

Prepared for Discover with Nature, TNC

ECUADOR

August 18th-25th, 2025

WELCOME TO ECUADOR

Join The Nature Conservancy on this unique opportunity to visit the Eastern slope of the Ecuadorian Andean Mountains. During your trip, visit world-class birding locations with local experts, engage with indigenous community members, and gain insights into local projects including how watershed conservation is linked to regional diversity.

CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

WATER FUNDS

Water security presents growing challenges in several parts of the world, and Ecuador is no exception. TNC engages in conservation projects that improve watershed management decision-making to reduce water security risks. Ecuador's natural resources are its biggest asset and strongest ally. Water Funds were created with the objective to guarantee water quantity and quality for nature, human, and productive activities. The success of the Water Fund model, created in Ecuador 20 years ago, started a movement that has seen 26 Water Funds in Latin America, validating a successful model of watershed protection.

During 2020, TNC Ecuador led a strategic initiative to improve water security on a national scale. Ecuador's Water Security Coalition unites 23 nationwide stakeholders from private, academic, and civil sectors to collectively enhance public policy, advance scientific and conservation development, implement corporate best practices, and improve communication. Together, they aim to initiate systemic transformation towards more effective water management. TNC, Unicef and UDLA lead the SARCC table (sanitation, wastewater and climate change) to raise awareness on the direct link of human health and water security. TNC uses a comprehensive framework based on conservation, expanding to include strategic alliances with other sectors that traditionally are disconnected from environmental efforts.

On this trip, you will discover how TNC has worked to preserve the water-rich ecosystem to improve water quality and quantity. You will also hear firsthand from community members whose livelihoods are affected by these conservation efforts.

CONSERVATION HIGHLIGHTS

AMAZON CONSERVATION STRATEGY

Ecuador's role as a global biodiversity powerhouse requires a very specialized approach closely integrated with local communities and governments. We work in iconic global landscapes such as the Amazon, as well as key agricultural landscapes in the Andean center region. By working side by side with indigenous communities, we aim to establish sustainable processes that empower communities and local governments for autonomous management. Our goal is to preserve ecosystem services through sustainable livelihoods, ensuring long term economic security. These processes must be appropriable, replicable and scalable. TNC's approach is based on robust sociocultural frameworks that integrate indigenous peoples and communities' rights in order to propose an adequate intervention strategy. In a region where 50% of the Amazon is under indigenous communities' territory, social and environmental integration is absolutely urgent.

TNC develops ethno-zoning maps that will allow communities to negotiate the implementation of possible investment projects within their territories. With this information, they have a mechanism to face external threats to their territories. These efforts are also intended for indigenous peoples to organize and face internal threats such as the expansion of the agricultural frontier. Ancestral residents and local communities secure their material resources, spiritual, and cultural necessities while playing a vital role in keeping the region's free-flowing rivers and their teeming aquatic life healthy, for present generations and those to come.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

DAY 1 | Monday, August 18th, 2025

Arrivals into Quito

Your journey begins at 5pm in Quito, Ecuador. Upon arrival at Mariscal Sucre Quito International Airport (UIO), collect your bags and look for your TNC Hosts and Iconic Trip Leader who will be holding a sign with *The Nature Conservancy*. If you are arriving early to explore Quito, we suggest staying at the Wyndham Quito Airport, where our group will be staying the first night of the trip. For those arriving on the 18th, we will transfer you to the Wyndham Quito Airport to settle into your comfortable room before enjoying a welcome reception and dinner.

Overnight at Wyndham Quito Airport, Quito, Ecuador

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

DAY 2 | Tuesday, August 19th, 2025

Water Funds

Following breakfast at the hotel, pack your bags as we head for our next destination, Palaguillo, to learn about Ecuador's successful water fund models. In recent years, TNC's experience creating water funds in Ecuador informed the development of a total of 26 water funds throughout Latin America.

