

Northwest Ecuador November 7 – 19, 2009

TROPICAL BIRDING



NORTHWEST ECUADOR: **In Search of Chocó Endemics**

November 7 – 19, 2009



BLACK-CHINNED MOUNTAIN-TANAGER

Tanagers were a big feature of this tour, with an amazing **55 species seen** in our eleven days birding, including a number of colorful species (like this one), which are regional endemics to the Chocó bioregion. Other endemic tanagers that were seen on this tour included **Scarlet-and-white, Blue-whiskered, Gray-and-gold, Scarlet-browed, Rufous-throated, Moss-backed, and Glistening-green Tanagers**, in addition to several **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis**.

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INTRODUCTION

*This tour focuses on the endemic-rich Chocó region of northwest Ecuador, home of some of the most spectacular and highly desired birds in South America, the "bird continent". We came across many of these, from the well-named **Beautiful Jay** seen late in the afternoon on our very first day, to the shocking red **Andean Cock-of-the-rocks** displaying near Mindo on our second day, a number of multicolored **Toucan Barbets** on multiple occasions, to northwest Ecuador's flagship "cover" bird: the stunning **Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan**. In addition to these "marquee" birds we racked up over forty of the Chocó endemics that were our main focus, including a very dapper **Black Solitaire**, my personal pick for bird of the trip (even if ignored by everyone else in their choices!), a striking and rare thrush. Rarer still, though more regular on this tour, was a superb **Tanager Finch** that made us wait until the nail biting eleventh hour to show up in the Tandayapa Valley. Other highlights of the trip included a whopping list of fifty five species of tanager, including some of the most colorful of the Chocó species, including the exquisite **Scarlet-and-white Tanager** and the standout **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis** at Canande, the scarce **Blue-whiskered Tanager** at Silanche, the gem-like **Glistening-green Tanager** in the foothills, and multiple encounters with **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers**. On top of all that we also saw over forty hummingbird species, including some of the most dazzling of the Chocó species, like the gorgeous **Velvet-purple Coronet**, glowing **Western Emerald**, striking **Empress Brilliant**, and impressive **Violet-tailed Sylph**. Proving once again that Ecuador is one of the very best places on Earth for both tanagers and hummingbirds.*

We covered a range of elevations, visiting forests in each that hold markedly different avifaunas, that allowed us to amass a bird list of over 430 species, (over 400 of which were seen by at least one member of the group). We began in the temperate zone (3400m/11 155ft) near Quito, dropping down into the subtropics for the next few days (1750-2300m/5742-7546ft), spent a day and a half in the foothills (1100m/3609ft), before then spending some time in the lowlands (200-400m/656-1312ft). Finally, on our very last day we drove along the scenic Chiriboga Road, an old trade route to Quito that allowed us to visit forest at various altitudes, beginning our morning in the patches of remaining foothill forest, before moving into the subtropics once more, and later rising into the temperate zone again, before we finally had to pack up our bins and drop into the dry inter-Andean valley that Ecuador's long, thin capital Quito lies within, for the end of the tour.

ITINERARY

November 7	Arrival in Quito
November 8	Yanacocha & the Old Nono-Mindo Road
November 9	Refugio Paz de las Aves
November 10	Upper Tandayapa Valley & Tandayapa Lodge
November 11	Mashpi Forest & the Old Nono-Mindo Road
November 12	Milpe
November 13	Pedro Vicente Maldonado to Rio Canande (Botrosa Road)
November 14	Rio Canande (reserve trails)
November 15	Rio Canande (Botrosa Road)
November 16	Rio Silanche
November 17	Rio Palenque
November 18	Chiriboga Road
November 19	Departure from Quito

November 8

YANACocha *Temperate polylepis elfin forest 3400m/11 155ft elevation*

OLD NONO-MINDO ROAD *Subtropical forest 2300–1700m/7546–5577ft elevation.*

The tour began on the slopes of Volcan Pichincha, the volcano that gives its name to the capital province of Ecuador. Although this is officially the start of the wet season for northwest Ecuador, there was no sign of this as we made our way up to the temperate reserve of **Yanacocha**, where we were afforded some great views over Ecuador's capital Quito, and of some Andean "giants" looming large in the background. The clear weather giving us a fantastic vista of some distant volcanoes on the horizon behind the city.

This first morning of the tour is a crucial one as it is the only real time we spend in the temperate zone. On this tour we cover a range of elevations that have very different bird communities,

this temperate area containing many different species from the lower elevation sites visited afterwards. Our main focus was a number of highland hummingbirds, and high altitude species flocks, that often contain a fantastic mix of tanagers, flycatchers, wrens, and others. Before we got into the reserve though we stopped for a **Tawny Antpitta** that skittered off the side of the road, as we ascended from Quito, and several **Black-tailed Trainbearers** flitted around some highland blooms.



Displaying their extremely long "trails" behind them as they did so. Our initial walk in the reserve was quiet, and I began to fear that the prolonged dry weather that the area had been experiencing may cause low bird activity. However, as we continued further along the Inca Trail, slowly but surely, we began to pick up more and more birds, as we finally came upon some of the highland flocks we had been hoping for. One such flock held a trio of well-built, striking Andean tanagers: including the hulking **Hooded Mountain-Tanager**, the striking **Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager**, and a pair of **Black-chested Mountain-Tanagers** too. Also in some of these flocks were **Superciliaried Hemispingus**, **White-throated** and **White-banded Tyrannulets**, **Rufous Wrens**, **Spectacled Redstarts**, and a few **Pearled Treerunners**. Once we reached the feeders towards the end of the trail we settled in to observe the frenzied action as hummingbirds zoomed in and out to take advantage of the bounty of sugar water. **Buff-winged Starfrontlets** were among the most numerous (*see photo above*), along with smaller numbers of **Sapphire-vented** and **Golden-breasted Pufflegs**, **Tyrian Metaltails**, and a single female **Mountain Velvetbreast**. However, the headlines were reserved for the peculiar **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, with its impossibly long bill, several of which came in regularly to gasps all round. Away from the flocks and the feeders we found a trio of chat-tyrants: **Crowned**, **Rufous-breasted**, and **Brown-backed Chat-Tyrants** all found alongside the "Inca Trail". By the end of the day we would add another striking chat-tyrant to our list, once we had dropped down into the subtropics...

After a packed lunch in Yanacocha reserve we began our descent towards Tandayapa Lodge, along the **Old Nono-Mindo Road**. We began our day at the heady heights of 3400m/11 155ft, although by the end of the day, when we checked in at Tandayapa Lodge, we had dropped to just 1750m/5577ft. As we descended from the temperate reserve of Yanacocha we moved into the subtropics where silver-leafed *cecropia* trees scattered the forested hillsides that opened up a whole new suite of birding possibilities. We had some specific riparian species in mind as we drove alongside the Rio Alambi that cuts through the steep valley bottom. The vehicle was brought to a sudden stop more than once to get us looks at one of these: a sprightly **White-capped Dipper** hopping around on boulders mid-river that were regularly washed with spray from the rushing Andean rapids, the preferred feeding area for foraging dippers seeking out aquarian invertebrates. I listened also for the high-pitched song of the **Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant**, another riparian species, that took some time before we all finally got some great looks at this, our fourth chat-tyrant species for the day. Next designated stop was a look out across the Alambi Valley, where in the late afternoon one of the most striking and instantly recognizable Andean birds, the **Andean cock-of-the-rock**, regularly comes to display (**see photo below**). The vivid red males have a harsh call that we



quickly heard floating across the valley towards us. However, they more than make up for their rather ugly call, with their outrageously bright plumage. We used the scope to observe four or more males dancing and displaying to unseen females below. Then we headed straight for Tandayapa while I listened for the harsh

cries of our first Chocó endemic species. As often happens with this one, as the afternoon wore on and we were getting close to Tandayapa my hopes waned a little, but then suddenly a group of **Beautiful Jays** began calling right by the road. We quickly jumped out of the van and found two or three of these well-named birds in the canopy of some roadside trees, kick starting our endemic focused tour with one of the smartest and scarcest ones straight off. We then decided enough was enough and headed straight for the lodge so that we could check in a little before dark, and with hummers still buzzing in their dozens around the World famous Tandayapa feeders.

November 9

REFUGIO PAZ DE LAS AVES *Subtropical forest 1900m/6234ft*

Today was one of the most important sites on the tour, the infamous “**Antpitta Farm**” near Mindo. Of course antpittas were our main focus, but this area has a lot more to offer than just antpittas, and soon after arriving we made our way down the trail to a specially built blind that looks out on a close **Andean Cock-of-the-rock** display area. Before we entered the hide though a large rusty-breasted bird was perched up right beside the trail, that was our first antpitta of the morning, and the rarest one in ordinary circumstances: **Giant Antpitta**, one of three different individuals of the species seen throughout this remarkable morning. The antpitta remained “frozen” on a mossy branch for some time

allowing all of us who desired to get close up photos. We then spent a little time in the blind being “serenaded” by **Andean Cock-of-the-rocks**, and watched on as scarlet males leapt from branch to branch and flapped their wings rather clumsily while showing off their very best display moves. At another blind things were a little quiet, just a couple of bold **Sickle-winged Guans** coming in on this occasion to feast on the fruit, while a male **Purple-bibbed Whitetip** fed on some red flowers out in front,



and a **Tyrannine Woodcreeper** was seen clasped to a mossy trunk in the near forest. A walk for Orange-breasted Fruiteater left us wanting, although we were not empty-handed for long on this one, and corrected this omission later the same day. We then visited a number of designated spots in the forest where the local landowner has habituated a variety of antpitta species, and individuals. Three different **Giant Antpittas** were tallied, along with two separate **Moustached Antpittas** (see photo above), and, after more than a little waiting, a smart **Yellow-breasted Antpitta** too. All of these normally shy regional endemics were seen just a few feet away from us, allowing us some incredible photo opportunities. At one point we looked on as a **Giant Antpitta** stood almost shoulder-to-shoulder with a **Moustached Antpitta** just centimeters from each other! Emerging out of the forest after this “antpitta show”, we lingered at the forest edge, watching some of the most striking of the Chocó hummingbird species flitting in and out of the forest to check out the well-placed sugar feeders. **Empress Brilliants**, **Brown Incas**, **Violet-tailed Sylphs**, and the audacious **Velvet-purple Coronet** all came in at regular intervals, *all* also endemics to this wet Chocó region.

