Bountiful Bolivia: Birding & Nature in the High Andes Species List | October 6-24, 2026 with Naturalist Journeys

Compiled by guide Greg Butcher with local guide Raul Navi. Our clients included Brenda, Michele, Sukon, and Tom.

Bolivia has more bird species than any land-locked country in the world and ranks number six among all countries with 1,439 according to the latest eBird count. The high numbers result from great elevational and habitat diversity. South America is the "bird continent", and Indonesia is the only country outside of South America with more species than Bolivia. Mammal taxonomy is even more in flux than bird taxonomy, so Bolivia has between 300 and 420 species depending on the system used – that's a big difference! The American Society of Mammalogists rans Bolivia 11th in the world for mammal diversity; surprisingly, the USA ranks 8th on that list.

We started at low elevations near Santa Cruz and ended at high elevations north of La Paz. Bolivian birding is very productive by a wide variety of measures: we saw 408 bird species total. We saw nine of 16 endemic species and nine of 19 near-endemics. We enjoyed good food and comfortable places to stay. We visited three of Bolivia's major cities. As a too-brief summary, I found Santa Cruz to be modern, Cochabamba to be cultural, and La Paz to be old-school. That might reflect the hotels we stayed in more than the cities themselves because La Paz has a pretty modern gondola system for mass transit.

We found representatives of a wide variety of popular Neotropical families: among the non-passerines, we saw Greater Rhea, Huayco Tinamou, four species of guans, Razor-billed and Bare-faced Curassows (!), Speckled Chachalaca, Scissor-tailed Nightjar, Sunbittern, Andean Condor, Blue-crowned and Masked Trogons, Amazonian Motmot, Spot-backed Puffbird, Versicolored Barbet, five species of toucans (!), Red-legged Seriema (!), 16 parrot species, including three macaws (!), and 26 hummingbird species. Passerines are perching birds, and they are divided into Suboscines (usually with simple songs) and Oscines (songbirds, most of which learn complex songs). South America in general and Bolivia specifically are rich in the variety of Suboscines (105 species on our tour). We saw five species of antbirds, Olive-crowned Crescentchest, Rufous-faced Antpitta, three species of tapaculos (yes, seen!), six species of woodcreepers, Bolivian Earthcreeper, Cream-winged Cinclodes, nine spinetails, four canasteros, Yungas Manakin, Barred Fruiteater, Red-crested Cotinga, Barred Becard, and 55 flycatcher species (!). South America has relatively few songbird families that we don't share in the United States. We saw three euphonias, Dusky-green and Crested Oropendolas, and 62 (!) species of tanagers, a total of 128 songbird species. (Recent genetic studies show that the U.S. species we call "tanagers" are really cardinals, and the South American species of "cardinals" are really tanagers – how about that!)**BIRDS**

The eBird link below details the 408 species of birds our group observed during the tour. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many. You can also click on "Checklists" to see all the individual checklists with all the birds at each

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location. To recap, we found 9 species endemic to Bolivia, 9 near-endemics, 26 hummingbirds, 62 tanagers, and 55 flycatchers on the tour.

Following is a list of the mammals, reptiles and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

Family or Species Common Name *Scientific Name* — (Number of species)