Upon arrival at the Palaguillo Water Protection Area, Director Bert De Bievre will provide a brief introduction to FONAG, recognized as the world's first water fund. Stretch your legs on a short walk around the area as you learn more about the Paramo high-altitude landscape, TNC's work in the resilient watershed strategy, water funds, and water protection areas.

Late morning, we will continue our drive to Papallacta, checking into Termas Papallacta Hotel and enjoying lunch upon arrival. The afternoon is yours to join an optional hike, or relax in the onsite hot springs, nestled in the majestic high Andes valley. Dinner will be served at the hotel this evening.

Overnight at Termas Papallacta Hotel, Papallacta, Ecuador

DAY 3 | Wednesday, August 20th, 2025

Drive to Wild Sumaco Lodge

After breakfast, we will begin traveling east to explore the surrounding landscape. Our first stop is the Papallacta lagoon, located on the buffer zone of the Cayambe – Coca Ecological Reserve; take time to explore this scenic area on foot while discussing the general ecology of the landscape. We will continue driving 1.5 hours, making a stop for lunch-with-a-view at Mirador Hard River Restaurant.

Following lunch, we will finish the remaining 2 hours of our drive to WildSumaco Lodge. Natural paradise located on Ecuador's Eastern Foothills, the lodge was built out of a deep love for the preservation of birds and their delicate environment. Set on a ridge in the Andes' Eastern Foothills, you'll find panoramic views reaching across the Rio Pucuno Valley and to the Andes beyond. Check in to your room before meeting for a tour and bird walk around the property. Dinner will be on-site this evening.

Overnight at WildSumaco Lodge, Guamani, Ecuador

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

DAY 4 | Thursday, August 21st, 2025

Birding at Wild Sumaco Lodge

Ecuador is a birder's paradise, boasting more than 1,600 species within its borders. It is the most mega-diverse country relative to its size, with 59% of its territory covered by native vegetation. From high-Andean mountain tops to thick and humid Amazon rainforests, Ecuador is home to 6% of all flora and fauna species in the world.

Get an early start for a full day of birding led by a local guide. We'll spend the morning exploring near the lodge, with breaks for breakfast and downtime, before taking a packed lunch to continue birding along Loreto Road.

Keep a lookout for some of these species while exploring: yellow-throated Spadebill, Gray-tailed Piha, Military Macaw, Spot-winged Parrotlet, Plain-winged Antwren, White-streaked Antwren, Foothill Screech-Owl, Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, Foothill Elaenia, Wing-banded Wren, Scarlet-breasted and Fierythroated Fruiteater.

Return to the lodge in the late afternoon and enjoy a good book on the deck before dinner begins.

Overnight at Wild Sumaco Lodge, Guamani, Ecuador

DAY 5 | Friday, August 22nd, 2025

Drive to the Amazon

Fuel up with a hearty breakfast before heading to the indigenous community of Pueblo Kichawa De Rukullakta (PKR), where, starting in 2021, The Nature Conservancy has developed a community-based conservation project focused on freshwater ecosystems. As part of its work, TNC has been supporting tourism initiatives and aquaculture projects with native species to improve sustainable livelihoods, guarantee food security, and promote freshwater conservation. TNC is offering technical support to establish community-based monitoring systems for water quality and freshwater biodiversity. Additionally, they are conducting capacity-building workshops with community leaders on topics including aquatic ecosystems, gender dynamics, collective rights, environmental regulations, waste management, and project management.

On arrival, we will be welcomed by Víctor Shiguango, PKR President, who will touch on the history, organizational structure, achievements and challenges of the PKR Governing Council. Following his introduction, the TNC-PRK team will present their current project "Community-Based Conservation of Freshwater Biodiversity in the Napo River Basin", allowing time for questions and discussions afterwards.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

We'll spend time walking through the montane forest, seeing first-hand the community-based monitoring system experience, before enjoying a traditional Amazonian meal and Kichwa traditional dance with community members.

