Due to a request from a participant, and unanimous interest among the group, we modified the itinerary a little to visit an Oilbird Cave near El Chontal, where we saw a number of these enigmatic, alien-like birds.
INTRODUCTION:
It had been almost exactly a year since my last Ecuador Andes Introtour, and so I was only too happy to be guiding the first of 2017. We normally run at least four of these tours each year for good reason: almost 340 bird species recorded in just 6 days, to an extremely reasonably priced destination that gives rise to an almost unmatched bird/dollar ratio. Money aside, the quality of birds we find on this trip is also impressive, as we typically find some of the best birds in South America (as we did on this tour), like Andean Cock-of-the-rock, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Toucan Barbet and Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, (all of which are possible on the first birding day of the tour); plus many of the most colorful Choco endemic bird species like, Velvet-purple Coronet, Violet-tailed Sylph, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia, Glistening-green and Moss-backed Tanagers, and other highly sought after species, such as White-capped Dipper, Golden-headed Quetzal, SEVEN species of Antpittas (5 of which in a single morning at Refugio Paz de las Aves), and around 40 species of hummingbird. The High Andes Extension (just TWO extra days) adds 40-50 birds to the list including several of the regular favorites for the entire tour like, Andean Condor, Torrent Duck, Andean Ibis, Giant Hummingbird, and Masked Mountain-Tanager.

We saw all that, and many more; at the end we registered 381 species out of which 33 were heard only and just 5 were seen only by the tour leader. We visited renowned birding areas like the Tandayapa Valley, Yanacocha Reserve, Milpe and Silanche Bird Sanctuaries, Mashpi Amagusa Reserve, the unique Refugio Paz de las Aves, the cold but super Papallacta Pass and the Condor Capital of Ecuador, Antisana. Logistically, this tour is easy, since for almost the entirety of the main tour we use the wonderful Tandayapa Bird Lodge as a base to explore the surrounding Choco Region, visiting different elevations every day; so this means unpacking only once.
TOUR SUMMARY: Main Tour (NORTHWEST slope of the Andes)

Jan. 23: Yanacocha and the Old Nono-Mindo Road: The tour started with a pre-dawn departure from our hotel in Quito towards the highland reserve of Yanacocha, located at 3350m/11,000ft elevation. On our way there, we were surprised by one of the most beautiful sceneries of the tour as just at dawn we saw the spectacular landscape with the city of Quito waking up, framed by two of the four highest snow-capped volcanoes in Ecuador, Cayambe (5790m/19,000ft) on the left and Antisana (5704m/18,714ft) on the right. Cayambe is the only snow-capped volcano in the world where the equator cuts across the summit.

We did a couple stops before getting to the reserve, birding some open areas, grasslands and farms for Black-tailed Trainbearer, Black Flowerpiercer, White-browed Spinetail, a crazy Tawny Antpitta running on the open road in front of the bus, Yellow-breasted Brushfinch, Black-crested Warbler, and the scarce Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet.

Once in Yanacocha, we started the longish walk along the Trocha Inca, a 3km/1.7mile-long trail that is mainly flat and level, so the altitude did not affect us too much. We soon started to find several of the targets for the area including, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Gray-browed Brush-Finch, the scarce Golden-crowned Tanager, Superciliared Hemispingus, Blue-backed Conebill, White-banded and White-throated Tyrannulets, and a few more songbirds. We were startled by yet another antpitta running in the open, this time a Rufous Antpitta for which we had tried previously achieving only unsatisfactory views. The area of the hummingbird feeders at the end of the main trail was quite active and produced Golden-breasted and Sapphire-vented Pufflegs, Buff-winged Starfrontlets, Tyrian Metaltails, Great Sapphirewings, and a pair of the much-wanted Sword-billed Hummingbird.

Andres heard a strange song emanating from the narrower trails behind the feeder area, and so decided to take the group there; a weird song, not because it was something wrong with the sound itself but because it belonged to an owl that is not particularly active by day, especially on a sunny morning close to noon. I initially thought that another person was playing a tape from there, since I saw another guide going with his group in that direction but it made no sense that he was playing that song so I decided to give it a try and play. We then
were very happily surprised when a couple of the normally only nocturnal White-throated Screech-Owls came raging towards us and perched relatively close (photo below by one of the participants, Pat). This was superb, for sure the bird of the day and one of the best of the trip; of course I did not bring my camera along with me on that walk, typical.
After this spectacular encounter we just headed back towards the trailhead, where we had lunch and afterwards spent some time at the hummingbird feeders were we saw another species, this one was mentioned also as one of the favorites for the trip, the outstanding Shining Sunbeam (photo below).

The afternoon was spent traveling from Yanacocha to Tandayapa through a well-known birding area, the Old Nono-Mindo Road. We did numerous stops along the way, and managed to find cool things like Hooded and Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers, the always desired White-capped Dipper, the riparian Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant, and a few other passerines (mainly tanagers) traveling in small mixed flocks, out of which the not-always-seen Black-capped Tyrannulet was worth mentioning.

We arrived to our final destination for the day, the famous and wonderful Tandayapa Bird Lodge; it was late in the afternoon by then, but we still had time to become speechless at the hummingbird feeder patio where in 1 5minutes we scored 15 species of these incredible creatures. My personal favorites were Violet-tailed Sylph, Booted Racket-tail, Brown Inca, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Western Emerald and the minuscule Purple-throated Woodstar. All the participants were a bit overwhelmed by the non-stop frenetic activity on the feeders so several stayed until late trying to photograph them.
Jan. 24: Tandayapa Bird Lodge and the Lower Tandayapa Valley: One of the coolest experiences we undertook on this trip was visiting, right at dawn, the forest blind (or hide), just 8 minutes walk from the main lodge building. This wooden hut allowed us to see at very close range several skulking and normally hard-to-see birds that come to feed on the compost and moth trap placed in front of the blind. Three-striped and Russet-crowned Warblers were typically the most confiding and even perched on the screens right in front of us at less than 2 feet from our faces. Chestnut-capped Brushfinch and Zeledon’s Antbird on the other hand, hopped on the forest floor just inches away from our feet. This is also one of the best spots to see the subtly ornate White-throated Quail-Dove that feeds on the compost every morning, which we did. There were a couple of *fumariids* that also came to eat moths, the small and normally difficult Spotted Barbtail and the hulking Steak-capped Treehunter.

