

# The Northern Peru Birding Route: Tumbes Extension





## Tumbes Extension

Tumbes is the northernmost Region on the coast of Peru, with a busy capital city and some unique biodiversity not found in the rest of the country. Starting a tour extension in Tumbes and birding various sites south to Chiclayo will boost bird lists and provide a great introduction to the main birding route. Tumbes Region is quite small and shares many biological characteristics with southern Ecuador, with the Pacific tropical forests and mangroves. Tumbes is also notable in having more than 30% of its territory declared as protected areas.

The Pacific tropical forests of Tumbes are unique in Peru - forming the southern extent of the tropical Pacific forests with influences of the Chocó ecosystem of Ecuador and Colombia. This area of humid forest is now protected within the Cerros de Amotape National Park, with the El Caucho area providing the best site for birding. The Tumbes Mangroves National Sanctuary is another state protected area bordering Ecuador, again forming a continuation of this habitat from Ecuador. After visiting these two protected areas, the journey south can include various sites and a great opportunity of a pelagic trip to see many species found in a marine zone where the Humboldt and El Niño sea currents meet, not to mention whales and tortoises.

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## Cerros de Amotape National Park

This 151,560 ha protected area together with the El Angolo Hunting Reserve is the largest protected continuous dry forest reserve in Peru and also the centre of the Northwest Peru Biosphere Reserve. The northern portion of the park is more humid with impressive Pretino (*Cavanillesia platanifolia*) trees and forms the southern end of the Pacific tropical forests from coastal Ecuador. The main access point is El Caucho, with the drive also providing good birding. Some 230 species have been recorded here and access is relatively easy with a 2 hour drive from Tumbes city. The Mantled Howler Monkey (*Alouatta palliate*) and White-fronted Capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*) can also be seen with some luck.

**Accommodation:** Tours generally use the 4-star Costa del Sol Hotel or B'liam Hotel in Tumbes or beach hotels near Zorritos, 25 km south of Tumbes.

**Access:** From Tumbes head south to Pampas de Hospital, some 20 km. At Pampas de Hospital a track leads southeast for another 30 or so kilometres to El Caucho. Four-wheel drive vehicles are recommended.

**Facilities:** Park guard post has toilets, resting area. There is a biological station here which can serve as a base for exploring the trails. Visitors must register with SERNANP in Tumbes before visiting. A full day is recommended here with pack-lunch.

**Local guides:** Yuri Oyola lives in Tumbes, he does not speak fluent english but knows the birds very well, cel 978370037.

**Contacts:** SERNANP, Av. Panamericana Norte No. 17-39, Tumbes, in front of the football stadium.

**Birds:** Little Tinamou, Pale-browed Tinamou, Rufous-thighed Hawk, Bicoloured Hawk, Crane Hawk, Grey-backed Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Black Hawk-eagle, Barred Forest-falcon, Collared Forest-falcon, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Crested Guan, Rufous-necked Wood-rail, Ochre-bellied Dove, Grey-cheeked Parakeet, Bronze-winged Parrot, Peruvian Screech-owl, Black-and-white Owl, Spectacled Owl, Green-breasted Mango, Green-crowned Woodnymph, Ecuadorian Trogon, Gartered Trogon, Whooping Motmot, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Ecuadorian Piculet, Red-rumped Woodpecker, Slaty Spinetail, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Great Antshrike, Western Slaty-antshrike, Grey-headed Antbird, White-bearded Manakin, Loja Tyrannulet, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, Tumbesian Tyrannulet, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, Pacific Royal Flycatcher, Grey-breasted Flycatcher, Ochraceous Attila, Snowy-throated Kingbird, Thrush-like Schiffornis, Yellow-cheeked Becard, Slaty Becard, One-colored Becard, Spotted Nightingale-thrush, Plumbeous-backed Thrush, Ecuadorian Thrush, Black-capped Sparrow, White-winged Brush-finch, White-headed Brush-finch, Stripe-headed Brush-finch, Black-and-white Tanager, White-shouldered Tanager, Orange-crowned Euphonia, Golden-naped Tanager, Yellow-billed Cacique.