We then had the obligatory feast back at the “cafe” on site where we were served a selection of local foods, including a very filling *bolones*, and some cheese *empanadas*. After our brunch we decided to go after the fruiteater again, although this time drive to another patch of roadside forest nearby, after a local tip off. On arriving in the area I

heard the high-pitched whistles of an **Orange-breasted Fruiteater** from the van on arrival and we all quickly jumped out. We hunted high and low for the source of its ventriloquial call to no avail for a time, before Hans calmly announced he had a bright green bird with a black hood, and a bright orange breast "plate": he had the fruiteater and it was clearly a male from his accurate description. After some quick maneuvering and some fine directions from Hans we were all onto a fine male fruiteater, a dazzling Chocó species that got more than a worthy mention among the trip highlights at the end of the trip. A little further down this same deserted private road we also picked up our first **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers** of the trip, that we were to see much better on several later occasions. Late in the afternoon we retired to Tandayapa Lodge, although a few of us tried for a lyre-tailed Nightjar at a normally reliable stakeout, but found them not to be calling at this time, perhaps due to the exceptionally dry weather the country had been experiencing. We did though have a **Rufous-bellied Nighthawk** pass overhead as dusk fell.

November 10

TANDAYAPA VALLEY *Subtropical forest 1750-2300m/5742-7546ft*

For this morning we headed out from the lodge and climbed up to the upper part of the **Tandayapa Valley**. The lodge and upper part of the valley are both located within the subtropical zone, although the short drive up to the top of the valley brought us into the *upper* subtropics and with it the chance of some of the most spectacular of the Chocó species we were searching for. We began by trying for one of these straight off the bat, Tanager Finch, a very rare



and local species that haunted us over the next day or so, as multiple attempts at a number of spots came up with nothing. However, this was not our only target, and top of the pile that morning had to be several **Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan**, the Tandayapa Valley's flagship bird, that also graces the cover of the Ecuador field for good reason: it is a multicolored, spectacular endemic, that no one should leave the country without! It has to be said though that aside from this special bird and an impressive male **Powerful Woodpecker** working on a close trunk things were very, very quiet, just a few small flocks seen containing the odd **Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager** (see photo above), a bird that would become familiar to us as it turned up regularly within flocks in this area. The quiet morning led us to retreat back to Tandayapa Lodge early with the revised plan of checking some areas again later in the afternoon, when I hoped it might have clouded over, that should then bring about heightened bird activity.

If you want a place to relax for a few hours until bird activity can pick up pace again, there is no finer place than the hummingbird platform at **Tandayapa Lodge**, where the feeders were crowded with hundreds of hummingbirds of at least 16 species: **Violet-tailed Sylphs** came in and out (**see photo below**), **Brown Incas** dropped in occasionally, a single male **Empress Brilliant** was hard to miss when it made dramatic appearances at the feeders, along with more common fare like **Purple-throated**



Woodstars, **Fawn-breasted** **Brilliant**s, **Buff-tailed** **Coronets**, a number of glowing **Western Emeralds**, **Sparkling** and **Green** **Violet-ears**, a single **White-bellied** **Woodstar**, and dozens of **Booted Racket-tails**. Around the lodge itself a female **Masked Trogon** brought a whole new meaning to the word approachable, posing nicely out the back of the lodge. A pair of **Red-headed Barbets** fed on *cecropia* fruits above, an **Ecuadorian** (**Spectacled**) **Thrush** sang from trees alongside the lodge, and a **Rufous-winged Tyrannulet** flitted above the hummer feeders on one occasion in the early afternoon.

In the late afternoon some of us went back up the valley to try and pick up some of the birds that had been so quiet that morning. On the way up the valley several mixed flocks had us bringing the car to a rapid halt and jumping out to sift through the parties. One of these held our only **Metallic-green Tanager** of the trip, while a little further up one of the best birds in northwest

Ecuador, **Toucan Barbet**, appeared in another flock, along with our first **Green-and-black Fruiteaters**, and **Rufous-chested Tanagers** of the tour. In the understorey we found a **Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant**, and a pair of **Striped Treehunters**. A late afternoon search for Tanager Finch left us wanting once more, although a **Spillman's Tapaculo** did uncharacteristically hop out into the open. This skulking denizen of the forest floor was a great close to our day just before we headed back to Tandayapa Lodge again. Back at the lodge some decided to stay behind, and have a relaxing time with the hummers at the feeders, or walk the trails around the lodge. While Carla and Colene found a **Streak-capped Treehunter** in one area, Stefan walked into a **Narino Tapaculo** scratching around on the side of a trail that also bought him a **White-throated Quail-Dove** walking along the same forested trail.

November 11

MASHPI FOREST *Foothill forest 1070m/3500ft*

TANDAYAPA VALLEY/OLD NONO-MINDO RD *Subtropical forest 1750-2300m/5742-7546ft*

For this day I decided on a last minute change of plan. With our time around Tandayapa having been fruitful so far, we chose to visit a new “hot” site, **Mashpi Forest**, that had recently been hitting the headlines in Ecuador for some of the great foothill birding to be had there. Having heard of some good sightings there just a few days before I could not resist checking it out. This proved to be a good choice as we found some superb birds on site, and I am sure I will be visiting this site more regularly on future tours. Just after arrival a rowdy flock of **Rose-faced Parrots** were found in some near trees, and a **Chocó Warbler** flitted about in the undergrowth. From the very same spot we also found our first **Glistening-green Tanagers** of the morning that appeared in a number of flocks during our time there. Through the morning we also enjoyed repeated views of **Toucan Barbets**, to the satisfaction of all, especially those that had opted out of our birding session the afternoon before, and had therefore missed them on that occasion. As we birded a beautifully forested road we ran into a **Tooth-billed Hummingbird** perched

up calling high in the trees, and at least four **Moss-backed Tanagers**, mixing it up with more **Glistening-green**

Tanagers in some of the flocks. All this was enough for our morning alone and more than justified our visit to the site. At lunchtime I opted to lunch on site at a particular spot where a very rare species (**Black Solitaire**) had been seen a few days before. Just as I took my first bite out of my sandwich I heard the unmistakable whistles of a **Black Solitaire** coming



from just in front of our van. I quickly alerted the group and ran out to try and find this very rarely seen Chocó species. It quickly became obvious that a feeding flock was moving through the fruiting trees above us that held a number of **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers**, more **Glistening-green Tanagers**, and several superb **Orange-breasted Fruiteaters** (see photo above). All stunning, regional endemics. However, the solitaire seemed to have fallen silent. Just as we considered wandering back to our abandoned lunch, the **Black Solitaire** called a number of times again, and I even glimpsed this dapper thrush a couple of times, although it quickly disappeared from view. A little more work with the I-pod, and a considerable amount of patience was required before suddenly, and dramatically, this smart bird hopped up onto an open branch, when we were all finally able to get good looks at this sharp-dressed, jet black thrush, with the clean white cheeks and deep red eye. Mission accomplished.

Knowing there was nothing that could top that, and with the day heating up and bird activity slowing, we decided to move on to the next site: subtropical forest along the **Old**

Nono-Mindo Road. Here we had a date with the elusive Tanager Finch that up until then had been leading us a merry dance with not even a hint of its presence at a well-known stakeout. However, before we tried for that one, we found a



Strong-billed Woodcreeper hugging the trunk of a large rainforest tree in one area that also held more **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers**, in addition to a few **Sepia-brown Wrens** sneaking through the undergrowth. Higher up along the road we bumped into the strikingly marked **Flammulated Treehunter** hiding out in the bamboo, before we finally decided to have a last gasp try for the "TF" again. I tried playing a tape, and finally the high-pitched calls of a **Tanager Finch** could be heard coming back at us from the understorey, and after some rapid repositioning we all got fantastic looks at this rare and local brush finch of the Chocó region. A truly dramatic end to what had been a landmark day for the tour. It is not often that Tanager Finch gets overshadowed, but the striking pied form of the Black Solitaire did just that (for me anyway!) Our day was not over though as we had expected when we began cruising back to Tandayapa Lodge, as a **Common Potoo** that flew out in front of the

van close to the lodge, then settled on a snag and continued to hunt insects while we watched on ([see photo](#)).

