



## **Enchanting Ecuador – Birding the Andes to the Amazon. Detailed Itinerary**

### **Day 1: Arrival into Quito and Transfer to Hotel in Quito.**

Participants will be picked up from Quito International airport (UIO). Whatever your arrival time, you will be met by a transfer agent, who will take you to the hotel for this first night of the tour. This hotel is an approximate 10-minute drive from the airport.

Accommodation for the night. Hostería in Puenbo.

*No meals provided today as this is an arrival day for the tour.*

### **Day 2: Birding East of Quito to Papallacta Pass (various highlands habitats)**

After a 5:30 AM breakfast at our hotel, your guide will provide a brief orientation for the day, as the group will want to get moving and begin birding.

Morning birding plans for the highland species and will be targeted based upon desired species.

We will start the tour birding high elevation habitats. These will include páramo, grasslands, high mountain lakes, high mountain forests and more.

Along the Papallacta Pass highway, we should find a few high elevation species as we drive through a mix of elfin forest and grassland páramo. The former yields many high

elevation cloud-forest and treeline species such as Pearled Treerunner, White-throated Tyrannulet, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Blackish Tapaculo, Plain-colored Seedeater, Cinereous Conebill, among others. Beyond and above, the proper páramo yields Bar-winged Cinclodes, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Paramo Pipit and Plumbeous Sierra-Finch.

We will start birding the continental divide over the Papallacta Pass where we'll look to find several high elevation hummingbird species near the top, and at several other spots along the way. In the afternoon, we shall enjoy excellent hummingbird species such as Ecuadorian Hillstar, Purple-backed Thornbill and Blue-mantled Thornbill. We may get lucky with several other species as well.

We will also try some other strategic stops along the way over Papallacta pass. Some of the lake stops hopefully will yield Silvery Grebe, along with Andean Gull, Yellow-billed Pintail, Andean Teal and Ruddy Duck (The Andean subspecies *ferruginea*) You will also try to find Páramo Ground-Tyrant, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Giant Conebill, White-browed Spinetail, Many-striped Canastero, Tawny Antpitta and Pale-naped Brushfinch, among others.

As the morning progresses and we will be descending on the eastern slopes of the Andes, where we will have the chance to find species more common on the east slope of the Andes like Red-crested Cotinga, Spectacled Whitestart, Brown-bellied Swallow, Cinereous Conebill, Blue-backed Conebill, Black Flowerpiercer, Plain-collared Seedeater, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, and Hooded Siskin. Here we can also get better looks at Pearled Treerunner, White-crested Elaenia, White-banded Tyrannulet, Agile Tit-Tyrant, Mountain Wren, Citrine Warbler, Black-backed Bush-Tanager, the rare Masked Mountain-Tanager, and also Black-chested Mountain-Tanager, Viridian Metaltail, Shinning Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, White-chinned Thistletail and maybe even Páramo Seedeater.

For a well-deserved hot lunch, we will visit the Guango Resort grounds and facilities.



The Guango Resort and reserve is famous for hummingbird feeders and a short walk of 30 to 90 minutes through the reserve can add several new species to the tour.

The most difficult thing upon arrival will be peeling away from the hummingbirds to walk the reserve before the heat of the mid-day sun kicks in.

On the Guango Reserve grounds there is a nice little bridge where we can find Torrent Duck, though it may be a bit more difficult during mid-day. Other good species at the reserve include Glossy Flowerpiercer, Turquoise Jay, Northern Mountain Cacique, Plushcap, Slaty Brushfinch, Black-capped Hemispingus, Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager, White-capped Dipper, Masked Flowerpiercer, Andean Guan and Smoky Bush-Tyrant.

At Guango, the hummingbird feeders will be the most essential birding. While studying the hummingbird feeders at the lodge we should find Lesser (formerly Green) Violetear, Mountain Velvetbreast, Bronzy Inca, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Tourmaline Sunangel, Tyrian Metaltail, Long-tailed Sylph, White-bellied Woodstar, and Gorgeted Woodstar if lucky. We may also be fortunate here to see Glowing Puffleg and Mountain Avocetbill.