## Tumbes Mangroves National Sanctuary

The Tumbes Mangroves National Sanctuary (2,970 ha) is located north of Tumbes city, bordering Ecuador. The main access point is called Puerto 25 where the local community is well organized to provide canoe trips through the mangroves, which last between 2 to 4 hours. About 200 bird species have been recorded for the mangroves and dry forest patches surrounding the area. Other access points are El Algarrobo and El Bendito. After a mornings visit to the mangroves the tour can begin to head south.

**Access:** The sanctuary is accessed by driving 23 km north towards to Zarumilla, then taking a track for 4 km to Puerto 25. From there the canoes are boarded for the trip through the mangroves.

**Facilities:** At Puerto 25 the local community is well organized and equipped with fibre-glass canoes and lifejackets. There are toilets and shops with souvenirs. The entrance fee to the Sanctuary is paid at Puerto 25, as well as the canoe.

**Local guides:** Same as Cerros de Amotape.

**Birds:** Black-bellied Whistling-Duck, Blue-winged Teal, White-cheeked Pintail, Chilean Flamingo, Wood Stork, Magnificent Frigatebird, Blue-footed Booby, Peruvian Pelican, Tricolored Heron, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron,



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White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, Crane Hawk, Mangrove Black Hawk, Clapper Rail, Rufous-necked Wood-Rail, Black-necked Stilt, American Oystercatcher, Collared Plover, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Willet, Ruddy Turnstone, Stilt Sandpiper, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Wilson's Phalarope, Gull-billed Tern, Common Tern, Elegant Tern, Cinereous Finch, Saffron Finch, Parrot-billed Seedeater.

## Coastal highway south to Máncora

The drive south along the Pacific coast is enjoyable for its scenery, with fishing villages, beaches and 'classic' American automobiles zipping up and down the road. After Zorritos the road crosses the reasonably wide Quebrada Bocapan with sand flats and shallow pools; worth a stop to check for waders or other shorebirds. Further south after Cancas, the Punta Sal beach resort has an interesting piece of land south of the property, with scrub and rocky outcrops. Chestnut-collared Swallow roost here as well as the chance of more shorebirds. The hotel restaurant looking out over the ocean is recommended for lunch. After Punta Sal the road veers inland to Mancora. Just before Mancora is Quebrada Fernandez, and taking a left here will drive along the dry valley through mixed scrub and dry forest. Key species here are the Rufous Flycatcher and Tumbes Tyrant.

**Access:** Quebrada Bocapan is at km 212. The entrance road for Punta Sal is at km 170.

**Birds / Aves:** Qda. Bocapan: Chilean Flamingo, Jabiru, Nazca Booby, Peruvian Booby, Guanay Cormorant, Peruvian Pelican, White Ibis, Roseate Spoonbill, American Oystercatcher, Collared Plover, Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Willet, Whimbrel, Least Sandpiper, Kelp Gull, Inca Tern, South American Tern, Royal Tern, Elegant Tern, Black Skimmer, Short-tailed Woodstar, Short-tailed Field Tyrant, Chestnut-collared Swallow, Cinereous Finch, Parrot-billed Seedeater, Tumbes Sparrow.

Punta Sal Resort: Blue-footed Booby, Peruvian Booby, Guanay Cormorant, Wilson's Plover, Snowy Plover, Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Coastal Miner, Necklaced Spinetail, Collared Antshrike, Short-tailed Field-Tyrant, Snowy-throated Kingbird, Chestnut-collared Swallow, Superciliated Wren, Tumbes Sparrow, Cinereous Finch, Sulphur-throated Finch, Parrot-billed Seedeater.

Qda. Fernandez: West Peruvian Dove, Peruvian Pygmy-Owl, Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Red-masked Parakeet, Collared Antshrike, Necklaced Spinetail, Rufous Flycatcher, Tumbes Tyrant.

## Los Organos – pelagic trip

Los Organos is a small town 12 km south of Mancora. Pelagic trips are organized with Pacifico Adventures who have good boats, equipment and knowledgeable guides. An early start will get you out to the continental shelf to start chumming for the birds, allowing a good few hours for birding.