November 12

MILPE BIRD SANCTUARY *Foothill forest 1100m/3609ft*

For the second consecutive morning we were in the foothills, but no bother as we had plenty still to look for at this elevation. On this day though we traveled to the **Milpe Bird Sanctuary**, a small reserve (62ha) set up by the [Mindo Cloudforest Foundation](#) (MCF) that protects an important area of forest in the Andean foothills close to the bustling town of San Miguel de los Bancos. The drop in altitude from Tandayapa bought us not only into a warmer climate, but also into a realm of many new birds. In and around the parking lot **Blue-necked Tanager**, **Yellow-tufted (Black-faced) Dacnis**, **Pale-mandibled (Collared) Aracari**, and **Swallow Tanagers** were all found before we had even descended into the forest itself. Before we walked into the forest though a raptor-like call led us to a male **Scaled Fruiteater** just beyond the parking lot. We had barely walked under the shade of the first trees at the forest edge when we spotted a male **Chocó Trogon** in the trees above. As we admired this regional specialty we soon realized another endemic was sharing the very same canopy, as a **Chocó Toucan** was

sitting just a meter or so away. Soon after we also found a female trogon and realized there was a pair holding territory in the area. We then waited for any of the flocks that roam this area of the forest, and shortly after were rewarded for our patience when one came through with several **Rufous-throated Tanagers** in their midst, in addition to more widespread species like **Scaly-throated** and **Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaners**, and **Red-faced Spinetails**. A low fruiting tree also held a couple of male **Golden-winged Manakins**, sporting bright yellow horns on their heads, and a flash of bright gold in their wings.

We also visited the neighboring **Milpe Gardens**, a small private reserve adjoining the foundation sanctuary we had spent our first few hours within. Shortly after walking into the forest there we found another busy feeding flock that held some other new foothill species, like a pair of **Russet Antshrikes**, and a superb **Brown-billed Scythebill** slinking up a thick mossy trunk. Along the forest edge we saw a pair of the newly recognized **Chocó Tyrannulets**, a



very recent split from Golden-faced Tyrannulet, and now considered as a full species that is restricted to this Chocó region. It was then time for a break at the hummingbird feeders back at the MCF reserve again, where **Green-crowned Woodnymphs** (see photo above) fought with **Green-crowned Brilliants**, **White-whiskered Hermits** and even a **Bananaquit** to get a look in at the feeders that were brimming with sugar water. After lunch we took a short walk around the reserve trails again, finding a **Tawny-breasted Flycatcher** and a superb pair of **Guayaquil Woodpeckers** (see photo on next page) that even allowed us to take the odd photo. We finished off for the day by driving and birding our way gently along the Milpe Road, getting perched views of several **Bronze-winged Parrots**, and both **Chestnut-mandibled** and **Chocó Toucans**.

November 13

BOTROSA ROAD, near RIO CANANDE *Lowland forest 420m/1378ft*



We spent the morning making our way to the **Rio Canande** reserve passing through patches of lowland forest and cleared areas en-route that held **Black-lored Yellowthroat**, **Sooty-headed Tyrannulets**, **Orange-crowned Euphonias**, **Blue-headed Parrots**, as well as **Pacific Parrotlets** and **Ecuadorian Ground-Doves** when we got close to the reserve. After resting up at the reserve feeders and picking up a **Rufous-tailed Jacamar** (see photo on next page) while there, many of us checked out the **Botrosa Road**, an area of lowland forest owned by an Ecuadorian logging company, but that is currently still in good shape and is a great place to look for some of the key tanagers of the Chocó lowlands. We ran into a number of flocks along the road, one of which contained a **Lita Woodpecker**, that lingered for some time foraging on an open branch so that we could line it up in the scope for all. The same flock also held a few **Scarlet-browed Tanagers** too, and another flock held **Scarlet-thighed Dacnis**, an outrageously bright male

Scarlet-and-white Tanager, and a male **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis** that generously allowed us to tee it up within the 'scope for some time. Carla glanced up to find a female **Black-tipped Cotinga** sitting there staring down at us in another area, that also produced our first pair of **Orange-fronted Barbets** too. Finally, just before we headed back to the lodge, we watched a **Slate-throated Gnatcatcher** flitting around the canopy of a rainforest tree, that even occasionally stopped moving for long enough for some of us to see it within the 'scope. Back at the lodge Bill and Colene, who had decided to spend the afternoon in that area, were graced with a snow-white male **Black-tipped Cotinga** that popped up right beside the lodge, a rare sighting indeed in that spot.

November 14

RIO CANANDE *Lowland forest 420-600m/1378-1969ft*



Our full day at Canande was spent birding some of the trails that lead right from the doorstep of the lodge. Before we left though we picked up both **Purple-chested and Blue-chested Hummingbirds**, along with **White-necked Jacobins** that were visiting the feeders on the forest edge. While trying to locate a Red-capped manakin at a display site along the trail we came upon a **Golden-crowned Spadebill**, and then trying another **Red-capped Manakin** spot we finally found a male that eventually perched invitingly in our 'scope. Several flocks were encountered within the forest that held **Rufous-winged Tanager** in

one, and **Northern Barred Woodcreeper** in another that also held **Red-rumped Woodpecker**, a single **Pacific Flatbill** passed through with another party, and a further **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis** also graced us. Other birds found along the trail included a male **Black-throated Trogon**, several male **Blue-crowned Manakins**, a striking **Black-striped Woodcreeper**, **Western (Striped) Woodhaunter**, **Brown-capped Tyrannulet**, **Stripe-throated Wren**, and **Spot-crowned Antvireo** among many others. Other nice finds included a **Southern Nightingale-Wren** creeping around on the forest floor, several **Rufous Pihás** causing a noisy racket in the rainforest canopy (this noisy cotinga must have one of the loudest birdsongs on the planet!?), a single **Rufous Mourner**, and a small group of **Purple-throated Fruitcrows**. A **Three-toed Sloth** was found feeding in a low *cecropia*, and was much appreciated despite a heated debate on how many digits it actually had! Highlight of the afternoon though, and perhaps even the day, was a **Black-headed Antthrush** that despite its frequent vocal response remained buried in deep cover for some time, before finally relenting and walking right out onto an open carpet of leaves where it paused for some time and sung back at us. When it gave us completely unhindered views. We returned to the lodge in the late afternoon, tired after our day in the sweaty Chocó lowlands. That did not stop a few people though sticking to the task as we tried for a special nightbird as dusk fell over the rainforest. A **Chocó Poorwill** could be heard calling frequently from a bank of roadside forest, and a couple of sweeps with the spotlight revealed a glowing pair of eyes glaring back at us, and pretty soon we lined it up at several different spots as it called excitedly back at us from its forest perch.

November 15

BOTROSA ROAD, near RIO CANANDE *Lowland forest 420m/1378ft*

For our final day around Rio Canande we returned again to an area of lowland forest along the **Botrosa Road**, in order to try and plug some of the gaps in our list for the area. Just before we left the lodge though, a descending call by the parking lot led us out of the van just after we had loaded up, to get looks at our first **Red-billed Scythebill** of the trip right from the lodge car park. Parrots and raptors were well-represented in our morning along the Botrosa Road: noisy **Mealy Parrots**, the endemic **Rose-faced Parrot** perched up, and **Bronze-winged Parrots**, and **Chestnut-fronted Macaws** passing low overhead all seen during our morning. On the raptor front, one look out brought us **Hook-billed Kite**, a **Gray-backed Hawk**, and a distant **Bat Falcon**. While another "mirador" (viewpoint) brought us a pair of **Plumbeous Hawks** gliding above, in addition to a couple of majestic **King Vultures** riding a thermal. A **Double-toothed Kite** was also found perched alongside the road too. One stop to search for a pair of **Barred Puffbirds** that had been in this area on previous trips, brought not only a fine pair of these puffbirds, in addition to a superb **Cinnamon Woodpecker** clasped to a rainforest tree trunk, and another pair of **Orange-fronted Barbets**. Toucans were also out in force, and while none were new additions to the trip list, it



was great to get repeated looks at more **Pale-mandibled (Collared) Aracaris**, **Chocó Toucans**, and **Chestnut-mandibled Toucans**. Just after we arrived at our first stop a noisy call alerted us to oropendolas in the area, and soon after Hans put us onto a **Chestnut-headed Oropendola** perched on top of a palm spike, and just a short distance down the road another three of these scarce birds were found feeding in an open roadside tree. We also got our first looks at **Immaculate Antbird**, and for a couple of people at least, a fine male **Spotted Antbird** that they were well placed for when it popped up in front of them. While trying to lure in our first **Immaculate Antbird** of the morning a tiny hermit buzzed around a small set of flowers beside us, that turned out to be the scarce **Bronzy Hermit**. Other welcome sightings in this area of extensive lowland forest included a much better look at **Black-striped Woodcreeper** (see photo above) than we had enjoyed the day before (this time lingering in my 'scope for some time), **Red-rumped Woodpecker**, **Western Slaty-Antshrike**, several **Long-tailed Tyrants** standing sentry atop a dead snag or two, and further **Snowy-throated Kingbirds**. New

additions came within some of the flocks found along there, including **Gray-and-gold and Golden-hooded Tanagers**, and a **Fulvous-vented Euphonia**, a single **Slate-colored Grosbeak**, in addition to another sighting of the endemic **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis**. Our final new bird for the day came when an antshrike began calling close by, and after more than a little searching we managed to find the male **Fasciated Antshrike** calling from a thick tangle. Convinced that it was hidden from our view it remained there for some time, allowing us to line the 'scope up on it, and get scope-filling views of this boldly striped antshrike with the bright red eye. Finally, a small troop of **Brown-headed (Black-headed) Spider-Monkeys** fled from us before we had to leave and head to the town of Pedro Vicente Maldonado for an overnight stay in order to explore the Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary the following day.