After lunch, we will move on toward San Isidro Lodge and Reserve about one hour away, giving us an early afternoon arrival time.

Afternoon plans will depend upon interest of participants and what species you have found to date. San Isidro has a great number of birding options including hummingbird feeders, several excellent birding trails here, and the road outside the lodge is often incredibly productive.

Everyone will enjoy the hummingbird feeders and will likely add to your list Bronzy Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Long-tailed Sylph, Gorgeted Woodstar and likely a few more species.

Birding along the road outside the lodge is often the best way to wrap up late afternoon birding here. Birding the road along the reserve often results in views of the stunning Highland Motmot and Andean Solitaire.

We'll spend the night at San Isidro Lodge, and here we should find their local owl species, the "San Isidro

Owl". This bird is similar to the Black-and White Owl, though has as yet been split into a separate species.

Accommodation for the night at San Isidro.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Day 3: Full Day Birding San Isidro**

You will again start early with breakfast at 5:30 AM, birding out the front door at 6:00 AM.

The montane cloud forest around this lodge supports similar species to the Cordillera de Guacamayos and the lodge is an ideal base from which to explore the area. Several features make the area attractive to birders immediately. Some potential trip birds likely to be added in the morning at San Isidro include White-capped Parrot, Powerful Woodpecker, Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Smoky Bush-Tyrant, Inca Jay, Black-billed Peppershrike, Saffron-crowned Tanager and dozens of other species.



Just outside the cabin door, the forest awaits, where mixed understory and canopy flocks seemingly drip from the foliage. You will hope to find Masked Trogon, Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Streak-capped Treehunter, Striped Treehunter, Streak-headed Antbird and Barred Antthrush. Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant and Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet are a few of the list of varied tyrannids to be found in the

mixed species flocks. Also be on the lookout for Black-chested Fruiteater, Dusky Piha, Pale-footed Swallow, Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia and Golden-collared Honeycreeper. A wonderful selection of colorful tanager species can be found, including Flame-faced Tanager and White-capped Tanager. The gregarious Northern Mountain Cacique and Subtropical Cacique should be found. These species, among many others, are residents here and are frequently seen by visiting birders.

San Isidro birds include a few rarities which may be found, including Highland Tinamou, Greater Scythebill, Bicolored Antvireo, Peruvian Antpitta, Giant Antpitta, White-rimmed Brushfinch and maybe White-faced Nunbird.

During one of the mornings we will certainly attend an antpitta feeding station to look for White-bellied Antpitta.

Around mid-day, you will have lunch and your guide will consider the best plan for the afternoon.

Afternoon birding could entail some time at the hummingbird feeders and birding the surrounding habitats. Some of the common species in the reserve are Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Pearled Treerunner, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Montane Woodcreeper, Ashy-headed Tyrannulet, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Streak-necked Flycatcher, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Smoke-colored Pewee, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Brown-capped Vireo, Russet-crowned Warbler, Capped Conebill, Bluish Flowerpiercer, White-sided Flowerpiercer, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Common Chlorospingus, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Black-eared Hemispingus, Northern Mountain Cacique, Subtropical Cacique and Russet-backed Oropendola.

Tonight the group is again at San Isidro.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper .*



#### **Day 4: Birding Loreto Road to Wildsumaco**

Another early start will be in order with breakfast at 5:30 AM, and birding starting at 6:00 AM.

Morning birding and departure plans depend upon species seen so far. Your bird guide will exercise sound judgement to maximize the species for the day.

As we drive toward Wildsumaco, we will make a few brief stops for birding along the Loreto Road. The road was formerly a great birding road; however, since the paving of this road, the birding is limited to only a few spots. Some of the birds you will be looking for along the way include Cliff Flycatcher, Blackish Nightjar, White-tailed Hillstar and the rare and hard-to-find Orange-breasted Falcon.

