



Shining Sunbeam (*Aglaeactis cupripennis*) /Picture: Diego Calderón Franco/

The Eastern Andes mountains are the largest of the three ranges in Colombia. They even extend into Venezuela. This range is a major part of the departments of Huila, Tolima, Cundinamarca, Boyacá, Santander, Norte de Santander, and Cesar, and covers small parts of the departments of La Guajira, Putumayo, Caquetá, Meta, Casanare, and Arauca.

This Andean range is bordered by the Eastern Plains to the east, the Magdalena River valley to the west, the Colombian Massif to the south, and the Caribbean lowlands and the Gulf of Maracaibo in Venezuela to the north.

Free birds in superb natural surroundings.

Just as in other mountain Andean ranges in Colombia, the main habitats are the montane and premontane rainforests and the páramos. Rainfall does not exceed 2,000 mm per year.

The country's capital, Bogotá, and other big metropolis on this range disturb the landscape harshly; even so, big virgin areas of forest still remain especially on the eastern slope. Almost 15 national protected areas and more than 20 IBAs protect the ecosystems of these Andean mountains.

Birding in the Eastern Range of the Andes



Chestnut-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia castaneiventris*) endemic species /Picture: Oswaldo Cortés/

With diversity in excess of 800 bird species, the Colombian Andes have been categorized as one of the richest and most diverse areas of the planet set in the Tropical Andes Biodiversity Hotspot.

The Eastern Andes offers some 50 unique specialties in several very attractive birding areas:

Bogotá and its surroundings are a very good option for spotting endemic species within the city itself. Examples are the Bogotá Rail (*Rallus semiplumbeus*), the Silvery-throated Spinetail (*Synallaxis subpudica*), and Apolinar's Wren (*Cistothorus apolinari*), although there are many other near-endemic and/or threatened species.

Just few hours from Bogotá, the Soatá area exhibits a great number of endemic species. The Mountain Grackle (*Macroagelaius subalaris*), the Chesnut-bellied Hummingbird (*Amazilia castaneiventris*), the Apical Flycatcher (*Myiarchus apicalis*), and Niceforo's Wren (*Thryothorus nicefori*) stand out.



Band-tailed Seed eater (*Catamenia analis*) /Picture: Juan David Ramírez/

Other very interesting endemic or near-endemic species like the Black Inca (*Coeligena prunellei*), the Recurve-billed Bushbird (*Clytoctantes alixii*), and the only confirmed extinct Colombian species - the Colombian Grebe (*Podiceps andinus*) - also belong to this mountain range.

Birdwatching inside and near Bogotá is logistically easy; visiting other areas further north will require extended road travel.

Downloads:

- [Complete list of birds of the Eastern Range of the Andes](#)
- [List of key species of the Eastern Range of the Andes](#)

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