November 16

RIO SILANCHE BIRD SANCTUARY *Lowland forest 350m/1148ft*

As we had already covered some lowland areas with similar birds at Canande, this day was all about trying to go after birds that we did not pick up there, and getting further looks at some of these cool lowland species. We started with one of the rarest of the bunch, a **Brown Wood-Rail**, that unfortunately on this occasion did not play ball and only gave me the shortest of looks before it slinked back into the forest, not allowing anyone else a view at all. I think it is fair to say though we all heard its loud, rollicking call very well though! Further along the road towards the reserve we found a pair of **Scarlet-backed Woodpeckers**, and in the same area the globally threatened **Little Woodstar** came in to feed on some tiny flowers on several occasions allowing us all a look at this rare and erratic hummer. Once we reached the reserve we soon bumped into a fast-moving roadside flock that held a key target bird for us, the scarce **Blue-whiskered Tanager** that moved through soon after. With the flock heading in the direction of the 50-foot canopy tower, we decided to climb up there and wait for them to come through. Unfortunately the flock must have had a rapid change of direction and never did appear there, although we did add two raptor species while there, with first a dark morph **Short-tailed Hawk**, followed by a pair of **Black Hawk-Eagles** that glided by. Around the base of the tower the flowering shrubs attracted multiple **Purple-chested Hummingbirds** that continually fought off other individuals and species, including a lone **Blue-chested Hummingbird**, and a **Green Thorntail**. We spent the remainder of our time walking the trails and road checking passing flocks. One of these busy feeding flocks came low overhead at one point, when a **Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo** dangled above us for some time, the same bird party also contained three **Cinnamon Woodpeckers** in their midst, a single **Black-crowned Tityra**, and a small group of vocal **Scarlet-rumped Caciques** too. While we waited for this or another flock to come by we found a pair of tiny **Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrants** that at one point shared the same low canopy with another dinky flycatcher, the **Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher**. Not far from them, a male **Gray Elaenia** was another new flycatcher for the trip. Our final flock of the afternoon contained our first **Streak-headed Woodcreeper**, both **Orange-fronted and Red-headed Barbets** (see next photo on next page), and a **Griscom's (Moustached) Antwren**. Other "flashy" tanagers that we were only too pleased to see again included **Gray-and-Gold Tanagers**, **Golden-hooded Tanagers**, and several **Yellow-tufted (Black-faced) Dacnis**. The endemic **Dusky Pigeon** made another appearance by the roadside, where another male **(Western) White-tailed Trogon** was also found too. One interesting bit of behavior observed was a **Double-toothed Kite** that swooped in low and caught a large *cicada* right in front of us, that continued to buzz loudly while in its bill, before the kite finally realized it was being watched and decided to take its noisy meal elsewhere! By late afternoon we needed to be on our way, and apart from a brief stop for **Plumbeous Kites** gliding overhead just after

we left Silanche reserve, and a hovering **White-tailed Kite** on the outskirts of the city of Santo Domingo our journey through largely cleared areas was pretty uneventful.



November 17
RIO PALENQUE
Lowland forest
200m/656ft

For the guides and participants alike this is one of the best days of the latter part of the tour, as by moving significantly south of where we had been a whole new suite of birding possibilities opened up. This is illustrated well with the number of new birds added at **Rio Palenque**, even at this late stage of the tour: *thirty* new species were found on this day alone. Rio Palenque consists of a small island of lowland forest that has been protected by a Japanese foundation, and is hemmed in on all sides by large plantations, and

would surely not exist anymore had it not been put under the foundation's protection. It contains an interesting mix of birds, and has some additional southern birds right at the northern extremity of their range that we had not had a shot at previously on the tour. Some of these birds are more typical of the *Tumbesian* region that encompasses the southwest of Ecuador and northern Peru.

We began by going after one of the rarest Palenque birds, a rare ginger-colored flycatcher, the **Ochraceous Attila**. We had deliberately timed our visit to the plantation, where a pair still exist, early so that we could try and find it when it is at its most vocal, in the first hour after dawn. Unfortunately for us it was strangely silent on arrival and so we set about going after other stuff, while I kept one ear out for any hint of the Attila in the area. Putting a Pacific Pygmy-Owl tape on in this open area beyond the edge of the forest can work wonders with small birds that frequently come in to mob the intruding "owl". So to kick start our morning, I played the owl, and pretty soon we were surrounded by a mobbing party of small birds that included three new hummers: **Long-**

billed Starthroat, Baron's (Long-billed) Hermit, and an **Amazilia Hummingbird**. In addition to these birds a number of passerines came in too, like several male **Crimson-breasted Finches, Blue-necked Tanagers, Yellow-bellied Siskins, Tropical Gnatcatchers, Yellow-crowned, Southern Beardless, and Yellow Tyrannulets**. This same owl trick was used several times that day and also brought in **Greenish Elaenia, Purple-crowned Fairy**, a pair of **Sulphur-rumped Flycatchers**, and **Lesser Greenlet**. After we had finished with this first mobbing party we began to hear the melodious song of the **Rufous-browed Peppershrike**, and found a beautiful singing bird perched in a *macadamia* tree. Then my ears caught the sound of a close **Ochraceous Attila**, which had finally broken its "vow of silence" and began calling loudly as they more usually do. We quickly backtracked to the plantation and brought the bird in much closer with a little playback. This bright ginger flycatcher chose his spot well though, and it was only after some rapid maneuvering and quick fire directions that I could finally get the 'scope on it and everyone could get the views we craved so much.

The Attila now in the bag, I was happy to leave this area, although not before we had soaked up some great looks at a number of **Blue Ground-Doves** perched in the low trees and feeding on the ground nearby. On our way along the road we taped out a stubborn group of **Speckle-breasted Wrens** that remained in deep cover for most of the time, only emerging from the bamboo for short periods. After arranging our lunch reservation at the scientific station and paying our entry fees we walked a short way along a forest trail picking up two species of puffbird: **White-whiskered and Pied Puffbirds**, and a **Gray-and-gold Warbler**. We then checked a shaded forested section of road that bought us a very cooperative **Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner**, that allowed us to line it up in the 'scope and watch as it threw its head back dramatically to call back at us. Also along there were a couple of very "well-endowed" **Long-billed Gnatwrens**.

Finally, lunch beckoned, which we had at the scientific station shaded by the rainforest, and with a view down to the Rio Palenque sprawling into the distance below. After lunch we checked the river itself for waterbirds, adding **Pied-billed Grebes, Neotropic Cormorants** and a group of four dapper **Pied Lapwings** (that were our ultimate reason for checking the gravel banks and islands along the river). Several **Gray-breasted Martins** also dipped low over the water to drink. For our "final act" we checked another forest trail, finding a **White-throated Spadebill** in the same spot as it had been a few months previously, and getting some cracking looks at pied male **White-bearded Manakins** that were heard "fire cracking" in the forest there. Marcia also helped us all get decent looks at a **Pallid Dove**, another endemic to the Chocó region, perched just outside the forest. Finally, we had to leave Palenque behind, and head back to Santo Domingo for the penultimate night of the tour, although we added a final *thirtieth* species before we did so when a **Lesser Nighthawk** was found catching insects on the wing by the main road a short time after we had left the rainforest.

November 18

CHIRIBOGA ROAD *Foothill, subtropical, and temperate forest*
1100-3400m/3609-11 155ft

This final day is also another favorite with the guides as you are never really sure what to expect out of it, as the range of elevations (and therefore forest types) along the **Chiriboga Road** has a wide variety of birding possibilities associated with it. Our day began at an elevation of around 1100m (3609ft), along a foothill section of the road, after which we climbed into a range of elevations within the subtropics, before ascending further still into the temperate zone that peaked at 3400m (11 155ft), before we dropped sharply down to Ecuador's capital Quito (2800m/9186ft) for our final, farewell dinner.

Before we reached the Chiriboga Road we simply had to stop as several riverside trees



were decked out with white birds, making the tree appear as if it was decorated with massive white flowers or

Christmas decorations, when in fact it was a huge flock, numbering in the hundreds, of **Cattle Egrets**. A common bird maybe, but an impressive sight all the same. We kicked off on the Chiriboga Road in an area of patchy foothill forest, although it was the rushing Andean

river, the Rio Toachi that was our first focus as we searched for one of the most iconic birds of the Andes, the **Torrent Duck**. Not long after the shout went up, when a juvenile male was found perched on a spray-drenched boulder in mid-river. On the other side of the bridge presumably that birds "parents" were found, as an adult male and female were also feeding amongst the fast-flowing rapids there. Walking up the road from there we heard a number of **Esmeraldas Antbirds** that sadly all proved elusive and unhelpful in all our attempts to see them. A little further on we found a feeding flock that held a pair of **Ashy-throated Bush-Tanagers**, along with a **Smoky-brown Woodpecker**, **Orange-bellied Euphonia** (see photo above) and others. A pair of smart **Slaty Spinetails** were lured out from their usual hiding place in the undergrowth, and gave us some fine views, of what for me is a vastly underrated species. Also along this foothill section of the road, where the forest was at its most degraded, we found a group of **Maroon-tailed Parakeets** that were settled in the trees and gave us some close up looks in the telescope. As we climbed higher we found another mixed flock with an interesting mix of birds, our fourth and last sighting of the endemic **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager** coming here, along with a great look at a **Streak-capped Treehunter** that was associated with the same bird party.

