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The 5 most incredible luxury locations for birdwatchers in Latin America

By Simon Williams on Mar 12, 2018 in [Argentina](#), [Brazil](#), [Colombia](#), [Ecuador](#), [Leisure Travel](#), [Peru](#), [South America](#), [Speciality Travel](#)



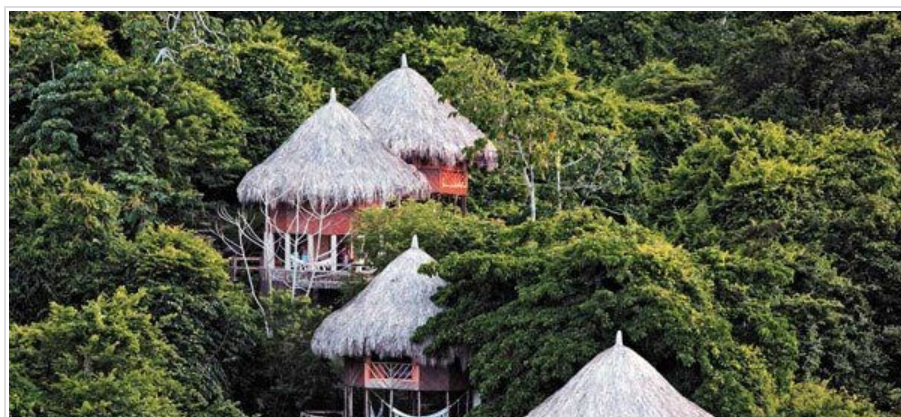
If you are a keen birder, there are few places which can rival the sheer diversity of species in Latin America. From the huge flightless rhea, to the tiny jewel-like hummingbirds that can be found across the whole continent, there is a bird for everyone. The most famous residents are species such as penguins, macaws and toucans, however, there are thousands of other unique birds that can be found in every habitat imaginable. Here we have rounded up the best locations, and which luxury hotels to stay in, for the ultimate birding holiday.

1. Tayrona Eco Habs, Tayrona, Colombia

Colombia boasts the most bird species of any country in the world and should therefore be on every birders radar. From the Caribbean Sea to the deep Amazon, and every place in between, there are hundreds of colourful birds to be spotted.



A particularly fruitful region is the coffee zone, which harbours an unbelievably rich biodiversity and endemic species such as the yellow eared parrot. Further north, close to the small town of Minca, lies one of the most celebrated of all bird reserves, 'El Dorado' in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The 1,600 acre reserve is home to hundreds of rare and endangered species, and the highest concentration of continental range-restricted bird species found anywhere in the world.



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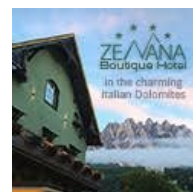
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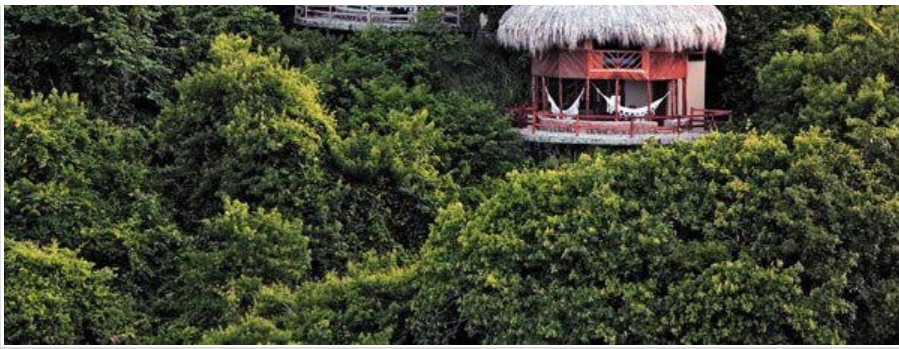
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Just a short distance away, close to the beautiful and also wildlife-rich Tayrona National Park one can find Tayrona Eco-Habs. This luxury coastal property is simple yet stunning. Guests can enjoy complete privacy in small thatched bungalows with views over the ocean and exclusive beach access. The whole property has been built to blend in with nature, with many natural materials being used, and is surrounded by jungle. Modern facilities are still available, making this an ideal base for a birdwatching holiday.

2. Araras Eco Lodge, The Pantanal, Brazil

The huge expanse of Brazil covers a wide variety of habitats and is home to over 1,700 species of bird. Similar to Colombia, it boasts some colourful and unique species that are found no where else in the world. The dense Amazon rainforest and the floodplains of the Pantanal are a haven for birdwatchers and offer outstanding opportunities to view some of the rarest species in Latin America. Endemic species such as the Lear's macaw, golden-crowned manakin and white collared kite draw birders from all over the world.