By late afternoon, we will arrive at Wildsumaco, a lodge dedicated to saving East Andean foothill forests, which will give us some time to study the different hummingbird feeders. We will be looking for Violet-headed Hummingbird, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Golden-tailed Sapphire, Ecuadorian Piedtail, Peruvian Racket-tail, Napo Sabrewing, Wire-crested Thorntail, Many-spotted Hummingbird, Black-throated Brilliant, Gould's Jewelfront, and the seasonal Green-fronted Lancebill and Rufous-vented Whitetip.

Tonight the group will stay at Wildsumaco.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*



#### **Days 5 & 6: Two Full Days Birding Wildsumaco**

You will spend two full days birding at Wildsumaco and surrounding areas. The Piha and FACE trails make for terrific birding walks, and one of the two will start the day.

- On Piha, we'll hope to find Gray-tailed Piha, Buff-throated Tody-Tyrant, Chestnut-crowned Gnateater, Black-streaked Puffbird and Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail.



Other trails in the area offer additional birding. Ideally, you will also get looks at some super skulkers, like Plain-backed Antpitta and Rufous-breasted Antthrush.

- We likely find time for the FACE trail today. There you will look for Short-tailed Antthrush, White-tipped Sicklebill and White-capped Manakin. Other fantastic birds here include Andean Laniisoma, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, Fiery-throated Fruiteater and Yellow-throated Spadebill. At night, you will try for Band-bellied Owl, Black-banded Owl and Vermiculated Screech-Owl.

At noon you will have lunch back at the very comfortable Wildsumaco Lodge. Wildsumaco is surrounded by excellent birding forest, and your guide will find many opportunities to fill out the birding day. There will very likely be a need for a few hours of siesta and lunch at mid-day, and after that there will be plenty of birding time remaining here.

Other birds you will seek here include Coppery-chested Jacamar, Channel-billed Toucan, Military Macaw, Ochre-breasted Antpitta, Northern White-crowned Tapaculo, White-backed Fire-eye, Ecuadorian Tyrannulet, Red-billed Tyrannulet, Olive-chested Flycatcher, Shrike-like Cotinga (very rare), Blue-rumped Manakin. Rufous-naped Greenlet and Chestnut-breasted Wren.

For two nights the group will stay at Wildsumaco.

*Meals in Package for these two days: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Day 7: AM Birding Wildsumaco; PM Transfer to Amazon Basin with Some Birding Upon Arrival**

You will again start early (breakfast at 5:30 AM) and birding out the door at 6:00 AM..

We will enjoy some of the wonderful birding trails during the morning here, likely trying some spots close to the lodge. Target birds will include Buckley's Forest-Falcon, Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail, Spot-winged Parrotlet, Foothill Screech-Owl, Band-bellied Owl, Dusky Spinetail, Foothill Elaenia, Black-and-white Tody-Flycatcher, Fulvous-breasted Flatbill, Yellow-throated Spadebill, Scarlet-breasted Fruiteater, Fiery-throated Fruiteater, Shrike-like Cotinga (very rare), Gray-tailed Piha, Blue-rumped Manakin, Golden-collared Honeycreeper and Olive Finch.

After lunch and during the hot part of the day we will begin our drive to the city of Coca – also known as Puerto Francisco de Orellana. Somewhere along the drive, and time permitting, we will look for birds along some of the grassy habitats in search of Caquetá Seedeater, Chestnut-bellied Seedeater and Lesser (Chestnut-bellied) Seed-Finch. You should arrive in the city of Coca no later than 4:30 to 5:00 PM and begin an eventful boat ride to Yarina Lodge on the Rio Napo.





This boat trip to Yarina should allow us views of Capped Heron, Cocoi Heron, Striated Heron, Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, Osprey, Plumbeous Kite, Black Caracara, Yellow-headed Caracara, Collared Plover, Laughing Gull (seasonal), Yellow-billed Tern, Large-billed Tern, Black Skimmer, Greater Ani, Ringed Kingfisher, Amazon Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, Swallow-winged Puffbird, Drab Water Tyrant, White-winged Swallow, Gray-breasted Martin, Brown-chested Martin, White-banded Swallow, Violaceous Jay, Shiny Cowbird, Giant Cowbird, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Russet-backed Oropendola and Crested Oropendola.