Along the lower sections of the road the foothill forest had been largely cleared, with just some remnant patches remaining. However, as we climbed higher we rose into the subtropical zone where large swathes of bamboo-choked forest still remain. The extensive dense stands of *chusquea* bamboo are home to a number of specialist species, one of the smartest of these bamboo-lovers is the **Plushcap**, two or three of which we found along the road, along with our final new "endemic" of the trip (depending on taxonomy adopted), a pair of **Western (Black-eared) Hemispingus**. The same area also held another small flycatcher, the cute **Rufous-crowned Tody-flycatcher**, another bamboo-dwelling species. No one was complaining at another couple of sightings of the spectacular **Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan**, that we had seen earlier on the tour in the Tandayapa Valley. Not only one of the most colorful species in Ecuador, it is also endemic to northwest Ecuador and western Colombia, arguably bringing this bird added value by virtue of its endemic status. Another colorful endemic appeared for the last time for us a little higher up, when we bumped into another diverse feeding flock that held two to three **Toucan Barbets** (see photo below), in addition to a terrific **Crimson-mantled**



Woodpecker. It was great to get further looks at some of the most stunning of all the birds we had encountered previously in the Tandayapa area, to re-kindle memories of some of Ecuador's most spectacular species on our final day. As we continued along the road, and rose higher still, we paralleled a rushing mountain river that brought us our final member of the "rio trio", the **Torrent Tyrannulet**, that was along the same river that held another **White-capped Dipper**, our first since the very first day of the tour. The final member of the trio (all birds that are closely associated with fast-flowing Andean rivers), **Torrent Duck**, was seen that morning, so that we had seen the complete "Rio Trio" that day along the Chiriboga Road.

Finally, we rose higher still into the temperate zone where we even witnessed a heavy rain shower, something that had been absent for the tour by virtue of the long dry spell that Ecuador was “suffering” with at the time. Time was running out, although we did find a final flock before we headed in earnest to Quito, that held several **Black-crested Warblers**, a **Blue-and-black Tanager**, and our final new bird of the tour: a **Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet**. With the afternoon wearing on, and not knowing what traffic conditions would await us in Quito, we soon dropped down from a high temperate pass, descending swiftly to the southern edge of the city, nestled within the much drier inter-Andean valley.

Our last night was spent having the traditional final feast, and looking back at some of the great sights and birds we had bumped into along the way. On a tour like this it is impossible to pick out a clear winner for the bird of the trip, but these all got a more than worthy mention in our final tour review: **Torrent Duck**, **King Vulture**, **Gray-backed Hawk**, **Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan**, **Toucan Barbet**, **Cinnamon Woodpecker**, **Red-headed and Orange-fronted Barbets**, **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, **Long-tailed Tyrant**, **Andean Cock-of-rock**, **Orange-breasted Fruiteater**, **Blue-whiskered Tanager**, and **Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager**. If you look at some of the other birds that did *not* make the short list, it illustrates well the massive variety and choice available from a tour like this: **Giant**, **Yellow-breasted and Moustached Antpittas**, **Rose-faced Parrot**, **Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager**, **Glistening-green and Scarlet-and-white Tanagers**, **Scarlet-breasted Dacnis**, **Booted Racket-tail**, **Velvet-purple Coronet**, **White-capped Dipper**, and the rare and local **Ochraceous Attila** to name just a few “omissions”. Strangely, and much to my dismay, the rare **Black Solitaire** (my pick for top trip bird), did not get a mention either!

In many ways it had been a typical tour, with some of the most fantastic of the endemics being found as usual. However, in other ways it was rather different, in that we only experienced just an hour or so of rain at this time of year, when it is traditionally considered the start of the rainy season in the normally wet Chocó region, which probably bought about some of the lack of vocalizations in some areas, and would be expected to bring about low bird activity, as most Andean birds tend to prefer wetter conditions. However, by the end of the trip we had amassed a total of 433 species recorded, with nearly 410 of these being seen by at least one member of the group, a very good total for the region, a much higher level than we had experienced back on the same tour in July. This is one of the appeals of this trip, the predictability of some of the most high profile species, making many of them almost a given on most tours (e.g. Toucan Barbet, Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, Velvet-purple Coronet, Chocó Toucan), coupled with a degree of unpredictability for others (Blue-whiskered and Scarlet-and-white Tanagers, Tanager Finch, Little Woodstar, Lita Woodpecker etc.), that makes for an exciting tour, where you can never be quite sure what to expect. All this illustrates well what a truly exciting birding destination Ecuador is, that for many (including me) is considered one of the very best birding countries on Earth.

BIRD LIST

The taxonomy of the list follows: Clements, James F., White, Anthony W., and Fitzpatrick, John W. **The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World**. Cornell, 2007.

This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell in December 2008.

Species highlighted in **RED** are **CHOCÓ ENDEMICS**

Species highlighted in **BLUE** are **TUMBESIAN LOWLAND ENDEMICS**

(As listed in Ridgely, R. S. and Greenfield, P. J. **The Birds of Ecuador. Volume I: Status, Distribution, and Taxonomy**. Cornell University Press, Ithaca, New York).

Please note: Recent taxonomic changes (published by Cornell in December 2008) render some that were lumped on the Clements list part of a more widespread species, and so are not always considered as endemics, although are listed here for completeness as some authors still believe them to be separate species, and therefore still regarded as endemic.

MCF is an abbreviation of the [Mindo Cloudforest Foundation](http://www.mindocloudforest.org/)

<http://www.mindocloudforest.org/>, an Ecuadorian NGO.

JCF is an abbreviation for the [Jocotoco Conservation Foundation](http://www.fjocotoco.org/)

<http://www.fjocotoco.org/> another Ecuadorian NGO.

TINAMOUS

h Little Tinamou

TINAMIDAE

Crypturellus soui

Heard regularly in the lowlands around Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS

Torrent Duck

ANATIDAE

Merganetta armata

Three were seen at the start of the Chiriboga Road on our final day, a pair and a juvenile male.

GUANS, CHACHALACAS, CURASSOWS

Crested Guan

CRACIDAE

Penelope purpurascens

Two flew across the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande on our final morning there.

h Wattled Guan

Aburria aburri

Heard on several occasions at Tandayapa Lodge, calling in the pre-dawn darkness as we descended to the parking lot for our day trips out.

Sickle-winged Guan

Chamaepetes goudotii

Two birds came in to feast at Angel's fruit feeders, at Refugio Paz de las Aves. Another couple was seen in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

NEW WORLD QUAIL

h Rufous-fronted Wood-Quail

ODONTOPHORIDAE

Odontophorus erythrops

Heard distantly on several occasions around Rio Canande.

h **Dark-backed Wood-Quail**

Odontophorus melanonotus

Heard calling lower down the valley from us at Refugio Paz de las Aves.

GREBES

Pied-billed Grebe

PODICIPEDIDAE

Podilymbus podiceps

Three birds were seen along the river at Rio Palenque.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS

Neotropic Cormorant

Large groups of these cormorants were seen flying downriver at Rio Palenque, with another bird seen along the Rio Toachi on the Chiriboga Road.

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS

Great Egret

Small numbers were seen in the lowlands.

Little Blue Heron

One was seen at Rio Palenque.

Snowy Egret

A few were recorded in the lowlands and foothills.

Cattle Egret

Huge flocks of these egrets peppered the trees along the banks of the Rio Toachi, en-route to the Chiriboga Road. Small numbers were recorded elsewhere in the lowlands and foothills.

Striated Heron

Two birds were seen along the river at Rio Palenque.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Phalacrocorax brasilianus

ARDEIDAE

Ardea alba

Egretta caerulea

Egretta thula

Bubulcus ibis

Butorides striata

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Black Vulture

Commonly recorded in the lowlands and foothills throughout.

Turkey Vulture

Commonly recorded in the lowlands and foothills throughout.

King Vulture

Two of these majestic vultures were seen circling by a viewpoint along the Botrosa Road near Rio Canande reserve, while we lunched there.

CATHARTIDAE

Coragyps atratus

Cathartes aura

Sarcoramphus papa

OSPREY

Osprey

One of these “fish hawks” flew low over the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande reserve.

PANDIONIDAE

Pandion haliaetus

HAWKS EAGLES AND KITES

Hook-billed Kite

A female flew over the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande reserve.

Swallow-tailed Kite

A group of nine birds was seen along a forest road near Rio Canande reserve, including four or more that were perched up there too. A “lift off” of five or so birds was also observed from just outside Rio Silanche sanctuary too.

White-tailed Kite

One hovering bird was seen close to the city of Santo Domingo. This species was formerly considered rare and local in Ecuador although appears to be expanding its range in the country.

Double-toothed Kite

One was seen perched in the Canande area, and another dramatically swooped in and caught a cicada in front of us in the sanctuary at Rio Silanche.

Plumbeous Kite

Two were seen gliding just outside the reserve at Rio Silanche.

Plumbeous Hawk

A pair was seen in flight above the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

Barred Hawk

Three were seen at Mashpi Forest, in the foothills, with another single seen through the trees at Milpe too.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Chondrohierax uncinatus

Elanoides forficatus

Elanus leucurus

Harpagus bidentatus

Ictinia plumbea

Leucopternis plumbeus

Leucopternis princeps

Gray-backed Hawk

This tumbesian hawk, generally rare in the northwest (although perhaps spreading north?), was seen along the Botrosa Road, near the reserve at Rio Canande.

Roadside Hawk

Recorded a number of times throughout, in the lowlands, foothills, and subtropics.

Gray Hawk

Just one circling bird was seen by some, on the edge of Rio Palenque's lowland forest "island".

Short-tailed Hawk

A dark morph bird was seen gliding low over the tower at Rio Silanche.

Black Hawk-Eagle

A pair of these scarce eagles was seen over the tower at Rio Silanche.

Leucopternis occidentalis

Buteo magnirostris

Buteo nitidus

Buteo brachyurus

Spizaetus tyrannus

FALCONS AND CARACARAS

Laughing Falcon

A single bird was seen en-route to Rio Canande, and a pair was seen perched by the scientific station at Rio Palenque.

