




Rare Andean Mammals Tour


Destination: Northern Andes, Ecuador **Season:** February & November

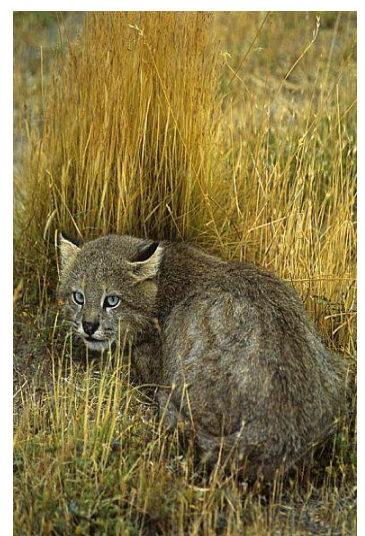
 Expert guides throughout and specialist equipment to try and help find small cats

 Spotlighting drives and walks in the cloud forest and Andes for rare small cats

 Hike and scan the high altitude grasslands for Andean bears and Mountain tapirs

 The only tour focusing on numerous rare and elusive mammals of the Andes

 Excellent chances for the newly described Olinguito among other species



Dates:

~~Sold Out Group Tour: 1st – 11th Feb 2019~~
Next Group Tour: 1st – 11th Nov 2019

Private / Tailored Tour information:

This tour can be booked anytime of the year, however the weather of the high Andes is unpredictable and so we pick the best seasons which are spring and autumn for our trips. During this seasons we usually have the best weather for scanning, less rain and cloud. However inclement weather can occur at any time of year.

Whilst we have a good success rate in filling tours we always suggest booking a private tour to avoid any disappointment.

The costs for a different group sizes (ranging from 1 – 6 are listed on the right, for people wanting to book private tours outside of our group tour dates); we aim to have 6 people maximum of our scheduled tours, however we will run with a minimum of 4 people – as long as everyone agrees to the increased price for 4 people.

We also have flexibility for the duration of trip you would like to book, if people would like to spend longer in some of these locations; that is possible, subject to availability.

There are also a couple of optional extensions that can be run in conjunction with trip (either at the start or the end), some popular ideas would be the Amazon in Ecuador around the Napo River and Yasuni National Park or the Galapagos Islands, we can provide itineraries and quotes for these and many more options in Ecuador.

Prices (2019 season):

Group Tour (10 nights)

£2,995 per person

*single supplement £350

Based on 6 people in a group – we will run the trip with 4 people minimum but the price will increase to the 4 person price below if we do not reach 6 pax.

Private Tour

£7,550 for a solo traveller

£4,595 per person (2 people)

*single supplement £350

£3,995 per person (3 people)

*single supplement £350

£3,595 per person (4 people)

*single supplement £350

Overview

Day 1: Quito / Cloud Forest

Days 2-3: Cloud Forest

Day 4: Papallacta

Days 5-10: Cayambe Coca NP

Days 11: Quito / Home



Tour Information

Introduction

Ecuador is a hot bed of biodiversity, in fact there are many areas of the country that are regarded as some of the most biodiverse in the world. With areas as varied and incredible as the Amazon Rainforest, Andean cloud forests and the Galapagos Islands it is no wonder that Ecuador is already well established on the worldwide wildlife watchers hot list.

But there are many species (particularly mammals) which go unnoticed or unknown. This tour is specially developed as part of Royle Safaris' ongoing and expanding range of mammal watching tours focused on the world's rarest and most elusive species.

In particular for this tour we have decided to explore the high altitude grasslands of the north Ecuadorian Andes (the paramo ecosystem) and the cloud forests of the western slopes. It is here that some of South America's largest mammals live alongside some of the least seen and understood.

This unique tour starts in the high altitude capital Quito and quickly leaves to the western slopes of the Andes and to a wonderful cloud forest lodge and private reserve called Bellavista. With the help of our expert guides we will explore the reserve grounds and nearby roads by day and night to try and unlock some of the secretive mammals of the cloud forest. This lodge shot to fame a few years ago as being one of the only places in the world where the newly described olinguito regularly visits in the evening / night. It is also a great place for species like western mountain coati and northern oncilla which will also be targeting here.

After a couple of days and nights here searching for mammals we head further into the Andes and focus on the massive and stunningly beautiful Cayambe-Coca National Park. This is the realm of the Andean bear, mountain tapir, Andean fox, northern pudu and very elusive colocolo cat. We will spend our days and nights here, scanning by day and then spotlighting and staking out likely areas by night. This park also offers some of the best views in Ecuador and on a clear day you can see various volcanoes including Cotopaxi, Chimborazo, Antisana and Sumaco among others.

We aim to see a good number of our targeted species on this trip and we will certainly put in the time and effort to find them. However securing all of our targeted species must not be a realistic expectation, we will of course do our best but we will require a good level of luck, as well as strategy, energy, enthusiasm and flexibility in our quest for the Rare Andean Mammals.

Itinerary

Day 1 Quito / Bellavista

Arrival & Travelling

Accommodation:

Bellavista Lodge
(Eco Lodge)

Food:

Dinner is the only meal included today and is served at the hotel.

Transportation:

Private vehicle & Walking.

We recommend everyone arrives in the morning today, if you cannot find a morning flight on this day we recommend arriving the night before (we can recommend and book local hotels in Quito for you). We will collect everyone from the airport or hotels in Quito this morning and then drive the couple of hours or so to the western slope of the Andes and the wonderful little private reserve of Bellavista.