We returned to the lodge for breakfast, and from the table saw a pair of Rufous Motmots that visit the lodge feeders daily; they were chased off by a family of Crimson-rumped Toucanets. After the meal, we started walking down the Tandayapa Bird Lodge driveway and only moved a hundred feet when a large flock came in. For a solid 90 minutes, we did not move from that single spot where we found, Metallic-green, Golden-naped, Flame-rumped, Beryl-spangled, Golden, Silver-throated, and Black-capped Tanagers, Black-winged Saltator, Red-headed Barbet, Barred Becard, Tricolored Brushfinch, Ornate Flycatcher, Black-and-white and Canada Warblers, Slate-throated Redstart, White-winged Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Golden Grosbeak, Orange-bellied and Thick-billed Euphonias, and a beautiful Crimson-mantled Woodpecker.

Only by mid-morning were we able to move down and walk towards the main access road, road where we found a few other flocks that held a couple of new birds like Streak-headed Antbird (photo on left), Rufous-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Uniform Antshrike, and Lineated Foliage-gleaner, among others. It was a bright sunny open day so raptors were out and about; we found a Short-
tailed Hawk soaring at close range, a swift passing Double-toothed Kite, plus more distant Broad-winged and Barred Hawks.

During the afternoon we visited the upper valley to pick up some birds special to that area, in the hope that we would see them and then free up time later on the tour for other sites. We managed to find a couple of the targets for the site like the unique Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan and the colorful Toucan Barbet. We also found Streaked Tuftedcheek, Striped Treehunter, Spillman’s Tapaculo, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Turquoise Jay, Speckle-faced Parrot and more. Close to dusk, we moved down the valley towards a stakeout place for Lyre-tailed Nightjar, which we saw when it was getting dark, but before we saw that, a Ringed Kingfisher flew low over our heads and a little more distantly a Bat Falcon was seen flying back and forth along the valley.

Jan. 25: Mashpi and Amagusa Reserve: We visited the Mashpi area today which is located about 90 minutes from Tandayapa, and which holds some very localized birds, many of which are endemic to the Choco Bioregion. One of the first birds we saw that day was a vocally active Barred Forest-Falcon that we managed to call in from the distance and a couple times it came out and quickly hid again until it finally flew above our heads to disappear inside the dense foliage behind us. Soon after, we started to find some of the birds that make this area famous; a lone Moss-backed Tanager was perched atop an exposed tree, and Orange-breasted Fruiteaters were calling all around us until we managed to track one down. Only one of the participants managed to see a White-tipped Sicklebill that was feeding on Heliconia flowers, and afterwards we ran into a flock that was a bit difficult to work on due to the dense foliage of the narrow trail we needed to move in to reach the birds; only quick views were achieved of the scarce Brown-billed Scythebill, the same with Golden-bellied (Choco) Warblers, Yellow-collared Chlorophonias, Glistening-green Tanagers, and Rufous-rumped Antwren; happily we were going to see a few of these much better later.

Midmorning, we visited the feeders of the locally owned Amagusa Reserve where we found Velvet-purple Coronets (photo on left), Empress Brilliants, Green
Thorntails, and White-whiskered Hermits at the feeders, plus a female and male Golden-collared Honeycreeper stealing the sugar water from the same feeders. Near that area one of the participants spotted a pair of perched up Rose-faced Parrots; this is a quite localized and scarce species so I was happy that we managed such great scope views.

The rest of the day was spent birding the forested road downhill, where we made many stops and found nice birds like, Striped Woodhaunter, Blue-tailed (Choco) and White-tailed Trogons, Scarlet-rumped Caciques, Golden-winged Manakin, Gray-and-gold, Rufous-throated, Ochre-breasted and Flame-faced Tanagers, Black-billed Peppershrike, Bay and Whiskered Wrens, Olive-crowned Yellowthroat, Bronze-winged Parrots, Maroon-tailed Parakeets and many more. One of my favorite birds of the area cooperated quite well on a stakeout site, in fact we saw two individuals of the Kookaburra-like Barred Puffbird (photo below).
Jan. 26: Upper Tandayapa Valley and Oilbird Cave near Chontal: We decided to visit the upper parts of the valley after some of the special birds of that elevation (2200m/7200ft). We did not find many flocks, but we found most of what we were seeking in the few flocks we did find. I was happy particularly with a very responsive Andean Pygmy-Owl that we managed to call in from some distance and which posed for some digiscoped pictures, like the one below.

Apart from this not too commonly seen bird, we found a flock with Grass-green and Blue-capped Tanagers, Powerful Woodpecker, Rusty-winged Barbtail, short views of the scarce Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Rufous Spinetail, Green-and-black Fruiteater, Sharpe’s Wren, and a vocal group of Spot-fronted Swifts that flew by a couple times above our heads. This kept us entertained for most of the morning but it was getting late and we needed to start a long ride towards the Oilbird cave, so we decided to call it a morning and start the drive.

Already in lower elevations past the town of Gualea Cruz we decided to stop to have our boxed lunches at a nice vantage point, from where we saw Swallow Tanagers, Masked Tityras, Choco and Southern Beardless Tyrannulets, Golden-rumped Euphonias, Squirrel Cuckoo, and a few of the common open country flycatchers of that elevation, like Snowy-throated Kingbird, Boat-billed and Rusty-marginned Flycatchers.