H Barred Forest-Falcon

Heard once, pre-dawn, in the Tandayapa Valley.

American Kestrel

One was seen en-route to Tandayapa from Yanacocha on our first day, and another was seen on our final day along the Chiriboga Road.

Bat Falcon

A strange record involved a bird high in the Tandayapa Valley on one day, a wanderer from lower elevations. Another was seen at great distance near to Rio Canande.

FALCONIDAE

Herpetotheres cachinnans

Micrastur ruficollis

Falco sparverius

Falco ruficularis

RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS

GO Brown Wood-Rail

Always one of the trickiest of the Chocó endemics to get a look at, and unfortunately this proved the case this tour too. Despite having one calling at close range for some time it stuck to deep cover, showing just to me, before slinking back into cover before anyone else got a look in.

RALLIDAE

Aramides wolfi

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS

Pied Lapwing (Pied Plover)

A group of four of these dapper shorebirds was found on a shingle island at Rio Palenque.

CHARADRIIDAE

Vanellus cayanus

SANDPIPERS

Spotted Sandpiper

A few were seen along the Rio Palenque.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Actitis macularius

PIGEONS AND DOVES

Rock Pigeon

Scattered sightings in urban areas throughout.

Band-tailed Pigeon

Recorded along the Old Nono-Mindo road, in the Upper Tandayapa Valley, at Mashpi Forest, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Pale-vented Pigeon

Three birds were seen on the way to Rio Canande from Pedro Vicente Maldonado, and another four were seen at Rio Palenque.

Plumbeous Pigeon

Several were seen in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

COLUMBIDAE

Columba livia

Patagioenas fasciata

Patagioenas cayennensis

Patagioenas plumbea

Ruddy Pigeon

Small numbers were seen in the lowlands, around Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Palenque.

Patagioenas subvinacea

Dusky Pigeon

Many were heard around Rio Canande, with one seen along the Botrosa Road near there, and another was seen in the sanctuary at Rio Silanche.

Patagioenas goodsoni

Eared Dove

A number were seen as we made our way up from Quito to Yanacocha on our first day, with others seen in Quito as we headed to the hotel at the end of the tour.

Zenaida auriculata

Ecuadorian Ground-Dove

A few were seen en-route to and from Rio Canande.

Columbina buckleyi

Blue Ground-Dove

Some fantastic views of both females and powdery blue males were had at Rio Palenque.

Claravis pretiosa

White-tipped Dove

Just one or two were seen flushed off roads in the subtropics.

Leptotila verreauxi

Pallid Dove

Perhaps due to the extremely dry conditions experienced very few were heard at all. A single bird darted over us in the forest at Rio Silanche, although Marcia got us the views we needed at Rio Palenque, when she found a perched bird on the forest edge.

Leptotila pallida

White-throated Quail-Dove

Stefan ran into one of these striking doves along the Potoo Trail at Tandayapa Lodge.

Geotrygon frenata

PARROTS

Maroon-tailed Parakeet

A few poor views of birds darting overhead were had at Mashpi Forest and Rio Canande, although our best views came within a foothill forest patch along the Chiriboga Road on our final day, where several perched birds were seen.

PSITTACIDAE

Pyrrhura melanura pacifica

Chestnut-fronted Macaw

Two birds flew over us calling along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

Ara severus

Pacific Parrotlet

A couple of small groups were seen en-route to Rio Canande, and another of these diminutive parrots was seen at Rio Palenque.

Forpus coelestis

Rose-faced Parrot

This superb parrot was seen first at Mashpi Forest in the foothills, with further sightings of perched birds close to Rio Canande. Sadly, we also saw one sitting on a shopkeepers shoulder in Pedro Vicente Maldonado, where they are now very rare.

Pyrilia pulchra

Blue-headed Parrot

Seen several times en-route to Rio Canande.

Pionus menstruus

Red-billed Parrot

Several groups were seen at Refugio Paz de las Aves, and in the Tandayapa Valley, where a group were scoped up perched in the trees.

Pionus sordidus

Bronze-winged Parrot

Seen a number of times in the foothills at Milpe (where a few were seen perched up), and also in the lowlands around Rio Canande, and Rio Silanche.

Pionus chalcopterus

Red-lored Parrot (Amazon)

A pair were seen passing overhead along the Botrosa Road.

Amazona autumnalis

Mealy Parrot (Amazon)

A number of these noisy parrots were found perched along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

Amazona farinosa

CUCKOOS

Squirrel Cuckoo

Scattered sightings throughout the tour.

CUCULIDAE

Piaya cayana

Smooth-billed Ani

First recorded in the foothills at Milpe, with further, regular sightings in the lowlands.

Crotophaga ani

OWLS

H Crested Owl

Heard calling distantly on our two nights at Rio Canande.

STRIGIDAE

Lophotrix cristata

H Mottled Owl

Three to four birds were heard on both nights at Rio Canande.

Ciccaba virgata

NIGHTJARS

Lesser Nighthawk

A single bird was seen hawking over a roadside field just outside Rio Palenque.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Lurocalis semitorquatus

Rufous-bellied Nighthawk

While we waited for a hoped-for Lyre-tailed Nightjar to appear (that sadly did not), one of these birds glided overhead.

Lurocalis rufiventris

Chocó Poorwill

This localized endemic was heard calling regularly on our two nights at Rio Canande, with good views had on the second night calling from a perch in roadside trees.

Nyctiphrynus rosenbergi

POTOOS

Common Potoo

This large nightbird swooped out in front of our vehicle headlights as we returned to Tandayapa Lodge one night, so we paused and watched on as it hawked insects from a number of low roadside branches.

NYCTIBIIDAE

Nyctibius griseus

SWIFTS

Chestnut-collared Swift

Just the one was seen in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

APODIDAE

Streptoprocne rutila

White-collared Swift

Recorded regularly at a number of sites on the tour, from the lowlands up into the subtropics.

Streptoprocne zonalis

Band-rumped Swift

Several large groups were seen close to Rio Canande.

Chaetura spinicaudus

Gray-rumped Swift

Recorded at several lowland sites, including Palenque, and Rio Silanche.

Chaetura cinereiventris

HUMMINGBIRDS

Bronzy Hermit

One of these scarce and localized little hermits was seen on the edge of lowland forest along the Botrosa Road.

TROCHILIDAE

Glaucis aeneus

White-whiskered Hermit

Small numbers were seen at Rio Canande, and Rio Palenque in the lowlands, and also at Milpe in the foothills, where several birds visited the feeders.

Phaethornis yaruqui

Tawny-bellied Hermit

A single bird was seen perched by a river while we waited (and waited) for the regular Yellow-breasted Antpitta to appear at Refugio Paz de las Aves. Another passed by along the Chiribogoa Road on our final day.

Phaethornis syrmatorphorus

Long-billed (Baron's) Hermit

One came in to scold my pygmy-owl tape at Rio Palenque, along with a whole mob of other birds that included Long-billed Starthroat, Crimson-breasted Finches, Yellow-bellied Siskins, Blue-necked Tanagers and others.

Phaethornis longirostris baroni

Tooth-billed Hummingbird

One was found calling from a high perch in Mashpi Forest.

Androdon aequatorialis

White-necked Jacobin

A regular at the hummer feeders at Rio Canande.

Florisuga mellivora

Green Violetear

Although outnumbered by its larger cousin, the Sparkling Violet-ear, there, a few came into the busy feeders at Tandayapa Lodge.

Sparkling Violetear

Good numbers were coming to the feeders at Tandayapa Lodge.

Green Thorntail

Good numbers were coming into the feeders in the Milpe Bird Sanctuary in the foothills, and a few were seen coming to the blooms at the base of the tower in the Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary.

Western Emerald

This dinky hummingbird was regularly coming to the frantic feeders at Tandayapa Lodge. All birds seen were males. NB. This species was recently (December 2008) split from Blue-tailed Emerald *C. mellisugus*.

Green-crowned Woodnymph

This sparkling hummer was regularly coming to the feeders at Milpe, and Rio Canande, with a few others seen at Rio Palenque.

Violet-bellied Hummingbird

A single bird came in to mob our pygmy-owl tape at Rio Palenque.

Andean Emerald

Good numbers were coming in to the feeders at Tandayapa Lodge, with others being seen at the Milpe feeders, and also at Refugio Paz de las Aves.

Blue-chested Hummingbird

One came in to the feeders at Rio Canande, where good numbers of its close congener the Purple-chested Hummingbird, were regularly coming in, and another was seen feeding on purple flowers within the Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary.

Purple-chested Hummingbird

This endemic was a common feature at the Rio Canande feeders, and several others were visiting (and defending), a bank of purple flowers at Rio Silanche.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird

One of the commonest hummingbirds in the region, seen on all days of the tour, and at a range of elevations from the subtropics right down into the lowlands at Palenque and Rio Silanche.

Amazilia Hummingbird

A single bird came in to mob a Pacific Pygmy-Owl tape at Rio Palenque, along with a Baron's Hermit, Long-billed Starthroat, Yellow-bellied Siskins, Crimson-breasted Finches, and Blue-necked Tanagers.

Speckled Hummingbird

Regularly recorded in the subtropics, in the Tandayapa Valley and at Paz de las Aves among other places.

Fawn-breasted Brilliant

Good numbers visited the feeders at Refugio Paz de las Aves and at Tandayapa Lodge.

Green-crowned Brilliant

A regular comer to the feeders at both Milpe and Canande. Another was also seen in the forest at Mashpi.

Empress Brilliant

A single striking male bird was visiting the Tandayapa Lodge hummer feeders on two days, with three or more birds also seen (both males and females) at the feeders at Refugio Paz de las Aves.

