

Birding Reserva Las Tangaras, Ecuador

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Many readers will be familiar with the Ecuadorian town of Mindo as a birding destination. Here is a guide to birding one thrilling, conservation-focused reserve there.

It was January, and a light rain descended from the sky, as if to warn us of the inevitability of torrential downpours to come later in the season. I hauled my backpack out of the pick-up truck that brought my partner, Bridget, and I – as well as the owner and current stewards of Reserva Las Tangaras: Dusti, Ayla and Guillermo – here from the Ecuadorian town of Mindo. Guillermo paid the driver while I read the reserve sign:

'Bienvenidos a Reserva Las Tangaras.' Then we were off. The 2-km trail to our new home snaked left and right, worn away over time and constantly wet from the ubiquitous drizzle in the cloud forest. After dodging deceptively deep puddles of mud, I looked up, eager to detect some of the fascinating biodiversity that drew me here in the first place. As if on cue, a flock of five Choco Toucan *Ramphastos brevis* flew across the trail in single file.



1 Choco Toucan *Ramphastos brevis*, December 2019 (Kevin M. Shaw; [@kevin_thebirds](#)). This Chocó endemic is fairly common around higher elevations at the reserve. You'll often hear their croaking before you see them.

All photographs taken at Reserva Las Tangaras, Pichincha, Ecuador.