



Please note: This is a sample itinerary and is subject to change at any time.

Day 1

Morning: You will make your own way to Puerto Maldonado where you will be collected from the airport and transported to the Explorer's Inn by boat along the snaking Tambopata River. The journey will take around 2½ hours, during which you may spot a number of interesting bird species including Capped heron (*Ptilerodius pileatus*), Horned screamer (*Anhima cornuta*) and Bat falcon (*Falco ruficularis*), as well as Side-necked turtles (*Podocnemis unifilis*), Spectacled caiman (*Caiman crocodilus*), and innumerable species of brightly coloured butterflies. Interactions with local families and fishermen who live along parts of the river, as they swim or ready their produce for market, is also common. A boxed lunch will be served in the boat.

Afternoon: On arrival at the lodge you will be greeted with a refreshing drink of exotic fruit juices before being showed to your palm-thatched bungalow accommodation with en suite bathroom. After settling in, the group will be called together in the auditorium for a welcome talk, which will cover general orientation and safety issues to keep in mind when out in the surrounding forest.

Evening: During and after the evening walk around the local trails of the lodge, there will be opportunities to get to know your fellow participants, the instructors and other members of the Fauna Forever and CORBIDI management team, as well as the Resident Naturalist volunteers – graduate biologists that work at the lodge and who will be on hand to assist and answer any questions about the local area. Dinner will be at 7 pm.

Day 2

Morning: After breakfast, you will attend a series of short presentations to familiarise yourself with the equipment and materials you will be using (mist nets, measuring/weighing equipment, rings, data sheets, etc.) and the different mist net deployment, bird extraction, handling and processing techniques you will be using during the course.

Afternoon: Armed with a set of mist-nets and accompanying research paraphernalia you will venture out into the forest with the rest of your colleagues and will begin deploying the nets and readying the bird processing areas. With the course instructors at hand at all times, you will begin to immediately put into effect some of the skills and knowledge introduced during the morning presentations, including carefully extracting your first "Tambopata" bird from a net.

Evening: Most evenings will be free for you to relax (hammocks are available), do some birding (night walks will be arranged on request), interact with the Resident Naturalists and other visiting researchers that come and go from the lodge, and to prepare yourself for the early, pre-dawn start the next day.

Day 3

Morning: The team will meet in the auditorium before sunrise and will then head off into the forest once again for some more netting and ringing practice! You will continue to extract birds using the variety of techniques taught to you earlier, as well as tackling the tasks of identifying them to family, genus and species, placing rings on them, taking morphometric measurements and filling out the datasheets.

Afternoon: Opportunity to attend an illustrated talk, titled “The basic information to gather from a bird: Cloacal protuberance (CP), brood patches (BP), fat (F) and pectoral muscle (PM)”. Be there or be square!

Evening: Free

Day 4

Morning: You’ve guessed it, more field practice. Work continues to hone your skills learned on previous days, including gathering data on the new terms introduced yesterday, such as CP, BP, F and PM.

Afternoon: Chance to attend another keynote presentation, titled “Moult strategies in birds: Body moult, wing moult, P wear and moult limit”, followed by a general discussion on moulting.

Evening: Free.

Day 5

Morning: Field Practice, involving all skills learnt to date, plus those introduced during the last presentation about moult strategies in birds.

Afternoon: Keynote presentation, titled “Basic principles for sexing and aging birds, including the Ossification technique”, followed by discussion.

Evening: Free.

Day 6

Morning: Field Practice (Yipee!) involving all skills learnt to date, plus those introduced during the last presentation about how to sex and age birds.

Afternoon + Evening: Free! A chance to join an organised trip to the Cocococha lake or Katicocha lake, including an after-dark search for caiman and roosting birds.

Day 7

Morning: Field Practice. By now you will have reached a stage where you are able to extract, process and liberate a bird efficiently and safely, so go ahead and show us what you’re made of – we’ll be taking notes.

Afternoon: You and your colleagues will be responsible for moving the mist-nets to a new location and erecting them under the supervision of an instructor, in readiness for the final day of netting.

Evening: Free.

Day 8

Morning: Final morning of field practice, and an opportunity for us to gauge once more how far you have come over the last week or so. You are now well on your way to becoming a mist-netting and bird ringing expert. You now need only amass as much experience as possible before competing for those all important avifauna conservation jobs or embarking on your own bird-related field research projects.

Afternoon: Closing activities: You'll attend a get-together in the lodge's auditorium where we will review the techniques learnt and the data collected. You will receive feedback on your progress during the course from your instructors, as well as a CD crammed full of useful information, and a course certificate to pin up with pride on your wall. There will also be a prize giving ceremony for those people we think deserve special recognition for their efforts.

Evening: Goodbye dinner party in the dining room, followed by a cocktail-tasting session at the bar (for those of legal drinking age of course!).

Day 9

Morning: We depart the Explorer's Inn lodge early and travel by boat to the airport in Puerto Maldonado where we'll say our goodbyes and take the final set of group photos.