Mid-afternoon, we will bid farewell and drive 1 hour to La Punta, where our group will board canoes for a 20-minute transfer to our lodge for the next three nights, La Casa del Suizo. One of the most established jungle lodges in Ecuador, we will spend the following days exploring the Napo River, the lush Amazon rainforest, and searching for wildlife.

Overnight at La Casa del Suizo, Ahuano, Ecuador

DAY 6 | Saturday, August 23rd, 2025

Amazon River

Breakfast is at your leisure this morning as our day begins slowly. Grab a coffee, sit out on your terrace in a hammock, and take in the exquisite views. Your TNC host will kick-off the day by introducing TNC's Amazon conservation strategy and touching on the significance of water-protected areas and reserves. Afterwards, gather your day bag as we head out for a guided rainforest walk. Lunch will be available upon our return to the lodge.

In the afternoon, choose to stay back at the lodge and spend time by the pool, or join the group for a guided kayak tour on the Napo River. There will be additional downtime prior to dinner onsite.

Overnight at La Casa del Suizo, Ahuano, Ecuador

DAY 7 | Sunday, August 24th, 2025

Amazon River

On our final day in the Amazon, we will spend another full day outdoors. In the morning, we will venture into the incredible primary forest in Misicocha, La Casa del Suizo's private reserve, accessible by a short canoe ride. Here, several walks with varying levels of difficulty will take you through the thick and humid jungle, crossing muddy paths and encountering all sorts of wildlife.

After lunch at the lodge, enjoy downtime before gathering to reflect on a week well spent in Ecuador together. Our final traditional Ecuadorian dinner will be enjoyed at the lodge.

ITINERARY OVERVIEW

Overnight at La Casa del Suizo, Ahuano, Ecuador

DAY 8 | Monday, August 25th, 2025

Departures from Quito

Pack your belongings and enjoy breakfast at leisure before returning to Quito, an approximately four-hour drive.

Departure flights may be booked for anytime after 5pm.

Costs

Total per person based on 10 guests in shared accommodation: \$8,160 USD

Notes:

Single Occupancy Cost: \$8,860

This cost includes:

Accommodations

All ground transportation

All meals beginning with lunch on Day 1 and ending with lunch on Day 8

All activities

All gratuities

All park entrance fees and permitting

All guides

Iconic Leader

Client hosts

This cost does not include:

Travel to and from trip start

Travel insurance

Incidentals and spa services

Alcohol, beyond the welcome and farewell reception

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

Payment and Cancellation Terms

As a reminder, all payment requests will be sent through Square. This may include the deposit, final payment, and any supplemental amounts for pre/post nights or extra transfers.

Deposit:

\$1,500 per person due at time of registration

- Cancellation within 7 days of registering: Deposit is 100% refundable
- Cancellation outside of the 7-day registration window: Deposit is non-refundable

Full Trip Payment:

Due 150 days prior to trip start

- Cancellation 150-136 days prior to trip start: Full trip cost is 50% refundable
- Cancellation 135-0 days prior to trip start: Full trip cost is non-refundable

If you need to cancel, please contact Iconic Adventures via concierge@iconicadventures.com.

Contact Information

As you plan for your journey with The Nature Conservancy and Iconic Adventures, please feel free to reach out with any questions. Our team is available to advise on paying invoices, arrival and departure details, packing lists, request mobility accommodations, and more.

You may reach us at concierge@iconicadventures.com. Note that emails sent over the weekend will be responded to on Monday at our earliest availability. Email is the preferred (and quickest!) way to reach us.

We are also available via phone: (877) 706-4266. Our team will respond within 24 hours during the work week. Please allow us time to respond before reaching out to The Nature Conservancy directly.

We look forward to traveling with you soon!

The Iconic Team

OUR TRAVEL VALUES

Access

Travel with renowned Conservancy experts and local partners for an exclusive, on-the-ground experience. You won't just see amazing places, you'll see how you are helping save them.

Impact

Witness how your commitment to our planet and your passion for conservation are making a difference in the wild places and communities you are impacting.