Buff-tailed Coronet

One of the commonest hummingbirds at Tandayapa Lodge, and traditionally one of the most aggressive species. We saw this for ourselves, as one bird vigilantly guarded one of the feeders from all comers. An exhausting process to watch, what with all the other hummingbirds swarming the feeders.

Velvet-purple Coronet

A truly dazzling bird, even for this impressive family that is so well represented in NW Ecuador. Recorded on just the one day at the feeders at Refugio Paz de las Aves, where at least two birds were regularly coming in. As with their congener, the Buff-tailed Coronet, also an aggressive and territorial hummer that we saw chasing and fighting with many others on our time there.

Mountain Velvetbreast

The least commonly encountered hummingbird in the temperate zone, at the wonderful Yanacocha feeders on our first day, where just one female bird came in several times.

Colibri thalassinus

Colibri coruscans

Discosura conversii

Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus

Thalaurania fannyi verticeps

Damophila julie

Amazilia franciae

Amazilia amabilis

Amazilia rosenbergi

Amazilia tzacatl

Amazilia amazilia

Adelomyia melanogenys

Heliodoxa rubinoides

Heliodoxa jacula

Heliodoxa imperatrix

Boissonneaua flavescens

Boissonneaua jardini

Lafresnaya lafresnayi

Brown Inca

Singles were seen visiting the Tandayapa Lodge feeders, and also again at the Paz de las Aves refuge.

Collared Inca

Surprisingly few were seen, with just a couple of sightings in the Upper Tandayapa Valley, and a female was seen in subtropical forest along the Chiriboga Road on our final day.

Buff-winged Starfrontlet

One of the commonest temperate hummingbirds at Yanacocha, where it was the most numerous hummer at the feeders. As we do not spend much time in the temperate zone on the tour, this was the only site where it was recorded on the tour.

Sword-billed Hummingbird

One of the most outrageous birds on the planet. Literally a living cartoon, with its massively outsized bill, the longest of any bird relative to body size in the world. Unsurprisingly, this got a few mentions when talking of birds of the trip at our farewell dinner. I can relate to this well, as having had my eyes opened to the existence of this bird through David Attenborough's "Birds of the Sun God" I came to Ecuador for the first time with only one real target in mind, to get a look at this outlandish hummingbird. We had three to four individuals at the crowded Yanacocha feeders on our first morning of the tour.

Great Sapphirewing

Another impressive hummingbird, although this one by virtue of its body size, being the second largest hummingbird in the world on body size (being larger than most tanagers seen on the tour!), only being beaten by the massive Giant Hummingbird. A number of males were visiting the feeders at Yanacocha on our first day.

Gorgeted Sunangel

An endemic species generally of the Upper Subtropics, and therefore we were surprised to see one coming in regularly at Tandayapa Lodge, in the lower subtropics, where it is just an occasional visitor. Others were seen in their more usual home, up in the higher elevations of the Upper Tandayapa Valley. Another was also seen at an exciting new foothill site visited on the tour, Mashpi Forest.

Sapphire-vented Puffleg

The commonest of the three pufflegs that occur at Yanacocha, we had good numbers of them at the feeders there on our first hummingbird-filled morning of the tour.

Golden-breasted Puffleg

Less common than its congener above, although two to three birds were still regularly coming in at the Yanacocha feeders, during our morning in the temperate zone.

Purple-bibbed Whitetip

Strangely hard to find at this time (perhaps due to the extremely dry conditions persisting right now in NW Ecuador?), just three birds were seen: one fed on flowers while we awaited the arrival of the Sickie-winged Guans at the fruit feeders at Refugio Paz de las Aves; another was seen at the Tandayapa Lodge feeders on one occasion; and a third bird was seen while birding the lower part of the Tandayapa Valley. Normally much more regular and numerous at the Tandayapa Lodge feeders.

Booted Racket-tail

One of Ecuador's most treasured hummingbirds that few will ever forget. Also one of the most common species at Tandayapa Lodge, where dozens of birds were "swarming" their frenetic feeders. Not an endemic but every bit as good as some of the more localizes species, by virtue of its tiny size coupled with an outrageous motmot-like raqueted tail, all topped off with a pair of cute white boots!
NB. Also known as **Raquet-tailed Puffleg** for good reason.

Black-tailed Trainbearer

A couple of these strikingly long-tailed birds were found in temperate scrub on our way up to Yanacocha.

Tyrian Metaltail

Regularly seen on our morning in the temperate zone at Yanacocha, where it was a regular at the busy feeders in the reserve.

Violet-tailed Sylph

Good numbers were coming to the feeders at Tandayapa Lodge and Paz de las Aves, with others seen in the foothills at Mashpi Forest.

Purple-crowned Fairy

Our first sighting came in the foothills at Milpe with others following in Rio Canande, and Rio Palenque, where an aggressive bird came into to mob our pygmy-owl tape.

Coeligena wilsoni

Coeligena torquata

Coeligena lutetiae

Ensifera ensifera

Pterophanes cyanopterus

Heliangelus strophianus

Eriocnemis luciani

Eriocnemis mosquera

Urosticte benjamini

Ocreatus underwoodii

Lesbia victoriae

Metallura tyrianthina

Agelaiocercus coelestis

Heliothryx barroti

Long-billed Starthroat

Helimaster longirostris

Just the one seen, when it came in to scold our pygmy-owl tape in the lowland reserve of Rio Palenque

Purple-throated Woodstar

Calliphlox mitchellii

One of the most numerous birds at the feeders on the veranda of Tandayapa Lodge, with another seen at the Milpe feeders in the foothills where it is far less regular.

White-bellied Woodstar

Chaetocercus mulsant

One bird came in for a short time to the feeders one afternoon at Tandayapa Lodge.

Little Woodstar

Chaetocercus bombus

Another good turn up from Marcia and Barbara who picked this one out near the reserve at Rio Silanche. This is an extremely scarce species that is categorized as Vulnerable by the IUCN.

TROGONS

TROGONIDAE

(Western) White-tailed Trogon

Trogon viridis chionurus

Seen on four occasions in lowland areas, including in Rio Silanche, Rio Canande, and Rio Palenque.

*NB. The South American Checklist Committee has recently accepted a proposal to split the western race, **chionurus**, from the eastern race, **viridis**. Under this proposal—that is likely to be later adopted under the official Clements list, (as Cornell are using the SACC list for the basis of taxonomy adopted in South America)—this western form keeps the name **White-tailed Trogon T. chionurus**, and the Amazonian White-tailed form is renamed as **Green-backed Trogo T. viridis**.*

H Collared Trogon

Trogon collaris

Heard in the foothills at Mashpi, and again distantly at Rio Silanche.

Masked Trogon

Trogon personatus

Only seen during one day in the Tandayapa Valley, when four different birds were seen, including an unbelievably approachable female bird at Tandayapa Lodge. In the last few months this bird has been hanging out the back of the lodge to the joy of many visiting photographers.

Black-throated Trogon

Trogon rufus

A male was seen at Rio Canande.

White-eyed (Chocó) Trogon

Trogon comptus

A pair put on a good show in the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation sanctuary at Milpe.

*NB. This has also been called **Blue-tailed Trogon** in the past too, and is currently given this name by the South American Checklist Committee..*

Golden-headed Quetzal

Pharomachrus auriceps

A pair was seen well in the subtropical forest within Refugio Paz de las Aves, and another female was found at Mashpi.

MOTMOTS

MOMOTIDAE

Rufous Motmot

Baryphthengus martii

One was seen along the Milpe Road in the foothill zone.

Broad-billed Motmot

Electron platyrhynchum

Three were seen at Mashpi Forest, and another at Rio Canande.

KINGFISHERS

ALCEDINIDAE

Ringed Kingfisher

Megaceryle torquatus

One was found perched on a wire by a huge quarry en-route to Rio Silanche.

Green Kingfisher

Chloroceryle americana

One was found perched on boulders overlooking the Rio Palenque.

PUFFBIRDS

BUCCONIDAE

Pied Puffbird

Notharchus tectus

A single bird was calling high in a dead tree at Rio Palenque.

Barred Puffbird

Nystalus radiatus

A pair were seen in lowland forest along the Botrosa Road, near to the reserve at Rio Canande.

White-whiskered Puffbird

Barbara, Colene and Bill bumped into a bird along the trails at Rio Canande, while the rest of us had to wait until Rio Palenque to catch up with it.

Lanceolated Monklet

This diminutive puffbird was calling at Milpe Gardens reserve, where I expected a long search to find this tiny puffbird hiding out in the dense foliage. I was a little shocked when Colene calmly she announced she had it (sitting right out in the open no less) just a minute or so later! I wish they were always like that.

JACAMARS

Rufous-tailed Jacamar

Two different birds were seen at Rio Canande, where many others were heard calling from the lowland forests there.

Malacoptila panamensis

Micromonacha lanceolata

GALBULIDAE

Galbula ruficauda

NEW WORLD BARBETS

Orange-fronted Barbet

This handsome Chocó barbet first made an appearance along the Botrosa Road near Rio Canande, where they were seen during both of our visits there. Later pairs were also seen at both Rio Silanche and Rio Palenque.

Red-headed Barbet

Seen at five sites at the tour, ranging from lowlands up into the subtropics.

CAPITONIDAE

Capito squamatus

Eubucco bourcierii

TOUCAN-BARBETS

Toucan Barbet

The “clown of the Andes” (by virtue of its myriad of colors and happy looking demeanour). We had great success on this tour with this striking Chocó endemic, seeing a couple of distant birds initially at Paz de las Aves, although having much better luck in the Upper Tadayapa Valley, at Mashpi Forest, and along the Chiriboga Road where some cracking views were obtained. Justifiably, this was earmarked as one of the birds of the tour during our farewell dinner in Quito.