With still some miles still to cover in order to get to our final destination, we moved on. Upon arrival to the house of the owner of the terrain where the oilbirds were, we found a few new things for the tour like Yellow-bellied Elaenia, the dull but vocal Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, the only American Kestrel and House Wren seen on the main tour, and the first of many Pale-legged (Pacific) Hornero. We picked up a very nice lady
with the keys to the gate to enter the cave trail, and drove a few more minutes down the road with her. Near the trail head, we found a nice **Guayaquil Woodpecker** and heard a **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** that never responded and remained unseen. The access to the narrow grotto is now very easy and the owners have been working on wooden steps and handrails to make it even easier; a local is also adorning the trail with Orchids he finds fallen on the forest.

After ALL the driving, the long and very bumpy road, and the kidney stone shock treatment that comes with the combination of the two previous factors, we found ourselves in front of a few pairs of these wonderful birds, **Oilbirds (photo below)**. There was one lone individual perched on a vine right above our heads, a couple on the far wall, 4 or 5 more on the opposite wall from where we were and at least 3 or 4 more a few feet from overhead on the wall on our side of the grotto. We were surrounded at some point by all these careless birds that patiently observed us.

After absorbing the strange energy that floods this cave, we were able to take a few pictures. This is a great place to photograph these incredible birds since you can take photos with natural light without the need of artificial illumination or flashes. What for sure you need there is a tripod and a remote for the shutter since it is still very, very dark. The problem sometimes is the focusing since in very low light conditions cameras struggle with this but with patience, and trial and error, we got nice pictures. My photos for instance were taken with an exposure of 1 second, at 640 ISO and I needed to brighten a little more afterwards during post-processing. This was afterwards considered the best bird of the trip by some of the participants and was unanimously considered one of the best moments of the trip. Despite all it costs to get there, seeing these “not necessarily beautiful” birds is always wonderful.

I will quote the description to this species from the Princeton Wildguides book “***Wildlife of Ecuador, a photographic field guide to Birds, Mammals, Reptiles, and Amphibians***” that I just finished writing a few months back (on the market from July, 2017), that is illustrated with top quality photographs from Pablo Cervantes (another of our Tropical Birding
guides) and others:

“This very interesting nocturnal bird roosts and nests communally in caves and dark grottos. Its cryptic plumage is rich cinnamon with white spots. Related to the nightjars, it has a similar shape but is larger and has a much longer wingspan. Unique among birds, it flies long distances by night to feed on fruit found by sense of smell. It has developed echolocation to navigate inside caves and the most photosensitive eyes in the bird world. Nestlings accumulate fat from their diet of (mostly) oily palm nuts. In the past, indigenous groups cooked them to release the oil, which was used for lamps and cooking. Away from well-known caves (one near Nangaritza in the extreme southeast, another in Chontal, about three hours northwest of Quito) sightings are rare (certainly overlooked), but Oilbird has been recorded in unexpected places like Quito; it can show up nearly anywhere, except maybe on the higher Andes.”

It was quite late in the day by then and we had a long ride back to the lodge, so we basically just drove back to Tandayapa without stopping much and arrived right on time for dinner at 7pm.

Jan. 27: Silanche and Milpe Bird Sanctuaries: Another early start was needed today to drive to the lowlands, this time mainly via the modern highway that leads to the Esmeraldas coast from Quito. The secondary road that leads to Silanche reserve from the main highway is always quite birdy, so we did various stops along the way picking up many new trip birds. The weather was not the best though, and at some point we needed to just bird from the bus and wait for the rain to give us a break to allow us to step out and bird. Happily, regardless of the weather, we managed to find some cool birds like Olivaceous Piculet, Black-

Once inside the reserve, well after midmorning, we walked the easy trails. The trails were not too lively but we did manage to find a few understorey specialties for the area, like the dull Northern Schiffornis which has one of my favorite songs for any bird in Ecuador; we also got White-flanked and Checker-throated Antwrens, Black-crowned Antshrike, a very responsive Band-tailed Barbthroat (which was singing from a hidden perch but came out to check us out with the use of playback), White-bearded Manakin, Lesser Greenlets, and a few other species. In more open areas, we found Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Piratic and Social Flycatchers, Cinnamon Becard, and had much better views of White-bearded Manakin.

It was already close to noon when we decided to start heading back to the foothills and drive towards a local restaurant for lunch. On the way out of the reserve however we were forced to stop a couple times since some good birds decided to show up, now that it was sunny instead following the end of the rainfall. We saw a perched Laughing Falcon which forced us to a sudden stop and after enjoying this beautiful raptor, in the same area we got Pacific Antwren, a pair of Masked Water-Tyrants, a nice Striped Cuckoo (photo left) perched on a wire and a couple of Shiny Cowbirds. Another stop produced a juvenile Gray-lined Hawk.

We had lunch at the well-known Mirador de Rio Blanco enjoying some tanagers that came to feed on the bananas placed right outside our window. We also got spectacular eye-level flight views of soaring Swallow-tailed Kites (photo on next page) over the magnificent viewpoint over the Blanco River valley. Rains started again and lasted for a solid hour at least; happily right at that moment we were enjoying the great food served in the restaurant and we had a relaxed meal with no rush to leave, awaiting the rains to stop.
As soon as that happened, we moved towards the bird sanctuary of Milpe located just a few minutes from there, and initially remained under the roof watching the hummingbird feeders since it was still lightly raining. We did not have to wait too long until we could go out on the trails after the one special bird of this reserve, the unique Club-winged Manakin, which we saw well at the end, although they were skittish at the start. Walking the trails we found other trip birds like Yellow-throated Toucan, Pale-vented Thrush, White-shouldered Tanager, Plain-brown Woodcreeper, Orange-billed Sparrow, Slaty Antwren, and had brief views of a Spotted Nightingale-Thrush.

