British see potential in Colombia for birdwatching

The possibility to watch birds all year round, the country's improved security conditions, the large variety of species in Colombia, were some of the aspects highlighted by the British entrepreneurs who participated during the fam-trip organized by Proexport Colombia.

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"Undoubtedly, this is a rich country in that sector; there are several and diverse zones where specialized tourists can move. The advantage of being able to conduct this practice any time of year has caught our attention. We know, and can notice, that this is a far safer country now. We are certain to include Colombia as a destination for birdwatching as part of our promotional packages," said Stephen Vaughan Ashby, representative of Birdfinders.

On the other hand, Nicholas Paul Roberts from Oriole Birding, who also visited the country for the first time, said Santa Marta was very appealing to him. "I liked it because it is a place that can be complemented by other activities: the beach, walks on the jungle, having the opportunity to see the indigenous communities, it is a very interesting place in general terms," he assured. The fam-trip took place between July 21st and 31st.

Due to time constraints in the visitors' agenda, the group asked to visit places in Cundinamarca, Valle del Cauca, the Coffee Triangle, Magdalena and the Pacific. However, other regions in the country also have birdwatching potential.

This visit was prior to the Bird Fair 2011, the largest bird fair in the world gathering professionals and enthusiasts, which will take place in the United Kingdom from the 19th to the 23rd of August. Colombia will be at the event with a Proexport exhibition stand, supported by the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism Promotion Fund.

Colombia is the number one country in bird diversity in the world, with 80 endemic species, according to the Humboldt Institute, which ranks it third in South America after Brazil and Peru.

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It is also considered a true paradise for birdwatching enthusiasts thanks to the countless options in the amazon and choc jungles, mist forests, or the Andes highlands, the Eastern Plains and the lower Caribbean lands.

Bird tourism has large international potential, considering it is an activity with an approximate market size of 100 million nature and bird watchers from around the globe. The participating operators in the fam-trip were Birdfinders, Oriole Birding, Oenanthe Birding Adventures and Kazakhstan Birdtours.