Red-bellied Grackle (*Hypopyrrhus pyrohypogaster*) endemic species /Picture: Juan David Ramirez/

The Central Andes is the oldest of the three mountain ranges of the Colombian Andes and harbors a diversity of habitats, forests, agricultural areas, and human settlements.

The main departments in which the it lies are Antioquia, Caldas, Risaralda, Quindío and Tolima. It is bordered to the west by the Cauca Valley, to the east by the Magdalena Valley, to the south by the Colombian Massif, and to the north by the lowlands of the Caribbean region.

The main habitats are the montane and premontane rainforests and the páramos. Rainfall ranges between 2,000 and 3,000 mm a year.

Although the region has some protected areas, the premontane forests have been severely affected by cattle ranching and agriculture, especially coffee cultivation. However, some areas in the north of the mountain range are still well preserved and new bird species have been recently found.

Birding in the Central Range of the Andes

Tawny Antpitta (*Grallaria quitensis*) /Picture: Diego Calderón Franco/

With over 800 bird species, the Colombian Andes are part of the richest and most diverse Biodiversity Hotspot on the planet. In the Central Andes, birdwatching options are mainly divided between those in the north (Medellín and nearby areas) and those in the heart of the range (Café Triangle).

Some 120 species are of special interest because they are either endemic like Parker's Antbird (*Cercomacra parkeri*); were recently described, for example, the Chestnut-capped Piha (*Lipaug us weberi*); or are threatened by some degree of extinction like the Brown-banded Antpitta (*Grallaria milleri*).

Ancient lands that reverberate with the song of the wind, the ritual path of birds in the sky.

In the northern section of the range, more than 300 species have been recorded ,including the endemic Stiles's Tapaculo (*Scytalopus stilesi*), the White-mantled Barbet (*Capito hypoleucus*), the Red-bellied Grackle (*Hypopyrrhus pyrohypogaster*), and the Multicolored Tanager (*Chlorocrysa nitidissima*), all of which may be easily spotted in the municipalities of Amalfi and Anorí and in the surroundings of Medellín.

Continuing south, near Manizales, Pereira and Armenia, there are several first class birding localities; the endemic Cauca Guan (*Penelope perspicax*) and specialties like the Red-ruffed Fruitcrow (*Pyroderus scutatus*), plus a load of tapaculos, antpittas and mountain-tanagers can be seen with relative ease.

Purplish-mantled Tanager (*Iridosornis porphyrocephala*) /Picture: Diego Calderón Franco/

Traveling in this area is easily done by road or by taking short flights between the main cities in the region.

Downloads

- Complete list of birds of the Central Range of the Andes
- List of key species of the Central Range of the Andes

Find in this zone much more nature to discover:

- Rural tourism at Café Triangle
- Valle del Cauca turismo rural
- Natural Parks of the Andean Region