Jan. 28: Refugio Paz de las Aves and Calacali: The last day of the main tour required the final very early start; we departed well before dawn to arrive on time to reach the Andean Cock-of-the-rock (photo next page) lek inside the World-famous Refugio Paz de las Aves reserve at dawn (the best time to be there). It was already bright enough to walk the trail to the blind without needing a flashlight, so it was easy; and when we got to the lek the activity was in full swing, with 3 or 4 displaying males that kept us entertained for more than an hour (i.e. longer than usual).

Just behind the blind in the same area, the owner of the land, Angel, called in a family of the normally very shy Dark-backed Wood-Quail; Angel is famous for whispering these and other shy birds out of the dense foliage inside of which they rarely ever come out. Well, I say “whisper” but in reality what Angel actually does is call in these birds by shouting their designated names name.
This technique is quite amazing and it seems completely opposite to the “normal” birding logic of being quiet and not moving too much to try to bring the birds out; he walks along the narrow trails of his property yelling for instance “Mariaaaa, Mariaa, venga, venga” when he tries to bring out the Giant Antpitta (photo below) he named Maria (and it woks a treat!).

This Giant Antpitta, for example, was formerly an almost mythical bird before Angel entered the birding world; the very first nest discovered for this species was as recently as late 2007, when he found it on his land. Nowadays, Maria is typically “easy” to see and to photograph at this wonderful reserve thanks to him and his brother Rodrigo who daily track the birds in their normal habitat and bring for them a juicy breakfast of recently washed and sliced earthworms (their natural food source). In this reserve during this one morning, we saw FIVE, yes FIVE, species of antpittas: Giant (aka Maria), Yellow-breasted (aka Willy the third), Moustached (aka Susan), Chestnut-crowned (aka Andrea), and the tiny Ochre-breasted named Shakira due to its habit of moving its body sideways back and forth when it is perched, as if it was dancing; such an appropriate name. Antpittas are generally shy and difficult to see, and so getting five species in one morning is spectacular!

Other nice species we found on his property included, Golden-headed Quetzal, Mountain Wren, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Masked Trogon, Toucan Barbet, Nariño Tapaculo (a dull Choco endemic), plus Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant, Green-and-black Fruiteater, and a few other species we had previously seen when we visited the upper Tandayapa Valley (since the elevation is similar).

As if it was not enough showing us all these outstanding birds that in normal conditions we would see with luck one or two during a regular tour, Angel also provides a very tasty brunch. His wife and Rodrigo’s wife cook rich
Bolones and Empanadas and serve them to us with freshly brewed coffee; yes, all this is included in the entrance fee that we pay, Cock-of-the-rock Lek, guiding to find up to 5 species of antpittas, wood-quails, and brunch. It is an incredible morning and for sure one of the most enjoyable days of the whole tour.

After all this, we headed back to the Tandayapa Bird Lodge lodge for lunch (yes, we still were full with brunch but hey....) and for picking up our bags to depart after the meal towards Quito. We left at about 2pm and headed back towards the capital, but on the way we stopped to bird for a while in a different ecosystem, at Calacali located right off the main highway back to Quito.

In this new habitat, dry Interandean scrub, we found a couple of new trip birds like Eared Dove, Common Ground-Dove, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch, Band-tailed Seedeater, Cinereous Conebill and got much better looks at the astonishing male Black-tailed Trainbearer (photo above) with which we called it a day and started the still longish drive towards Puembo where our hotel for the night was located. Out of the 7 participants of the tour only 2 did not take the extension so that afternoon and we said goodbye to them; and missed them during the following couple of days.
TOUR SUMMARY: High Andes Extension (Upper side of the eastern slope)

Jan. 29: Antisana National Park and Guango Lodge: We did not need a very early start today given that the birding in Antisana is quite easy, done almost exclusively in open areas along the vast stretches of paramo in the park. Also, being at high altitude, the birds are often active through the day. The first stop we made was at Tambo Condor, the restaurant where we were going to have lunch on the way out; on the way in however, it is a great stop to use bathrooms for the early coffee drinkers and to check for the first time the feeders where we quickly saw the hulking Giant Hummingbird drinking sugar water, the largest hummingbird in the world.

Over the next few hours, we drove within the highland plains where we found, as highlights, various pairs of Andean Condors soaring, a lone Cinereous Harrier (photo below) which is now only rarely seen, a pair of Black-faced Ibis (which recently has been split into Andean Ibis by some taxonomic authorities), dozens of Carunculated Caracaras, a couple of Ecuadorian Hillstars, Andean Tit-Spinetail, both Canasteros (Many-striped and Streak-backed), Paramo Pipit, Andean Lapwings, Variable Hawks, a young Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Plumbeous Sierra-Finches and both Cinclodes (Chestnut-winged and Stout-billed).

The furthest stop of the morning was at the edge of La Mica Lake from where we spotted Slate-colored (Andean) Coots, Andean Teal, Northern Silvery Grebe, Andean Gulls and some very distant Yellow-billed Pintails and (Andean) Ruddy Ducks. We started our way back towards Tambo Condor for lunch and from the back patio we set our scope on a distant cliff where the owners of the restaurant had been monitoring a
Andean Condor nest, and we saw a 37-day old nestling and its massive parents. At the hummer feeders Giant Hummingbirds visited often, and various individuals of Sparkling Violetears (photo below) were constantly present.