Accommodation for the night. Yarina Lodge.

*Meals in Package for Today: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

### **Days 8, 9 & 10: Birding Yarina Lodge and Reserve**

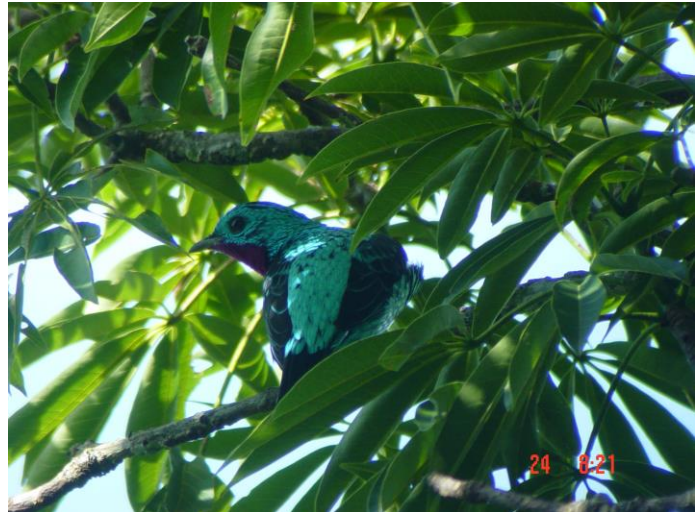
The Yarina Lodge is owned and managed by Ecuadorian Fernando San Miguel and his family, who also operate the Amazon Dolphin Lodge. Yarina is the lodge nearest the town of Coca. This lodge is reached by a boat along the Napo River and down a Southern tributary of the Napo, the Manduro River in the Orellana province at an elevation of 250 to 300 meters above sea level. The growing bird list for the lodge is a little over 300 species. Here there is some Varzea forest in the area, and most of the habitat is rolling Terra Firme. Though the Yarina does not have the largest list, there are several specialty species well worth seeing here. The Yarina Lodge protects some 550 hectares of forest.

During your stay in Yarina we will develop a routine of early morning rising which will mean having breakfast no later than 5:30 AM every day, with probably an afternoon down time to rest before resuming your birding expeditions at about 3:30 to 4:00 PM. This will be dependent on weather conditions and your guide's good judgment.

The Manduro River that feeds the mighty Napo and flows past the Yarina Lodge is a good place to look for Sungrebe, Sunbittern, Green-and-rufous Kingfisher and American Pygmy Kingfisher. The artificial lake just above the lodge has a boardwalk, where the



rare Orange-eyed Flatbill occurs. A pair of Zigzag Herons can be seen along the stream where this artificial lake flows into the Manduro River.



The Manduro River itself provides good birding excursions for birds other than those mentioned above. During one of the days at the Yarina Reserve you will have a dugout canoe ride to explore the upstream habitat along the Manduro River, birding at leisure as you slowly move through the forest. Some of the species to look for are Cinereous Tinamou, Slate-colored Hawk, Gray-necked Wood-Rail, Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl, Great Potoo, Rufous-breasted Hermit, Fork-tailed Woodnymph, Amazonian White-tailed (Green-backed) Trogon, Blue-crowned Trogon, Long-billed Woodcreeper, Moustached Antwren, Spot-winged Antbird, Plumbeous Antbird, White-shouldered Antbird, Spot-backed Antbird, Masked Crimson Tanager and Gray-headed Tanager. Even though there are no big stands of *Mauritia* Palms, the uncommon Point-tailed Palmcreeper can be seen upstream from the lodge along the Manduro River and we will surely give it a try.

