Bay-headed Tanager (*Tangara gyrola*) /Picture: Diego Calderón Franco/

The Western Andes Range is the lowest mountain range in Colombia. These mountains include very humid forests on its western slope and drier ones on the eastern one. The range covers parts of the departments of Antioquia, Chocó, Risaralda, Valle del Cauca, and Cauca.

The Colombian Andes are one of the richest and most diverse of all Biodiversity Hotspots on the planet.

As with other Andean mountain ranges in Colombia, premontane and montane humid forests and páramos are the most important habitats found. Rainfall may reach 4,500 mm per year.

The eastern slope, in the Cauca River valley, has been much more impacted human activity than the western slope, which still remains almost intact. Seven big national parks and several IBAs do an excellent job of protecting the forests of this mountain range.

Birding in the Western Range of the Andes

Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*) /Picture: Diego Calderón Franco/

With more than 800 bird species, the Andean Colombian mountains are located inside the richest and most diverse Biodiversity Hotspot on earth.

The Western Andes enclose a large quantity of interesting birding areas, with some 60 species restricted to this range.

In southwestern Antioquia, there are still healthy populations of Yellow-eared Parrot (*Ognorhynchus icterotis*), Dusky Starfrontlet (*Coeligena orina*), and Chestnut-bellied Flower-piercer (*Diglossa gloriosissima*).

Yellow-headed Manakin (*Xenopipo flavicapilla*) /Picture: Diego Calderón Franco/

Further south, in the Tatamá and El Inglés hills and the Munchique and Farallones de Cali parks, there are several beauties like the endemic Black-and-gold (*Bangsia melanochlamys*) and Gold-ringed Tanagers (*B. aureocincta*), the recently described Munchique Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina negreti*), and the Gorgeted Puffleg (*Eriocnemis isabellae*).

The vicinity of Cali offers several good options for birding with a good chance to spot the endemic Multicolored Tanager (*Chlorochrysa nitidissima*).

Visiting all these birding areas involves more effort than in the central or eastern Andes; several require 4-wheel drive vehicles. Yet without a shadow of a doubt, birding in the western Andes is an exciting, joyful experience.

Downloads

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

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