After a delicious lunch of authentic typical Andean food, we started the ride towards Guango Lodge. When the weather is fair along the Papallacta Pass en route to Guango, we tend to stop and try for some of the target birds of that high elevation area. However, that was not the case, and it was very foggy and rainy up there on our way through, and so we blasted on to Guango instead of stopping there first. We birded in and around Guango Lodge for the remainder of the day; upon arrival, we spent some time at their legendary hummingbird feeders, where we saw Chestnut-breasted Cornet, Tourmaline Sunangel, Collared Inca, and Sword-billed Hummingbird. While this sounds very impressive, and indeed it is, the feeders were in reality quite slow, and missing some other regular species!

When the rains gave us a break, we headed down the trails towards the Papallacta River and were rewarded with a family of Torrent Ducks, a male, female and two chicks swimming together upstream quite closeby. We also found another White-capped Dipper there. Along the narrow forest trails we found a couple of the specialties of the eastern subtropical zone, like Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager, and Slaty Brush-Finch, together with other more widespread birds like, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Black-eared Hemispingus, Capped Conebill, (Northern) Mountain Cacique, Turquoise Jay, and Blue-and-black Tanager. When the rain started pouring, we headed back to the lodge for a hot shower, and a nice meal.
afterwards, which was voted for as the top meal of the tour. After the dinner we worked on our daily checklist in front of the fireplace to warm our chilled bones at this high elevation site.

Jan. 30: Papallacta Pass and Quito Airport: The very last day of the tour was spent mainly around Papallacta. We started the day by birding the dirt road that leads to Cayambe-Coca National Park where the habitat is a mixture of Elfin forest and humid montane scrub. There are a couple of special birds here, and the one we put special attention into was the rare and local Masked Mountain-Tanager which we saw very well in a flock that also held another avian target, Black-backed Bush-Tanager. Two new hummingbirds were also found this morning, a young male Rainbow-bearded Thornbill and several Viridian Metaltails. Along the same road, a couple kilometers lower down, we found three species of Mountain-Tanagers, Buff-breasted, Black-chested and Scarlet-breasted. Just before heading towards a different area, we found this beautiful Pale-naped Brush-Finch (photo below) that is typically a reclusive and shy skulker, but on this occasion was anything..

We took the bus and drove up the mountain towards the pass, but did a short stop by the Jamanco Lake where we got better and closer views of Yellow-billed Pintails than before, and found a couple of Southern Lapwings too; (a species typically not found here, but had been present in the area for some time). At the pass, we were forced to stop for a bird perched on an electric cable, which at this elevation could only be the rare and local Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant (photo on next page), which later flew and perched on a rocky wall. We continued all the way up the side road that leads to the antennas of Papallacta on a quest that sadly turned out to be unsuccessful for a seedsnipe. We started the descent back towards Quito, but did a couple of
stops along the way but the areas were very quiet so we decided to continue until close to Quito Airport to bird the rest of the afternoon there, at a small (though productive) pond.

The pond next to the new international airport of Quito can be surprisingly good or very quiet; that afternoon it was sadly the second scenario what we found when we got there. A dirt road near the area produced a few new birds for the trip though, including a pair of Hooded Siskins, a group of wintering Blue-winged Teals, a bright male Vermilion Flycatcher, and the difficult and inconspicuous Purple-collared Woodstar which was the very last lifer for the participants on this tour; a nice finishing bird though for sure!

**FINAL CHECKLIST:**

382 species were recorded on this 8-day trip (including the extension) of which 33 species were heard only (H) and 5 were seen only by the tour leader (L).

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<th>TINAMOUS</th>
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<td>DUCKS, GEESE, &amp; WATERFOWL</td>
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<td>Torrent Duck</td>
<td>Merganetta armata</td>
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Blue-winged Teal  
Yellow-billed Pintail  
Andean Teal  
(Andean) Ruddy Duck  

**CRACIDS**  
Sickle-winged Guan  

**NEW WORLD QUAIL**  
Dark-backed Wood-Quail  

**GREBES**  
Pied-billed Grebe  
Silvery Grebe  

**CORMORANTS AND SHAGS**  
Neotropic Cormorant  

**HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNs**  
Cattle Egret  

**IBIS AND SPOONBILLS**  
Black-faced (Andean) Ibis  

**NEW WORLD VULTURES**  
Black Vulture  
Turkey Vulture  
Andean Condor  

**HAWKS, EAGLES, AND KITES**  
Hook-billed Kite  
Swallow-tailed Kite  
Double-toothed Kite  
Cinereous Harrier  
Barred Hawk  
Roadside Hawk  
Variable Hawk  
Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle  
Gray-lined Hawk  
Broad-winged Hawk  
Short-tailed Hawk  

**RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS**  
White-throated Crake  
Slate-colored (Andean) Coot  

**PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS**  
Southern Lapwing  
Andean Lapwing  

**SANDPIPERS AND ALLIES**  
Greater Yellowlegs  
Lesser Yellowlegs  

**GULLS, TERNs AND SKIMMERS**  
Andean Gull  

**CRACIDAE**  
Chamaepetes goudotii  

**ODONTOPHORIDAE**  
Odontophorus melanotus  

**PODICIPEDIDAE**  
Podiceps occipitalis  

**PHALACROCORACIDAE**  
Phalacrocorax brasilianus  

**ARDEIDAE**  
Bubulcus ibis  

**THRESKIORNITHIDAE**  
Theristicus melanopis branickii  

**CATHARTIDAE**  
Coragyps atratus  

**ACCIPITRIDAE**  
Chondrohierax uncinatus  

**CHARADRIIDAE**  
Vanellus chilensis  

**SCOLOPACIDAE**  
Tringa melanoleuca  

**LARIDAE**  
Chroicocephalus serranus
PIGEONS AND DOVES
- Rock Pigeon
- Pale-vented Pigeon
- Band-tailed Pigeon
- Plumbeous Pigeon
- Ruddy Pigeon
- Dusky Pigeon
  - Common Ground-Dove
  - Black-winged Ground-Dove
  - White-tipped Dove
  - Pallid Dove
  - White-throated Quail-Dove
  - Eared Dove

