

Sandoval Lake Lodge (2D / 1N)

Sandoval Lake is one of the most beautiful lakes in Peru; a great body of water protected in the Tambopata National Reserve. It is home of a family of Giant Otters in danger of extinction, but we do have an excellent chance to see them during our stay. The banks of the lake are populated by jungle and flooded Mauritia Palm forests, which are home to monkeys from six different species, as well as with a huge variety of colorful birds.

This visit to the Tambopata National Reserve allows us to look in Sandoval Lake and the surrounding area where we will see a wealth of wildlife in the reserve and learn about the Amazon rainforest. Our program includes walks through the forest trails by day, night, and through boat excursions around the margins of this extraordinarily beautiful lake.

Itinerary

Day 1: Puerto Maldonado to Sandoval Lake. Our staff will welcome you at the airport in Puerto Maldonado and drive you through the city to the boat dock on the Tambopata River. Here we board a motorized canoe and head towards the nearby confluence of the mighty Madre de Dios River, the source of the Amazon tributary. Just 30 minutes down river is landing at the port that will lead to Sandoval Lake.

We walk a trail of 3 Km (2 mi), stopping to watch birds and butterflies, up to a narrow canal boats. From there, we navigate the flooded forest of palm trees that leads to the open waters of this peaceful lake. Our crew will row the boats across to the lodge (motors are prohibited on the lake). Under the surface of the lake we may see the huge Paiche (an Amazonian fish that can weigh up to 100Kg/220lbs). Or you may hear strange and unsettling screams and see heads peering from the lake surface, which will mark our first encounter with *Pteronura brasiliensis*, the Giant Otter of the Amazon.

After a brief rest, we start again by boat to explore the entire eastern end of the lake, following the sound of hundreds of Blue-and-Yellow and Red-Breasted Macaws as they return to the palm forest for the night. Our view from the boat often allows close and extensive encounters with birds and mammals. In Sandoval Lake the Capuchin Monkey, in particular, has nearly lost its fear of humans.

We return to the lodge at dusk for dinner. Afterwards we take the boat again, in search of caimans, which are now extremely rare in the Amazon, but are still common in this protected lake. They grow up to 4m long, and dispute their share of fishing with the otters. On clear nights we go by boat farther into the lake for a view of the vast southern sky, unobstructed, with its magnificent views of constellations and the Milky Way. **(Box Lunch, D)**

Day 2: Sandoval Lake. Sandoval Lake to Puerto Maldonado. After breakfast we make a final paddle through palm swamps on the west end of the lake. On the clearer mornings a glorious sunrise and its reflection can be seen in the lake. We return to the Madre de Dios River and head towards Puerto Maldonado and from there on to the airport. **(B).**

Please note that itineraries may vary slightly to maximize wildlife viewing, depending on the reports of our local researchers and experienced naturalist guides.