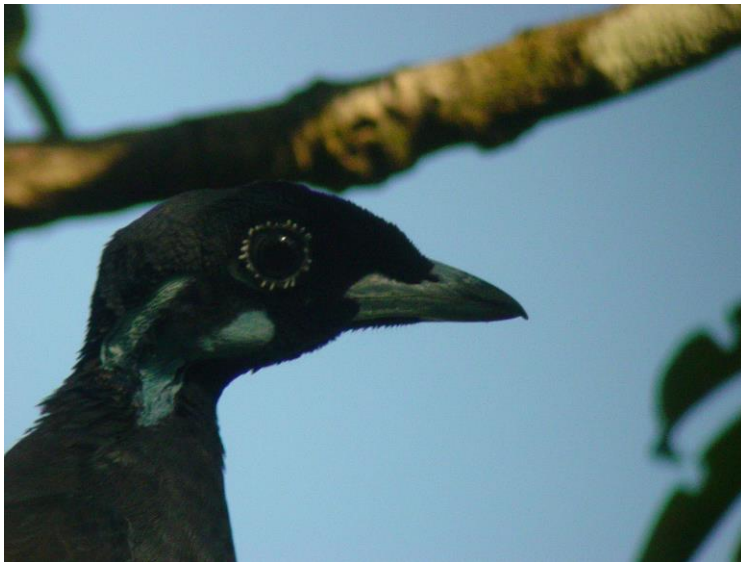
Downstream from the lodge along the Manduro River there is another artificial lake where you will take a short dugout canoe ride to look for birds from a short viewing tower. There are no specialties, but many of the commoner varzea type habitat species occur here, e.g., Wattled Jaçana, Scarlet-crowned Barbet, Gray-capped Flycatcher and Thrush-like Wren. This artificial lake will be worth visiting during one of your afternoons.

One of the days you will undertake an excursion to some river islands along the Napo River just down from Yarina Lodge.

The weather pattern in the eastern Andes, and stormy rains over the headwaters, can force changes in water level flowing down the mighty Napo River. This continuous change in water level causes constant movement of sediments along the river banks.

This creates sandbanks that can last through to the next rainy season. Some of these sandbanks can also become islands of various sizes in the middle of the river. At times the water channel is modified to the point that these sand islands keep growing larger in size and begin to be colonized by pioneering vegetation. Certain islands are washed away yearly, while others last for years. This process allows a slow change in the habitats through succession of the dominant vegetation that begins with low-growing early succession scrub, to Gynerium cane, which in turns give away to the Cecropia dominated habitat. Some of the oldest islands reach the point where they are dominated by tall forest akin to that of the Varzea.

All the different stages of the various river islands are the sporadic homes of a group of specialized bird species that live only in these river islands. Local guides and outboard motor operators know the best islands to look for some of these birds. Some islands have trails that have been cut to allow you walk on them with the purpose of birdwatching.



Today's visit to one or two of these river islands will give you the chance to look for Slender-billed Kite, Plumbeous Kite, Great Black Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Short-tailed Hawk, Black Caracara, Gray-breasted Crake, Pale-vented Pigeon, Ruddy Ground-Dove, Little Cuckoo, Ladder-tailed Nightjar, Olive-spotted Hummingbird, Swallow-wing, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Little Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Lesser Hornero, Dark-breasted Spinetail, Plain-crowned Spinetail, White-bellied Spinetail, Parker's Spinetail, Barred Antshrike, Castelnau's Antshrike, Black-and-white Antbird, Mouse-colored Tyrannulet, Mottle-backed Elaenia, River Tyrannulet, Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant, Spotted Tody-Flycatcher, Fuscous Flycatcher, Drab Water-Tyrant, White-winged Swallow, Brown-chested Martin, Gray-breasted Martin, Blue-and-white Swallow, White-banded Swallow, Southern Rough-winged Swallow, Orange-headed Tanager, Grayish Saltator, Lesser Seed-Finch, Large-billed Seed-Finch, Caquetá Seedeater, Lined Seedeater, Lesson's Seedeater (Nov-Apr.), Black-and-white Seedeater, Chestnut-bellied Seedeater, Yellow-browed Sparrow and Oriole Blackbird.