COLUMBIDAE
- Columba livia
- Patagioenas cayennensis
- Patagioenas fasciata
- Patagioenas plumbea
- Patagioenas subvinacea
- Patagioenas goodsoni
- Columbina passerina
- Metriopelia melanoptera
- Leptotila verreauxi
- Leptotila pallida
- Zentrygon frenata
- Zenaida auriculata

CUCKOOS
- Smooth-billed Ani
- Striped Cuckoo
- Squirrel Cuckoo

CUCULIDAE
- Crotophaga ani
- Tapera naevia
- Playa cayana

OWLS
- White-throated Screech-Owl
- Cloud-forest Pygmy-Owl
  - Andean Pygmy-Owl

STRIGIDAE
- Megascops albogularis
- Glaucidium nubicola
- Glaucidium jardinii

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES
- Lyre-tailed Nightjar

CAPRIMULGIDAE
- Uropsalis lyra

OILBIRD
- Oilbird

STEATORNITHIDAE
- Steatornis caripensis

SWIFTS
- Spot-fronted Swift
- Chestnut-collared Swift
  - White-collared Swift
- Gray-rumped Swift

APODIDAE
- Cypseloides cherriei
- Streptoprocne rutila
- Streptoprocne zonaris
- Chaetura cinereiventris

HUMMINGBIRDS
- White-necked Jacobin
- White-tipped Sicklebill
- Band-tailed Barbthroat
- White-whiskered Hermit
- Tawny-bellied Hermit
  - Wedge-billed Hummingbird
  - Brown Violetear
  - Sparkling Violetear
  - Purple-crowned Fairy
  - Gorged Sunangel
  - Tourmaline Sunangel
  - Green Thorntail
  - Speckled Hummingbird

TROCHILIDAE
- Florisuga mellivora
- Eutoxeres aquila
- Threnetes ruckeri
- Phaethornis yaruqui
- Phaethornis syrmatophorus
- Schistes Geoffroyi
- Colibri delphinae
- Colibri coruscans
- Heliothryx barroti
- Heliangelus strophianus
- Heliangelus exortis
- Discosura conversii
- Adelomyia melanogenys
Violet-tailed Sylph | Aglaiocercus coelestis
---|---
Ecuadorian Hillstar | Oreotrochilus chimborazo
Black-tailed Trainbearer | Lesbia victoriae
Rainbow-bearded Thornbill | Chalcostigma herrani
Tyrian Metaltail | Metallura tyranthina
Viridian Metaltail | Metallura williami

**L** Glowing Puffleg | Eriocnemis vestita
Sapphire-vented Puffleg | Eriocnemis luciani
Golden-breasted Puffleg | Eriocnemis mosquera
Shining Sunbeam | Aglaeactis cupripennis
Brown Inca | Coeligena wilsoni
Collared Inca | Coeligena torquata
Buff-winged Starfrontlet | Coeligena lutetiae

**L** Mountain Velvetbreast | Lafresnaya lafresnayi
Sword-billed Hummingbird | Ensifera ensifera
Great Sapphirewing | Pterophanes cyanopterus
Buff-tailed Coronet | Boissonneaua flavescens
Chestnut-breasted Coronet | Boissonneaua matthewsi
Velvet-purple Coronet | Boissonneaua jardini
Booted Racket-tail | Ocreatus underwoodii
Purple-bibbed Whitetip | Urosticte benjami
Fawn-breasted Brilliant | Heliodoxa rubinoides
Green-crowned Brilliant | Heliodoxa jacula
Empress Brilliant | Heliodoxa imperatrix
Giant Hummingbird | Patagona gigas
Purple-collared Woodstar | Myrtis fanny
Purple-throated Woodstar | Calliphlox mitchelli
Western Emerald | Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus
Crowned (Green-crowned) Woodnymph | Thalurania colombica
Andean Emerald | Amazilia franciae
Purple-chested Hummingbird | Amazilia rosenbergi
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird | Amazilia tzacatl

**TROGONS**
Golden-headed Quetzal | Pharomachrus auriceps
Blue-tailed (Chocó) Trogon | Trogon comptus
(Western) White-tailed Trogon | Trogon chionurus
Trogon caligatus | Trogon personatus