Knowledge

Learn how we are applying the latest cutting-edge science to affect global change and drive conservation.

Inspiration

Immerse yourself in local cultures and awe-inspiring landscapes to foster your own connection to our world.

Globally Minded

Elevate your understanding of our work by observing first-hand how TNC and our partners act locally and how we turn local results in to global impact by scaling solutions that work.

TNC TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

Group travel with The Nature Conservancy provides our donors with the opportunity to experience, alongside fellow supporters, the places TNC is working collaboratively to advance our conservation mission. Within these curated trips is the chance to engage with a community of active individuals and conservation staff who enjoy teaching and learning about the important conservation work we do and exploring the outdoors.

In order to ensure an enjoyable trip environment that supports learning and enrichment, we need your partnership. We ask that all participants review TNC's [Code of Conduct](#) prior to joining a trip. We also encourage you to carefully review all trip information to make an informed decision as to whether travel with TNC and a specific trip's characteristics and activities are right for you. Following the Code is an expectation and responsibility for everyone in the larger TNC community, including our staff, partners, vendors and supporters. **To that end, when registering for a TNC trip, you are agreeing to uphold the Code.**

TNC TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

While the entire Code of Conduct is important, the tenets that are especially relevant to TNC group travel are: respect for each other, respect for the world around us and acting with integrity. The following traveler expectations are intended to provide guidance for how those tenets translate to group travel but are by no means an exhaustive list. By participating in a TNC trip, you make a commitment to act in accordance with the TNC Code of Conduct to your fellow travelers, as well as to TNC staff, partners, community members and vendors. Any violation of or disregard for the Code of Conduct may result in removal from a trip and/or denial of future TNC travel participation.

1) RESPECT ALL PEOPLE, PLACES AND PERSPECTIVES.

Each participant on a trip is an integral part of the travel experience. Demonstrating respect and consideration is imperative not only for nature, local communities and cultures in the places we visit, but also for fellow travelers, staff, partners, community members and vendors. Everyone will bring different goals, backgrounds, experiences and abilities, and it is important that the group respect each individual's perspectives and needs throughout the trip. Sometimes trip participants become lifelong friends, and we encourage the camaraderie and community built through these shared experiences!

2) HARASSMENT IN ALL ITS FORMS, INCLUDING DISCRIMINATION AND MICROAGGRESSIONS, IS NOT TOLERATED.

There is no place on any TNC travel experience for disrespect to or bullying or intimidation of fellow travelers, TNC staff, partners, community members or vendors. All travelers agree to support an environment free from any behavior that could make an individual feel unsafe or diminish their dignity. If you experience or observe this type of behavior on a trip, please report it to your trip host or guide.

Examples of behavior that will not be tolerated include, but are not limited, to:

- Racial discrimination in any form (jokes, comments and/or actions)
- Verbal abuse of any traveler, staff, partner, community member or vendor
- Actions or statements that exclude or divide people because of their differences or differing perspectives
- Jokes about gender or sexual orientation or that include sexual innuendo
- Discriminatory actions or statements based on gender or sexual orientation
- Unwelcome physical contact or physical intimidation of a sexual nature

TNC TRAVELER EXPECTATIONS

3) ACT IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE APPLICABLE LAW OF THE LOCATION(S) OF THE TRIP.

Your trip location(s) may have different laws from your home location. You are expected to be aware of and adhere to the trip destination's laws throughout the experience, even when locations change throughout a trip.

4) EMPLOY AN ATTITUDE OF FLEXIBILITY.

At times, there may be changes in the itinerary when deemed necessary or advisable for the comfort and well-being of trip members. We appreciate your understanding, flexibility and adaptability in order to make the trip safe and enjoyable for you and everyone else.

TNC and its tour operators reserve the right to deny registration or remove a tour participant from a trip should such person's behavior, health or mental condition impact the safe and equitable operation of the trip.

Thank you for your attention and understanding, and please let a TNC travel representative know if you have any questions in advance of registering at travel@tnc.org.