{rokbox title=|Colombia, the country with the largest variety of birds in the world, a tourism option|}../es/images/stories/prensa/especiales/itb2011/fotonota4.jpg{/rokbox}

Colombia, the country with the largest variety of birds in the world, a tourism option

Berlin, Mar 6. (Pxp).- With 1,876 bird species, Colombia is "the country of wonders" for those who enjoy highly specialized natural tourism. Birding or bird-tourism. ITB 2011 visitors will get a first hand glance at this option, where this tropical South American nation provides the largest and most diverse variety in the world.

According to Ecoturs' Manager, Angela Gomez, the demand in this segment has increased by 150% since bird-watching plans began sales back in 2006.

Currently, Ecoturs is a Proaves member company, a non-for-profit organization in charge of preserving this valuable natural resource. According to Gomez, the discovery of six new species totally unknown to science after numerous scientific expeditions during the last decade has strongly impacted the demand.

Species like the Reinita Ali-dorada (Gold-winged Queen), Baudo Oropenduala and Colombia's emblematic bird, the Loro Orejiamarillo (Yellow-eared Parrot), lure thousands of tourists from the United States and the United Kingdom through international companies selling these packages, such as Vent Tours, the most prestigious bird-tourism company in the United States, Tropical Birding, Manu Expeditions, Optics for the Tropics and Birdquest.

Colombia offers abundant bird-watching routes in terms of species and experiences, where the clients demand what they want to see. The Endemics Bonanza route, for instance, comprises the entire Caribbean Coast, with destinations like Reserva El Dorado, Via Parque and Los Flamencos. On this tour, visitors can observe 474 bird species, 22 of which are endemic, such as the SM Foliagegleaner, SM Screech-Owl and the SM Parakeet.

Another route is the Magdalena Birding Extravaganza, which includes the whole central region of Colombia with towns like Victoria (Caldas), Falan (Tolima), Chingaza National Park (on the outskirts of Bogotá), La Florida (Bogotá) and reservations like El Paujil (Puerto Boyacá) and Reinita Cielo Azul (San Vicente de Chucurri, Santander). There, you may observe 775 species, 27 of which are endemic.

The route entitled Central Colombia Escapade takes place in the Province of Antioquia, and it includes the Colibri del Sol Reservation, Reserva Loro Orejiamarillo, Las Tángaras and Otún Quimbaya. Here you can see 580 different species, 21 of which are endemic.

According to Angela Gomez, nobody had placed their bets on bird-tourism in Colombia, due to security reasons. Now, this activity has shown the most impressive growth in the past four years

and the 'word-of-mouth' of those who have come to visit and the general change of the country's image abroad has allowed the nation to grow in a segment where the visit to exotic places is a must for a good experience.

This is currently a small, but profitable market, with visitors coming to the country for an average of 20 days, and having the opportunity to see Colombia in a far more varied way, given the number of different locations where the birds live. The packages are usually multi-destination, and their cost varies around US$3,000 per person, on average.

This year, Proexport Colombia, the Tourism, Investment and Exportation Promotion Office in Colombia, will be participating at ITB with 25 representatives including regional institutions, tour and hotel operators, intending to position Colombia in Germany and around the world, and also to support these entrepreneurs in generating more business and strengthening alliances with their partners.

The International Tourism Fair, ITB will take place in Berlin, Germany between the 9th and 13th of March, 2011. Over 180 thousand visitors from 180 countries in the world will be visiting, making this the most important tourism trade show in the world.