

TOP 5 WILDLIFE SIGHTINGS OF 2016

1. JAGUAR



On May 25, a group of six travelers led by Inkaterra explorer guide Charles Yauta were able to spot a jaguar (*Panthera onca*) during their excursion to the Inkaterra station in the shores of the scintillating Valencia oxbow lake. After observing various mammals, reptiles and birds during a three-hour boat ride down the Madre de Dios River, travelers remained awestruck as they witnessed the majestic feline sitting peacefully on the Inkaterra platform, only 30 meters away. Photos were taken for about two minutes while the jaguar was resting under a shade tree, before hiding away amidst the dense vegetation.

The sighting confirms the extraordinary biodiversity conserved within Inkaterra areas in the Amazon rainforest. Though jaguars were recently registered during nighttime with camera traps set by NGO Inkaterra Asociación, it is the first time since 2014 that this elusive animal is closely encountered in broad daylight at Inkaterra. With a Near Threatened conservation status according to IUCN, the jaguar is the only extant *Panthera* species native to the Americas. A solitary, stalk-and-ambush predator, it plays a key role in regulating ecosystems through hunting.

2. NEOTROPICAL OTTER



During an early birding excursion led by Explorer Guide Santos Ccasani and Dennis Osorio (Inkaterra Asociación), a group of travelers were walking around the Tea House at Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, trying to get a privileged view of the Urubamba riverbanks in search of torrent ducks. Dennis spotted some movement amid the rocks: it was a Neotropical Otter (*Lontra longicaudis*), a solitary animal with dark gray-brown pelage common to riverine environments from Central to South America, considered Near Threatened by IUCN. Guests were able to photograph it before it returned to the river, where it commonly feeds from fish and crustaceans.

3. HARPY EAGLE



At the Cachuela clay lick, a group of guests were able to find diversity of birds such as little parakeets, parrots and macaws where all near the clay lick. Suddenly, one of the macaws gave an alarm call and all the birds disappeared. A Harpy Eagle (*Harpia harpyja*) had perched on a tree looking an early snack, without success. This bird is the most powerful eagle of the Tropics, big enough to prey a monkey or a sloth.

4. ANACONDA



An anaconda (*Eunectes murinus*) was sighted by Explorer Guide Charles Yauta during an excursion to Gamitana Creek, where Inkaterra has developed a model farm for the sustainable production of Amazonian fruits. After an abrupt movement amid the bushes, Charles observed the appearance of the world's largest snake, identified by its dark green color with oval black spots, whose habitat is found in the tropical rivers of South America. It was a 4-meter specimen strangling a female agouti (*Dasyprocta punctata*). The group was able to take many photos and could appreciate the moment in which the anaconda devoured its prey. Afterwards, the constrictor snake hid itself into the vegetation, looking for safe haven to rest during the digestion process.

5. GOLDEN- HEADED QUETZALS



During a specialized birding excursion led by Inkaterra Explorer Guide Carmen Solis, a couple of Golden-headed Quetzals (*Pharomachrus auriceps*) were sighted in front of the tea plantation. Carmen heard the distinctive call of Quetzals and went in search of them. After a few minutes, she and a group of travelers were able to see the bird flying from one side of the plantation to the other, until resting over a branch of the *Inga adenophylla* tree. Everyone was able to observe this species for some minutes. With good luck and some patience, they were also able to see how a female flew to join its mating couple.