After checking in we will hike around some of their trails, most of the species we will be looking for here are nocturnal or at least crepuscular but we will try and find red-tailed squirrels and maybe a western mountain coati foraging around. But once the sun begins to fall behind the trees and hills the mammals start to come out, we will then spend time at the banana feeding station. It is here that they regularly get visits from kinakajous, Andean white-eared opossums and of course the olinguito. It is around here that during the early mornings you can also sometimes see tayra and western mountain coati.

Then after dinner we will hit the road for some spotlighting around the winding mountain roads surrounding the lodge.

Days 2-3 Bellavista

Hiking & Panda Tracking

Accommodation:

Bellavista (Eco Lodge)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the lodge or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Walking & Private vehicle.



For the next two full days and nights we will have early morning (pre-dawn) drives around the roads again and hope for northern oncilla (among other species) and then after breakfast we can hike around the various trails here, before staking out the banana station in the evening and then spotlighting after dinner.

Day 4 **Papallacta**

Travelling & Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

Pamballacta
(Lodge)

Food:

Breakfast will be served at Bellavista and then lunch and dinner at Pamballacta.

Transportation:

Private vehicle & Walking.

This morning will be our last pre-dawn drive and then after breakfast we will depart Bellavista and travel back to Quito. We do not spend long in the city and quickly drive out and towards the Antisana volcano in Cayambe-Coca National Park. The drive will take 3 hours or so and along the way, once we are in the paramo and out of the city, we will stop and scan for bears. There are several bear territories along the highway and we will be looking for the tell-tale signs of bear activity. Our local guide is very knowledgeable about the bears and where they like to forage and with his help we will hopefully see a bear before even getting to our lodge today.

After arriving in Pamballacta we will check in and then (depending on the time) drive in the afternoon up into the paramo and once again scanning for bears as well as mountain tapir. Also around here and possible are Andean rabbits, Andean fox, Andean white-tailed deer and northern pudu. Some are easier to see than others, but we will spend time looking for each species.

Then after dinner back at the lodge we know a location nearby where the little understood stump-tailed porcupine is known from.

Days 5-10 **Cayambe-Coca National Park**

Wildlife Watching

Accommodation:

Pamballacta
(Lodge)

Food:

All of our meals will be served at the lodge or with a packed lunch or field snacks.

Transportation:

Private vehicle & Walking.

For the next 6 full days and nights we will explore the paramo in greater depth looking for our targeted species here, we also know a few locations a little lower down that we can also explore for the tapir which is more elusive than the bears here. Our local guide has a great reputation with some of the lodges here and often for the cost of a drink at the lodge we can hike their trails or visit their salt licks without having to stay there. So we will be based in one location and close to the paramo but have the option of visiting other locations to increase our chances.

Then at night we will be back in the park with some special equipment to try and find the small predators of the grasslands. Your guides will also be spending the day (as we drive around) looking for likely territories and habitats for animals like long-tailed weasel, skunks and of course the very elusive colocolo. We will return to these areas at night and try and find some of these small predators (the weasel being the exception as it is diurnal).

The days will be long and hopefully filled with mammals, as we will stay as late we can do (according to the park rules and our fatigue levels).

Day 11 **Quito / Home**

Departure

Accommodation:

NA

Food:

Only breakfast will be included today, before departure.

Transportation:

Private Vehicle

This morning we will depart after breakfast and travel back to the capital and to the airport in time to catch your return flight home. If you cannot get flights for today we can of course arrange a hotel in Quito for you and drop you there instead.

Your tour and all Royle Safaris services end upon transfer to the airport

Please note that the itinerary stated above is correct as our planned intentions for the tour. However adverse weather conditions and other local considerations can necessitate some modifications of the itinerary during the course of the tour; any changes will be made to make the best of the time, weather conditions and other constraints forced upon us and all changes will be made in conjunction with our terms and conditions.



Tour Inclusions

Absolutely everything mentioned in the above itinerary is included (except where it is expressly mentioned as an optional extra).

- All accommodation as mentioned above or of a similar standard as mentioned.
- All meals as mentioned in the itinerary; please note that some lunches and dinners are not included when staying in Quito in this itinerary.
- Bottled mineral or purified (boiled) water will be provided throughout and on request.
- Private vehicles for all transfers.
- English speaking local drivers and guides with years of experience in working in the areas we are travelling.
- Royle Safaris zoologist escort.
- Expert mammal guide.
- Local guides and experts in finding mammals in individual areas where necessary
- Special guest access to lodges and resorts we are not staying at in order to search for wildlife.
- All fuel, tolls, taxes and other expenses relating to driving.
- All wildlife watching and cultural activities as mentioned in the itinerary.
- Entrance fees and permits to all locations for wildlife watching mentioned.
- Field guides will be available for reference whilst on the trip.

Tour Exclusions

Nearly everything you will need is included in the price you have already paid for the tour. However there are some things not included.

- International flights to and from the tour start and end points.
- Travel insurance including any fees that result from emergency medical or evacuation needs.
- Visa fees for entering the country(s).
- Vaccinations and any medication are not included.
- Any food other than the meals provided and mentioned in the above itinerary; please note that some lunches and dinners when staying in Quito are not included in this itinerary
- Some meals will include a drink (such as juice, tea & coffee at breakfast) but most soft drinks and alcohol are an extra expense.
- Any items of a personal nature are not included, such as souvenirs, medication, toiletries, laundry and phone calls.
- Tips are also not included. There is no hard and fast rule for tipping in Ecuador. However we would appreciate it, if you have been happy with the service of the guides and camping team then please tip a little something at the end of the complete excursion. For local guides we hire for individual activities please tip individually and also if there are tip boxes in restaurants, camps, lodges and hotels then these are generally used for tipping all of the staff.
- Any departure taxes which may be due when leaving are not included (but may be included in the cost of your flights).