt
Short tailed Field Tyrant

Coastal Miner
Blue-black Grassquit

House sparrow

We then headed to another small wetland where Jesus picked up a roosting Peruvian Thick-knee, one of our most wanted birds for the day.



Peruvian Thick-knee, Short-tailed Field Tyrant, Variable Hawk, Coastal Miner

We then headed north, stopping for a roadside Variable Hawk.

Finally we made a stop at a small lagoon where we added to the trip list:

White-cheeked Pintail

We arrived back at our hotel around 3pm and spent the rest of the afternoon and evening in and around the Miraflores area doing some last minute shopping and people watching!

Overnight at Mariel Hotel, Miraflores.

Wednesday 10th July

This was a day for visiting sights in and around Lima including the excellent Museo Larco which Nathan and Leah had recommended.

No new birds were expected today but I observed Harris Hawk in the centre of the city along with Blue-Gray Tanager, Tropical Kingbird, Shiny Cowbird and many many Vultures (without binoculars I took many to be Black) over the city. However when sitting in a taxi I noticed an Ani feeding in a small grasses area - a Groove-billed Ani - my last new species for the trip.

Our flight back was at 21:55 with BA to London Gatwick. It took Just over an hour to get from the hotel to the airport due to the challenging Lima traffic but the overnight flight worked well.

General Advice / Notes:

Insects - We used DEET throughout the jungle. It stopped the mosquitos but did not stop the tiny tiny Sand Flies which we encountered at sand banks and when embarking the boats.

Tipping - we were advised on protocols by Amazon Wildlife Peru.

Birding - I had specifically asked Amazon Wildlife Peru for the Amazon Trip, if we could have a guide who was good on their birds. Whether this made a difference or not, I do not know. However in Saulo we had a superb birding guide, as good as any that I have experienced in previous birding trips abroad. In terms of preparation, I tried to prepare as best as possible but if new to South America, Birding in Peru is mind blowing.

Bird Recording - The challenge with Peru is the huge number of species / families and for anyone who has not birded South America, it is daunting. Usual bird trip evening bird logs become a lot more challenging when the species checklist can be 1500+ birds. I (and Louise!) instead recorded bird names in the notes on my phone, as and when I seen them. This can be challenging in the field when you come upon a large mixed species flock. Nathan had the Princeton Birds of Peru Phone App and I have to say that I would get this if returning. It allowed you to quickly find the species and record it.

Clothing - You need to prepare for three seasons of weather if doing this itinerary!

Altitude Sickness - We got caught out. Looking back on it, I would speculate that the sudden change from sea level to 3300m in one day was the cause of our sickness.

Culture and History - Peru is an intense experience and it was superb. I don't see how you could go on a Birding or wildlife holiday to Peru without taking the time out to visit Machu Picchu in particular.

Food - As a vegetarian, I had no issues at all. During our Amazon / Manu part of the trip we had our own Chef, Juan, who was excellent. Indeed, overall for culinary experiences, Peru really did deliver.

Money Transfer - we had no problem with our 50% cost Bank transfer to Amazon Wildlife Peru. However in our transfer to South Birding Peru, two banks took out fees totalling \$99! Seemingly this was unusual and it was definitely no fault of South Birding Peru.

Lima- it is a large, busy, heavily polluted city. There is not too much to do in it and it is in our opinion only worth a short stay - at least for the good of your health. It is in total contrast to the experience of the Amazon....

Guides - We had three guides at different times and I would recommend all of them for a Birding trip.

Hurtacapy Lake - Rivelino

Manu / Amazon - Saulo

Lima - Jesus

If you want to ask any questions about the trip, please email me at: wilton.farrelly 'at' live.co.uk)



Nathan, Wilton & Saulo in the jungle – note the clothing!

Summary

Overall Peru was a fantastic experience. Whilst we did not manage to see Jaguar, the Giant Otter interaction shall live long in the memory. The cultural and historical experiences were superb. The birding was at times challenging but always enjoyable. I amassed circa 325 species on the trip and an estimated 280 were lifers. Indeed I seen nearly as many bird species on this two week trip in Peru as I have seen in Ireland in the last 20 years....

Wilton Farrelly

