Title

A team from the leading US bird tour company, Field Guides, are competing in the third Peru birding competition, aka the World Birding Rally, for a week from December 3. Field Guides leaders Jesse Fagan and Dan Lane are joining Peruvian ornithologist Fernando Angulo, alongside four other teams, and Field Guides have generously agreed to raise funds for BirdLife, with a particular focus on the Endangered hummingbird Marvellous Spatuletail *Loddigesia mirabilis*.

This stunning hummingbird is endemic to Northern Peru and is considered globally Endangered. It was chosen as a flagship species for a campaign to protect the páramo grasslands and forests in the Tilacancha and Cruzhuayco river watersheds, benefitting the communities in the rural areas of San Isidro de Maino and Levanto, and the residents of Chachapoyas town. Led by the BirdLife collaborator in Peru, APECO, the campaign intends to support the Private Conservation Area of Tilacancha. All the funding raised during the challenge will go towards supporting the project on the ground.

Both Dan Lane and Jesse Fagan have long experience of guiding Field Guides tours in Peru. Dan has been visiting the country since 1996, and is a co-author and artist on the acclaimed field guide, Birds of Peru. He is also a research associate at the Louisiana State University Natural History Museum. Jesse trained as a mathematician and has been birding fanatically since his teens, with a long history of bird work in Texas and Central America, especially in El Salvador. For two decades, Fernando Angulo has been active in conservation at home in Peru, both studying the endangered White-winged Guan Penelope albipennis, and as one of the principal investigators of the Centro de Ornitologia y Biodiversidad (CORBIDI) in Lima.

Reporting from the field ahead of planning the race, Fernando notes that it has been raining heavily, so the birding is bound to be challenging in every way. The route starts in lowland rainforest near Madre de Dios, before climbing over the eastern slopes of the Andes, and finishes in the extraordinary Urubamba Valley that lies below the great terraces and ruins of Macchu Picchu. With Dan reporting a staggering potential list of more than 800 species, the race promises more birds in a week than most of us can hope to accumulate in a year. In December 2012, the winning team saw 493, and in earlier this year, in June, cracked 636!

Anyone who would like to sponsor Dan, Jesse and Fernando can do so via the Field Guides website. BirdLife also owes thanks to Peggy Watson, Jan Pierson, Richard Webster, and the Field Guides home team for this support, and for their earlier commitment to BirdLife's Preventing Extinctions Programme in Latin America.