**Facilities:** Good yachts, life-jackets, skilled navigation crew, on-board toilet.

**Local guides:** Owner Sebastian is a marine biologist who may accompany some trips.

**Contacts:** Pacifico Adventures, Sebastian Silva or Belén Alcorta. Tel: (073) 257-686.  
pacificoadventures@yahoo.com, www.pacificoadventures.com

**Birds:** Great Frigatebird, Peruvian Booby, Blue-footed Booby, Nazca Booby, Red-footed Booby, White-chinned Petrel, Parkinson's Petrel, Galapagos Petrel, Pink-footed Shearwater, Flesh-footed Shearwater, Galapagos Shearwater, Waved Albatross, Ringed Storm-Petrel, White-faced Storm-Petrel, Least Storm-Petrel, White-vented Storm-Petrel, Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel, Markham's Storm-Petrel, Black Storm-Petrel, Elliot's Storm-Petrel, Swallow-tailed Gull, Red-billed Tropicbird.



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## Piedritas, Talara

This small forest patch is good for the Peruvian Plantcutter and a few other Tumbesian endemics. The habitat is right behind the village and school. Locals are friendly and will point you in the right direction for the “cortarrama”. You will notice that the Talara area is a major petroleum producing centre, with nodding-donkeys and pipelines everywhere and the refinery in Talara.

**Access:** Coming from the north, after crossing Quebrada Pariñas, there is a turning on the right at Jabonillal village. Follow this track for 8 km until it comes out at Piedritas. If coming from Talara, take the road north for Lobitos until Piedritas.

**Facilities:** Toilet at school.

**Local guides:** Ask for Fabian and Fabricio, two local lads.

**Birds:** Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Burrowing Owl, Grey and White Tyrannulet, Rufous Flycatcher, Tumbes Tyrant, Necklaced Spinetail, Coastal Miner, Peruvian Plantcutter, Cinereous Finch.

## San Pedro Mangroves and Virrila Estuary

After Talara the drive south passes through Sullana and on to Piura, where some tours will overnight. If you have spare time in Piura, the campus of the Universidad de Piura (UdeP) should give you Peruvian Thick-knee and Tumbes Swallow. Southwest of Piura, towards Sechura town, are the San Pedro Mangroves, a good spot for the Peruvian Tern. Further along the road crosses the Virrila Estuary, with more opportunities for waders and other species. The road is heading towards the Illescas massif on a peninsula, part of which is now protected as a reserved zone. After birding the above sites the road continues past Illescas and heads inland to join the Pan-American Highway coming south from Piura to Chiclayo. By this stage you are in the Sechura Desert. Another hour or so and you will be in Chiclayo.

**Access:** Sites are easy, with short walks. No facilities at sites.

**Birds:** San Pedro Mangroves: White-cheeked Pintail, Pied-billed Grebe, Great Grebe, Chilean Flamingo, Wood Stork, Peruvian Booby, Peruvian Pelican, Black-bellied Plover, Collared Plover, Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Willet, Whimbrel, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Pectoral Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Laughing Gull, Franklin's Gull, Peruvian Tern, Gull-billed Tern, Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Elegant Tern, Black Skimmer, Coastal Miner, Wren-like Rushbird, Tumbes Swallow, Barn Swallow, Cinereous Finch, Collared Warbling-Finch.

Virrila Estuary: Great Grebe, Chilean Flamingo, Peruvian Booby, Guanay Cormorant, Peruvian Pelican, Black-bellied Plover, Snowy Plover, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated Plover, Spotted Sandpiper, Greater Yellowlegs, Willet, Lesser Yellowlegs, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Hudsonian Godwit, Marbled Godwit, Ruddy Turnstone, Red Knot, Sanderling, Baird's Sandpiper, Least Sandpiper, Semipalmated Sandpiper, Western Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, Wilson's Phalarope, Peruvian Tern, Gull-billed Tern, South American Tern, Royal Tern, Black Skimmer, Coastal Miner.

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