The Napo River excursion will be a good opportunity to look for Neotropic Cormorant, Cocoi Heron, Striated Heron, Capped Heron, Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, King Vulture, Plumbeous Kite, Great Black Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Black Caracara, Yellow-headed Caracara, Bat Falcon, Common Piping-Guan, Southern Lapwing, Pied Plover, Collared Plover, Large-billed Tern, Yellow-billed Tern, Sand-colored Nighthawk, Ringed Kingfisher, Amazon Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, White-eared Jacamar, Swallow-wing and Chestnut-eared Araçari.



The various Terra Firme trails, particularly the main trail from the lodge, will provide a great opportunity to look for birds like Marbled Wood-Quail, Ruddy Quail-Dove, a roosting Long-tailed Potoo, White-bearded Hermit, Straight-billed Hermit, Black-tailed Trogon, Amazonian Violaceous Trogon, Spotted Puffbird, Brown Nunlet, Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, Fasciated Antshrike, Undulated Antshrike, Plain-winged Antshrike, Mouse-colored Antshrike, Plain-throated Antwren, Long-winged Antwren, Banded Antbird, Black-faced Antbird, Yellow-browed Antbird, Lunulated Antbird, Scale-backed Antbird, Black-spotted Bare-eye, Striated Antthrush, Black-faced Antthrush, White-eyed Tody-Tyrant, Screaming Piha, White-crowned Manakin, Blue-crowned Manakin, Wing-barred Piprites, Southern Nightingale-Wren and Musician Wren.

Many canopy dwelling species can be seen along forest edges and several viewing points. Other bird possibilities include King Vulture, Double-toothed Kite, White Hawk, Black-faced Hawk, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Blue-and-yellow Macaw, Black-headed Parrot, Mealy Amazon, Black-bellied Cuckoo, Ocellated Poorwill, Pale-rumped Swift, White-necked Puffbird, Pied Puffbird, White-fronted Nunbird, Many-banded Aracari, Lettered Aracari, Ivory-billed Aracari, Golden-collared Toucanet, Channel-billed Toucan, White-throated Toucan, Scale-breasted Woodpecker, Chestnut-winged Hookbill, Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper, Spot-winged Antshrike, Pygmy Antwren, Gray Antbird, Golden-faced Tyrannulet, Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher, Zimmer's Flatbill, Eastern Sirystes, Grayish Mourner, Black-capped Becard, Plum-throated Cotinga, Spangled Cotinga, Bare-necked Fruitcrow, Dusky-capped Greenlet, Purple Honeycreeper, Green Honeycreeper, Blue Dacnis, Black-faced Dacnis, Yellow-bellied Dacnis, Opal-rumped Tanager, Opal-crowned Tanager, Paradise Tanager, Green-and-gold Tanager, Yellow-

bellied Tanager, Yellow-backed Tanager, Flame-crested Tanager, Slate-colored Grosbeak, Casqued Oropendola, Green Oropendola and Red-rumped Cacique.

Accommodation for these nights will be at Yarina Lodge.

*Meals in Package for these days: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*



**Day 11: AM Birding Yarina Lodge; PM Birding Transfer Boat Ride to Coca.**

After your regular early start with breakfast at 5:30 AM, your last birding morning in Yarina will be devoted to finding any birds we may have missed from the Amazon Rain Forest here. Birding in these lowland forests will last through early afternoon. At about 5:00 PM the group depart by boat to Coca for our last night stay in the Amazon.

Accommodation for this night at our Hotel in Coca.

*Meals in Package for these days: Breakfast, Lunch and Supper.*

**Day 12: Early Morning Transfer to Coca Airport with Arrivals Back into Quito during mid/morning; Final Lunch as a Group; PM International Flights Departures from Quito.**

The group will be flying from Coca to Quito in the early morning will arrive in Quito mid-morning.

Upon arrival in Quito, the group will find a lunch spot in the Quito airport. After an early lunch, participants will plan for international flights returning home.