MAMMALS: — (17)
Brown Agouti *Dasyprocta variegata* — We only saw one agouti, at the Red-fronted Macaw Reserve on the last day there.
Southern Amazon Red Squirrel *Sciurus spadiceus* — We had a Red Squirrel on our first day at the Santa Cruz Botanical Garden and again at Death Road (Camino de la Muerte) near the end of the tour.
Bolivian Squirrel *Sciurus ignitus* — We saw Bolivian Squirrels four days in a row, at Refugio Los Volcanes and near Samaipata.
Montane Guinea Pig *Cavia tschudii* — Our first Montane Guinea Pig was in the Polylepis Forest on Cerro Tunari near Cochabamba. Afterwards, we found one near La Paz and another near Lake Titicaca.
Common Yellow-toothed Cavy *Galea musteloides* — We saw cavies four days in a row, starting at Monte Blanco Retreat and continuing as we drove through the mountains getting closer to Cochabamba. Cavies and guinea pigs are very closely related.
Capybara *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris* — Capybaras are the world's largest rodents. They like to live near water. We saw them twice near the lake/pond at the Santa Cruz Botanical Garden.
Common Mountain Viscacha *Lagidium ahuacaense* – Was it our last new sighting on the tour? At high elevation, looking for tapaculos, we found a rabbit-like creature sitting calmly on top of a rock. Viscachas are rodents related to chinchillas.
Neotropical Otter *Lontra longicaudis* – We had one otter in a stream at the Santa Cruz Botanical Garden.
Lesser Grison *Galictis cuja* – We drove by a dead mammal near Siberia that Raul called a Huron. The common translation is ferret or weasel, but the species in this area is Lesser Grison, in the same family.
Tayra *Eira Barbara* – On our way to Death Road (Camino de la Muerte), a Tayra crossed in front of the van. Tayra is another species of weasel and a widespread Neotropical predator.
Black-tailed Marmoset *Mico melanurus* — Santa Cruz Botanical Garden was a haven for monkeys. We saw four species there. Marmosets are the smallest of the four, about 9 inches long with a foot-long tail, weighing only 3/4s of a pound. The face is black in addition to the tail; most of the body is pale brown.
White-eared Titi *Plecturocebus donacophilus* — Santa Cruz Botanical Garden. Titis are only a bit bigger than marmosets. In this species, males are about a foot long while females can be as big as 16 inches. They weigh about 1.7 pounds. This species is mostly gray with hints of brown.
Black-and-gold Howler *Alouatta caraya* – These howlers have black males and golden females. Males are 20-23 inches, and females are 16-20 inches. Males weigh 11-15 pounds, while females are 9-11 pounds.
Brown Capuchin *Sapajus apella* — We saw capuchins at Refugio Los Volcanes as well as at the botanical garden. They are light brown with black caps. They are the second-largest monkeys of the four we saw, 14-18 inches and 5-8 pounds (males heavier than females).
Crab-eating Fox *Cerdocyon thous* — We had great views of a foraging Crab-eating Fox in the flashlight in the dark at Refugio Los Volcanes.
Llama *Lama glama* — We had both llamas and alpacas on Cerro Tunari near Cochabamba. Llamas are larger and longer-necked than alpacas. Llama is the domesticated descendent of the guanaco, which can still be found in the wild from Peru through Bolivia to southern Argentina.
Alpaca *Vicugna pacos* — Cerro Tunari. Alpacas are the domesticated descendents of the vicuna. Vicunas can still be found from Peru through Bolivia to northern Chile and Argentina.

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REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: — (6)

Yellow-headed Sideneck Turtle *Podocnemis unifilis* — There were many Sideneck Turtles at the lake/pond at the Santa Cruz Botanical Garden.

Yacare Caiman *Caiman yacare* — We had several caimans at the botanical garden, most of them pretty small. Caimans are closely related to alligators and crocodiles.

Argentine Black-and-white Tegu *Salvator merianae* — Tegus are large New World lizards. They look a lot like Old World monitors, but they aren't closely related. We saw a large tegu at the Santa Cruz Botanical Garden and again at Refugio Los Volcanes.

Black Lava Lizard *Tropidurus melanopleurus* — We saw several Black Lava Lizards at the Red-fronted Macaw Reserve.

Giant Ameiva *Ameiva ameiva* — The ameiva is a bright green lizard that can grow to a foot and a half. We saw one on our first day at Refugio Los Volcanes.

Cane Toad *Rhinella marina* — The Cane Toad is widespread throughout Latin America and widely introduced elsewhere (tragically, to Australia). It gets its name from its use to reduce pests to sugar cane. We saw them at Refugio Los Volcanes and Red-fronted Macaw Reserve.