Our top recommendation for birding accommodation in the Pantanal is the Araras Eco-Lodge which has been built with an emphasis on comfort and harmony blending with the environment. Since 1990 the lodge has been involved in a conservation program to help the endangered Hyacinth Macaw. This bright blue parrot is an iconic species and since the program began, the lodge has increased the surrounding population of macaws from 27 to over 80. Reachable year-round, the lodge is nestled in an ecologically diverse and impeccably preserved region. Guests at the lodge will have the opportunity to participate in first-class bird watching, trekking in pristine forests, canoeing, and horseback riding.





There are also guided photo-safaris, sunrise and sunset hikes, and stunning views from tree-top lookout points. The lodge, built in regional rustic style, includes leisure facilities such as a swimming pool and a large veranda with cosy hammocks. Guests can also unwind with a drink at the lodge's bar and enjoy excellent local cuisine featuring Pantanal meat and fish, organic salads, and seasonal fruits and vegetables.

3. Mashpi Lodge, Quito, Ecuador

Ecuador is 5th on the list of the countries which boast the worlds most numerous bird species – an impressive feat considering the size of the country. This small corner of Latin America is a biological wonderland and has hundreds of species packed into its pristine cloud forests, jungle lowlands and of course, famous Galapagos islands. For birders on a tight time limit, this is the country for you as travelling between each birding hotspot is much less complicated and time consuming.



There are many different, and wonderful, lodges which you could choose to stay in to maximise your birdwatching time, but one of the best is Mashpi Lodge. Not only is it ultra-modern and luxurious but it also boasts over 400 species of bird (including 36 endemics) and has been voted the leading green hotel in Ecuador. The lodge has a strong focus on conservation and has a dedicated research team who are involved in a number of scientific projects which are helping to preserve the choco habitat which it resides in. Guests can explore the surrounding forests through a variety of activities such as night safaris, hiking trail excursions, an observation tower visit and the brilliant 'sky bike' ride through the canopy. At the end of a busy day there is a full spa to relax in, yoga classes and a menu full of delicious options in the restaurant.





4. Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel, Aguas Calientes, Peru

Coming in second place on the list of the most bird species on the planet, Peru is another beautiful part of the world that should be considered for a birding holiday in Latin America. From impossibly deep canyons to untouched jungle and mysterious cloud forest, the country which is prominently famous for its history, also has some fabulous birding regions. One of the biggest draws here, literally, is the Andean condor which is resident year-round in the Colca Canyon. This gigantic bird has a wingspan of over 10 feet, therefore it is unmistakable in flight.



Located in the small town of Aguas Calientes of Machu Picchu fame, the Inkaterra Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel is the only place to stay if you are interested in wildlife. The hotel is surrounded by 12 acres of natural beauty and has its own team of guides to show you the best of what can be seen within the grounds. There are orchid trails (372 species of native orchid thrive here), bird watching walks and a spectacled bear project to be enjoyed by guests.



This is no ordinary hotel garden, rare and beautiful species including the Andean cock-of-the-rock and golden-headed quetzal are regularly spotted among over 200 other birds which call this place home. Back at the hotel, there are plenty of facilities to be enjoyed such as a spa, hot springs, swimming pool and restaurant serving some of the best Peruvian cuisine.

5. Bahia Bustamante, Chubut, Argentina

Little known and remote, the west coast of Argentina is certainly not somewhere that springs to mind when thinking of a trip to South America. However, the region should be on your radar if you are looking for an unusual birding holiday. The coastal habitat here is unique, hot and dry and yet home to thousands of Magellanic penguins.



In addition, these waters are famous for their orca population which hunts by beaching themselves to capture young seals and sealions. Aside from these two major draws, there are hundreds of seabirds which pass by and a decent amount of land based species too. The burrowing parrot, rhea and southern flamingo are a taste of the variety of birds in the area.



Bahia Bustamante is a small lodge steeped in history and offering guests a 5* experience. Although the rooms are simple, the location and sheer wilderness experience is first class. Each day a variety of options are presented to explore the surrounding region, from horseback rides to cycling and boat trips, allowing close observation of the resident species.

Simon Williams is Director of [Bespoke Latin America](#). Bespoke Latin America is a luxury travel company specialising in tailor made holidays to Latin America.

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