**MOTMOTS**
Rufous Motmot | Baryphthengus martii
Broad-billed Motmot | Electron platyrhynchum

**KINGFISHERS**
Ringed Kingfisher | Megaceryle torquata
PUFFBIRDS
Barred Puffbird

JACAMARS
H Rufous-tailed Jacamar

BUCCONIDAE
Nystalus radiatus

GALBULIDAE
Galbula ruficauda

NEW WORLD BARBETS
Red-headed Barbet

CAPITONIDAE
Eubucco bourcierii

TOUCAN-BARBETS
Toucan Barbet

SEMNORNITHIDAE
Semnornis ramphastinus

TOUCANS
Crimson-rumped Toucanet

RAMPHASTIDAE
Aulacorhynchus haematopygus

Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan
Andigena laminirostris

Collared (Pale-mandibled) Aracari
Pteroglossus torquatus erythropygius

Yellow-throated (Chestnut-mandibled) Toucan
Ramphastos ambiguus swainsonii

Choco Toucan
Ramphastos brevis

WOODPECKERS
Olivaceous Piculet

PICIDAE
Picumnus olivaceus

Black-cheeked Woodpecker
Melanerpes pucherani

Golden-olive Woodpecker
Colaptes rubiginosus

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker
Colaptes rivolii

Lineated Woodpecker
Dryocopus lineatus

Powerful Woodpecker
Campephilus pollens

Guayaquil Woodpecker
Campephilus gayaquilensis

FALCONS AND CARACARAS
Barred Forest-Falcon

FALCONIDAE
Micrastur ruficollis

Carunculated Caracara
Phalcoboenus carunculatus

Laughing Falcon
Herpetotheres cachinnans

American Kestrel
Falco sparverius

Bat Falcon
Falco rufigularis

NEW WORLD AND AFRICAN PARROTS
Rose-faced Parrot

Psittacidae
Pyrilia pulchra

Red-billed Parrot
Pionus sordidus

Speckle-faced (White-capped) Parrot
Pionus tumultuosus seniloides

Bronze-winged Parrot
Pionus chalcopterus

Pacific Parrotlet
Forpus coelestis

Maroon-tailed Parakeet
Pyrrhura melanura pacifica

TYPICAL ANTBIRDS
Rufous-rumped Antwren

THAMNOPHILIDAE
Euchrepolmis callinota

Black-crowned (Western Slaty-) Antshrike
Thamnophilus atrinucha

Uniform Antshrike
Thamnophilus unicolor

Checker-throated Antwren
Epinecrophyla fulviventris

Pacific Antwren
Myrmotherula pacifica

White-flanked Antwren
Myrmotherula axillaris

Slaty Antwren
Myrmotherula schisticolor
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<tr>
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<th>Scientific Name</th>
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<tr>
<td>Streak-headed (Long-tailed) Antbird</td>
<td>Drymophila striaticeps</td>
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<td>Chestnut-backed Antbird</td>
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<td>Esmeraldas Antbird</td>
<td>Sipia nigricauda</td>
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<td>Zeledon's (Immaculate) Antbird</td>
<td>Hafferia zeledoni</td>
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<td><strong>ANTPITAS</strong></td>
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<td>Undulated Antpitta</td>
<td>Grallaria squamigera</td>
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<td>Moustached Antpitta</td>
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<td>Acropternis orthonyx</td>
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<td>Ash-colored Tapaculo</td>
<td>Myornis senilis</td>
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<td>Blackish (Unicolored) Tapaculo</td>
<td>Scytalopus latrans</td>
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<td>Nariño Tapaculo</td>
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<td>Paramo Tapaculo</td>
<td>Scytalopus opacus</td>
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<td><strong>ANTTHRUSHES</strong></td>
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<td>Rufous-breasted Anthrush</td>
<td>Formicarius rufipectus</td>
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<td><strong>OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS</strong></td>
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<td>Tawny-throated Leaftosser</td>
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<td>Plain-brown Woodcreeper</td>
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<td>Campylophargus pusillus</td>
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<td>Montane Woodcreeper</td>
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<td>Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii</td>
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<td>Rusty-winged Barbtail</td>
<td>Premnornis guttuliger</td>
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<td>Pale-legged (Pacific) Hornero</td>
<td>Furnarius leucopus cinnamomeus</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chestnut-winged (Bar-winged) Cinclodes</td>
<td>Cinclodes albidiventris</td>
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<td>Stout-billed Cinclodes</td>
<td>Cinclodes excelsior</td>
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<td>Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner</td>
<td>Philydor rufum</td>
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<td>Anabacerthia variegaticeps</td>
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<td>Lineated Foliage-gleaner</td>
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<td>Uniform Treehunter</td>
<td>Thripadectes ignobilis</td>
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<td>Striped Treehunter</td>
<td>Thripadectes holostictus</td>
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<td>Streak-capped Treehunter</td>
<td>Thripadectes virgaticeps</td>
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</table>
Striped (Western) Woodhaunter
Spotted Barbtail
Pearled Treerunner
Andean Tit-Spinetail
White-browed Spinetail
Many-striped Canastero
Streaked-backed Canastero
Red-faced Spinetail
Azara's Spinetail
Rufous Spinetail
Slaty Spinetail

**TYRANT FLYCATCHERS**

Brown capped Tyrannulet
Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet
White-tailed Tyrannulet
White-banded Tyrannulet
White-throated Tyrannulet
Tufted Tit-Tyrant
Yellow-bellied Elaenia
White-crested Elaenia
Sierran Elaenia
Streak-necked Flycatcher
Slaty-capped Flycatcher
Rufous-breasted Flycatcher
Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant
Sooty-headed Tyrannulet
Ashy-headed Tyrannulet
Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet
Choco (Golden-faced) Tyrannulet
Omnate Flycatcher

**TYRANNIDAE**

Bronze-olive Pygmy-Tyrant
Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant
Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant
Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher
Common Tody-Flycatcher
Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher
Cinnamon Flycatcher
Bran-colored Flycatcher
Smoke-colored Pewee
Acadian Flycatcher
Vermilion Flycatcher
Smoky Bush-Tyrant
Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant
Masked Water-Tyrant

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H Crowned Chat-Tyrant
H Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant
Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant
H Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant
Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant
Dusky-capped Flycatcher
Boat-billed Flycatcher
Rusty-margined Flycatcher
Social Flycatcher
Golden-crowned Flycatcher
Piratic Flycatcher
Snowy-throated Kingbird
Tropical Kingbird

COTINGAS
Green-and-black Fruiteater
H Barred Fruiteater
Orange-breasted Fruiteater
H Scaled Fruiteater
Andean Cock-of-the-rock
Purple-throated Fruitcrow

MANAKINS
Golden-winged Manakin
White-bearded Manakin
Club-winged Manakin

TITYRAS AND ALLIES
Masked Tityra
Northern (Thrush-like) Schiffornis
Barred Becard
Cinnamon Becard
White-winged Becard
One-colored Becard

VIREOS AND ALLIES
Black-billed Peppershrike
H Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo
Lesser Greenlet
Brown-capped Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo

CROWS JAYS AND MAGPIES
Turquoise Jay

SWALLOWS
Blue-and-white Swallow
Brown-bellied Swallow
Southern Rough-winged Swallow

