

Colonia Birding & Heritage Experience

Colonia del Sacramento is a must-visit destination in Uruguay, combining rich cultural heritage with rewarding birding opportunities.



Southern Screamer. By Bill Pohley.

Located on the western coast of the country along the Río de la Plata, this small colonial city is one of the oldest in Uruguay and has been designated a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Founded by the Portuguese in 1680 and contested multiple times by the Spanish, Colonia offers a unique blend of architectural styles, reflected in its historic quarter with cobblestone streets, colorful houses, lanterns, and charming plazas.

Beyond its cultural appeal, Colonia also features a variety of natural habitats of great interest for birdwatching. Marshes, native woodland patches, open green areas, and the shores of the Río de la Plata support a diverse assemblage of species. During a full-day outing, it is possible to record **over**

80 bird species, combining scenic exploration with excellent birding in a relaxed setting.



Old Town of Colonia del Sacramento by Rafael Tosi

Full-Day Option

Maximum duration: 8 hours

This itinerary combines cultural scenery with a diversity of accessible habitats, providing a relaxed yet productive birding experience with excellent opportunities for observation and photography.

Pick-up is arranged from any location within the city of Colonia. For guests staying elsewhere, such as Montevideo, the itinerary can be adjusted accordingly by incorporating additional travel time. From Colonia, the maximum driving time between birding sites does not exceed approximately 20 minutes, allowing for an efficient and well-paced day in the field.

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Uruguay

The tour begins near the historic quarter, where a coastal park along the shores of the Río de la Plata offers an excellent introduction to the region's birdlife. This area typically holds a variety of waterbirds, gulls, and terns, along with common urban and edge species.

We then visit nearby coastal marshes, where a richer wetland community can be found. These habitats are productive for waterfowl, herons, ibises, and rails, and may also produce species such as Southern Screamer, Wattled Jacana, and a diversity of marsh specialists.

Continuing along the scenic coastal road (Rambla de Colonia), we explore areas of native shrubland and open habitats. These environments are ideal for observing passerines, including spinetails, tyrant flycatchers, and seedeaters, as well as additional waterbirds along the shoreline.

The final stop takes place at the Riachuelo Yacht Port area, located a short drive east of the city. This site combines native woodland, river margins, and open areas, offering a different set of species. Here, it is possible to encounter a variety of woodland birds, including woodpeckers, tanagers, and flycatchers, along with species associated with the river.

After a picnic lunch, a short walk through the woodland allows for further birding opportunities before returning to Colonia.

Half-Day Option

Maximum duration: 5 hours

For guests with limited time in Colonia del Sacramento, we offer a half-day birding experience designed to maximize efficiency without compromising observation quality.

Two tailored approaches are available. The first maintains a diversity of habitats by reducing the time spent at each location, allowing for a well-rounded introduction to the region's wetlands, coast, and woodlands within a shorter schedule. The second option focuses exclusively on the sites most relevant to the client's wish list, prioritizing target species and specific habitat preferences.

The order of visits and site selection are carefully planned according to seasonal conditions, bird activity, and logistical considerations, ensuring the most productive use of available time.

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Marshes and native trees along the coasts of Río de la Plata in Colonia del Sacramento. By Rafael Tosi.

Logistics & Comfort

- **Minimal travel time between sites** — generally no more than 20 minutes by vehicle, maximizing time in the field.
- **Low level of physical activity.** Most birding takes place on firm ground, including paved roads and compact gravel tracks. Short walks are occasionally required — typically only a few dozen meters. Several observations are also made from comfortable stationary viewpoints on flat terrain, allowing guests to enjoy excellent birding opportunities without physical effort.
- **Clean restroom facilities** — scheduled stops provide access to clean and well-maintained restrooms.
- **Picnic lunch** — is enjoyed in a comfortable setting under the shade of native trees, with access to tables.