Ochthoea frontalis
Ochthoea diadema
Ochthoea cinnamomeiventris
Ochthoea rufipectoralis
Ochthoea fumicolor
Myiarchus tuberculifer
Megarynchus pitangui
Myiozetetes cayanensis
Myiozetetes similis
Myiodynastes chrysocephalus
Legatus leucophaius
Tyranus niveigularis
Tyranus melancholicus
Pipreola riefferii
Pipreola arcuata
Pipreola jucunda
Ampelioides tschudii
Rupicola peruvianus
Querula purpurata
Masius chrysopterus
Manacus manacus
Machaeropterus deliciosus

TITYRIDAE
Tityra semifasciata
Schiffornis veraepacis rosenbergi
Pachyramphus versicolor
Pachyramphus cinnamomeus
Pachyramphus polychopterus dorsalis
Pachyramphus homochrous

VIREONIDAE
Cyclarhis nigrirostris
Vireolanius leucotis
Pachysylvia decurtata
Vireo leucophrys
Vireo olivaceus

CORVIDAE
Cyanolyca turcosa

HIRUNDINIDAE
Pyochelidon cyanoleuca
Orochelidon murina
Stelgidopteryx ruficollis
WREN
H Scaly-breasted (Southern Nightingale) Wren
  House Wren
  Mountain Wren
H Sedge (Grass) Wren
H Plain-tailed Wren
  Whiskered Wren
  Bay Wren
  Sharpe’s (Sepia-brown) Wren
  Gray-breasted Wood-Wren

TROGLODYTIDAE
Microcerculus marginatus
Troglodytes aedon
Troglodytes solstitialis
Cistothorus platensis aequatorialis
Pheugopedius euophrys
Pheugopedius mystacalis
Cantorchilus nigricapillus
Cinnycerthia olivascens
Henicorhina leucophrys

GNATCATCHERS
H Tawny-faced Gnatwren

TROGLODYTIDAE
Microbates cinereiventris

GNATCATCHERS
H Tawny-faced Gnatwren

DIPPERS
White-capped Dipper

POLIOPTILIDAE
Microbates cinereiventris

THRUSHES AND ALLIES
Andean Solitaire
Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush
Spotted Nightingale-Thrush
Swainson’s Thrush
Pale-vented Thrush
Ecuadorian Thrush
Great Thrush

CINCLUDAE
Cinclus leucocephalus

NEW WORLD WARBLERS
Black-and-white Warbler
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat
Tropical Parula
Blackburnian Warbler
Three-striped Warbler
Black-crested Warbler
Golden-bellied (Chocó) Warbler
Russet-crowned Warbler
Canada Warbler
Slate-throated Redstart (Whitestart)
Spectacled Redstart (Whitestart)

PARULIDAE
Mniotilta varia
Geothlypis semiflava
Setophaga pitiayumi
Setophaga fusca
Basileuterus tristriatus
Myioborus nigrocristata
Myioborus chrysogaster chlorophrys
Myioborus coronata
Cardellina canadensis
Myioborus minimus
Myioborus melanocephalus

TANAGERS AND ALLIES
Superciliaried Hemispingus
Black-eared Hemispingus
Black-eared (Western) Hemispingus
Gray-hooded Bush Tanager
White-shouldered Tanager
White-lined Tanager
Flame-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Tanager

THRAUPIDAE
Hemispingus superciliaris
Hemispingus melanotis melanotis
Hemispingus melanotis ochraceus
Cnemoscopus rubrirostris
Tachyphonus luctuosus
Tachyphonus rufus
Ramphocelus flammigerus icteronotus
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<td>Thick-billed (Lesser) Seed-Finch</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Variable Seedeater
Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Band-tailed Seedeater
Plain-colored Seedeater
Paramo Seedeater
Bananaquit
Yellow-faced Grassquit
H
Dull-colored Grassquit
Buff-throated Saltator
Black-winged Saltator
Slate-colored Grosbeak

**BUNTINGS AND NEW WORLD SPARROWS**

Yellow-throated Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager)
Dusky Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager)
Gray-browed (Stripe-headed) Brushfinch
Orange-billed Sparrow
Chestnut-capped Brushfinch
Rufous-collared Sparrow
Tricolored Brushfinch
Slaty Brushfinch
Pale-naped Brushfinch
Yellow-breasted (Rufous-naped) Brushfinch

**CARDINALS AND ALLIES**

Summer Tanager
White-winged Tanager
Ochre-breasted Tanager
Golden Grosbeak

**TROUPIALS AND ALLIES**

Scrub Blackbird
Shiny Cowbird
Scarlet-rumped Cacique
(Northern) Mountain Cacique

**FINCHES, EUPHONIAS AND ALLIES**

Thick-billed Euphonia
Golden-rumped Euphonia
Orange-bellied Euphonia
Yellow-collared Chlorophonia
Hooded Siskin

Sporophila corvina
Sporophila nigricollis
Catamenia analis
Catamenia inornata
Catamenia homochroa
Coereba flaveola
Tiaris olivaceus
Tiaris obscurus
Saltator maximus
Saltator atripennis
Saltator grossus
Chlorospingus flavigularis
Chlorospingus semifuscus
Arremon assimilis
Arremon aurantirostris
Arremon brunneinucha
Zonotrichia capensis
Atlapetes tricolor
Atlapetes schistaceus
Atlapetes pallidinucha
Atlapetes latinuchus
Piranga rubra
Piranga leucoptera
Chlorothraupis stolzmanni
Pheucticus chrysogaster
Dives warczewiczii
Molothrus bonariensis
Cacicus uropygialis pacificus
Cacicus chrysonotus leucoraphus
Euphonia laniirostris
Euphonia cyanopechala
Euphonia xanthogaster
Chlorophonia flavirostris
Spinus magellanicus