SEMNORNITHIDAE

Semnornis ramphastinus

TOUCANS

Crimson-rumped Toucanet

Four sightings were made on the tour: at Refugio Paz de las Aves, Tadayapa Lodge, Mashpi Forest, and along the Botrosa Road near Rio Canande.

Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan

A pair of these fantastic toucans was seen during an otherwise quiet morning in the Upper Tadayapa Valley. Although when you get this bird little else matters at that point! A few others were also seen in the subtropical forests along the Chiriboga Road.

Collared (Pale-mandibled) Aracari

Seen first as we drove into Milpe sanctuary, and then seen on all of our days in the lowlands (at Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque). Finally, a single bird was seen in a patch of foothill forest right at the start of the Chiriboga Road.

Chestnut-mandibled Toucan

A pair were seen along the Milpe Road, with later sightings around Rio Canande.

Chocó Toucan

Several were seen at Milpe (including one sharing a tree with a pair of Chocó Trogons), and a number of them were also seen along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

RAMPHASTIDAE

Aulacorhynchus haematopygus

Andigena laminirostris

Pteroglossus torquatus erythropygius

Ramphastos swainsonii

Ramphastos brevis

WOODPECKERS

Olivaceous Piculet

Two of these dinky woodpeckers were seen en-route to Rio Canande.

Black-cheeked Woodpecker

Regularly recorded in the lowlands where it was the commonest woodpecker, recorded at Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

PICIDAE

Picumnus olivaceus

Melanerpes pucherani

Scarlet-backed Woodpecker

Veniliornis callonotus

A pair of these handsome woodpeckers were seen just outside the reserve at Rio Silanche.

Bar-bellied Woodpecker

Veniliornis nigriceps

A couple of people found one of these highland woodpeckers sneaking through the trees with a mixed flock at Yanacocha.

Smoky-brown Woodpecker

Veniliornis fumigatus

Recorded in the foothills at Mashpi, Milpe, and several times along the lower sections of the Chiriboga Road.

Red-rumped Woodpecker

Veniliornis kirkii

Several birds were seen around Rio Canande, and later at Rio Silanche.

Lita Woodpecker

Piculus litae

This scarce Chocó 'pecker was found within a feeding flock along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande, in company with Scarlet-browed Tanagers and others.

Golden-olive Woodpecker

Colaptes rubiginosus

Recorded at Milpe in the foothills, and then in the lowlands around Rio Palenque, and Rio Silanche.

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker

Colaptes rivolii

For me one of the best looking woodpeckers in Ecuador, with its bright crimson back and sulphur-yellow underparts.

Cinnamon Woodpecker

Celeus loricatus

Another very fine and striking woodpecker. One was seen along the Botrosa Road, and then three birds were found in a feeding flock at Rio Silanche.

Lineated Woodpecker

Dryocopus lineatus

Our first made an appearance late one afternoon along the Milpe Road, with others seen around Canande.

Powerful Woodpecker

Campephilus pollens

A male was seen near the Tandayapa Ridge in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Guayaquil Woodpecker

Campephilus guayaquilensis

A pair was found in the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation sanctuary at Milpe, and another was seen in the lowland forest "island" of Rio Palenque.

OVENBIRDS

FURNARIIDAE: FURNARIINAE

Pale-legged (Pacific) Hornero

Furnarius leucopus cinnamomeus

Recorded mainly alongside roads in the lowlands en-route to and from Rio Canande in the lowlands, and also around Rio Silanche and Rio Palenque.

NB. This is split off as Pacific Hornero in the Birds of Ecuador by Ridgely and Greenfield, although is considered a race of the widespread Pale-legged Hornero in the latest Clements list.

Azara's Spinetail

Synallaxis azarae

Heard a number of times in both the temperate zone (around Yanacocha), and in the subtropics of the Tandayapa Valley, where we had our one and only view.

H Rufous Spinetail

Synallaxis unirufra

Strangely quiet in our time around the Upper Tandayapa Valley, where none were heard at all. One was heard calling from a thick stand of Chusquea bamboo along the Chiriboga Road although could not be tempted out into the open.

Slaty Spinetail

Synallaxis brachyura

Colene and Bill got one of these very smart spinetails (a much under appreciated bird I feel), around the lodge at Rio Canande, and on our last day we all got great looks along the lower sections of the Chiriboga Road.

H White-browed Spinetail

Hellmayrea gularis

A few called from the dense understorey at Yanacocha, but remained in deep cover the whole time unfortunately.

Red-faced Spinetail

Cranioleuca erythrops

Three or more were seen with large mixed feeding flocks in several foothill reserves in the Milpe area.

Pearled Treerunner

Margarornis squamiger

This is one very smart furnariid, with rich rufous upperparts and clean white dotting below, that is a regular flock follower in the lower temperate zone and upper subtropics. We found our first in the temperate forests of Yanacocha on our first day, with others seen in passing flocks on several days in the Tandayapa Valley.

Streaked Tuftedcheek

One was seen poorly as it moved through with a feeding flock in the temperate forest of Yanacocha, although three or more birds were seen much better in mixed feeding flocks in the Upper Tandayapa Valley several days later.

Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii

Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner

A number of individuals were seen in the busy mixed feeding flocks experienced in the foothill forests around Milpe, and another passed through with a flock along one of the lower sections of the Chiriboga Road on our final day.

Anabacerthia variegaticeps

Lineated Foliage-gleaner

One gave us the run around, failing to perch for long enough for us to get a great look at it at Mashpi Forest, although one was seen much better the following day in the small private reserve of Milpe Gardens.

Syndactyla subalaris

Striped (Western) Woodhaunter

One was seen along the trails within the lowland forest reserve of Rio Canande.

Hylocistis subulatus assimilis

NB. This western "form" is considered a separate species from the eastern "race", Eastern Woodhaunter, in the Ecuador field guide by Ridgely and Greenfield, although on the latest Clements list is lumped with the eastern form as Striped Woodhaunter.

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner

This foliage-gleaner regularly turned up in foothill feeding flocks at Milpe, and also once in a foothill forest patch along the Chiriboga Road.

Philydor rufum

Striped Treehunter

Good views of a pair were had in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Thripadectes holostictus

Streak-capped Treehunter

Two sightings were made, firstly by Carla and Colene when they hung back at Tandayapa Lodge one afternoon, and later a bird showed well along a lower section of the Chiriboga Road.

Thripadectes virgaticeps

Flammulated Treehunter

We came upon one of these very boldly marked ovenbirds along one of the higher-elevation sections of the Old Nono-Mindo Road one afternoon.

Thripadectes flammulatus

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner

One put on a good show in Rio Palenque, even allowing us to scope it up as it called back at us, throwing its head back as it did so.

Automolus ochrolaemus

H Ruddy Foliage-gleaner

While we tried (in vain) to get a look at a close calling Brown Wood-Rail at Pedro Vicente Maldonado, one of these foliage-gleaners was heard calling in the background.

Automolus rubiginosus

Plain Xenops

One came through in a large feeding flock in the foothill reserve of Milpe.

Xenops minutus

Streaked Xenops

Also found within a mixed feeding flock at Milpe.

Xenops rutilans

WOODCREEPERS

Tyrannine Woodcreeper

One was found along a forest trail at Refugio Paz de las Aves.

FURNARIIDAE: DENDROCOLAPTINAE

Dendrocincla tyrannina

Plain-brown Woodcreeper

One was found at Milpe in the foothills, and others were seen in the lowlands at both Rio Silanche and Rio Palenque.

Dendrocincla fuliginosa

Olivaceous Woodcreeper

One was found along a forest trail in our day at Rio Palenque.

Sittasomus griseicapillus aequatorialis

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper

This tiny woodpecker was seen at both Milpe, and Rio Canande.

Glyphorhynchus spirurus

Strong-billed Woodcreeper

A close calling bird could not be located at Refugio Paz de las Aves, although one showed well later on the tour in an area of upper subtropical forest along the Old Nono-Mindo Road.

Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus

Northern Barred-Woodcreeper

One was seen along a steep forest trail at Rio Canande.

Dendrocolaptes sanctithomae

Black-striped Woodcreeper

Two sightings were made within lowland forests in the Rio Canande area, with a further sighting at Rio Silanche.

Spotted Woodcreeper

Recorded a number of times in both the foothills and lowlands, around Milpe, Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and along a lower section of the Chiriboga Road.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper

Just two sightings were made: at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Montane Woodcreeper

Recorded a number of times in the Tandayapa Valley, with further views at Refugio Paz de las Aves, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Red-billed Scythebill

A bird was found right by the lodge at Rio Canande on our final morning, and another was seen along a forest trail at Rio Palenque.

Brown-billed Scythebill

This impressive woodcreeper was found creeping up a thick mossy trunk by Hans in a small private reserve at Milpe.

Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus

Xiphorhynchus erythropygius

Lepidocolaptes souleyetii

Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger

Campylorhamphus trochilirostris

Campylorhamphus pusillus

TYPICAL ANT BIRDS

Fasciated Antshrike

A male was scoped up in a dense vine tangle along the Botrosa Road in our final morning in the Rio Canande area.

H Great Antshrike

Several were heard distantly en-route to Rio Canande, and later again in the lowland forest of Rio Palenque, where a pair could not be tempted out from a deep, dark vine tangle.

Western Slaty-Antshrike

A couple of singles were seen in Rio Canande, with other sightings following in Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Russet Antshrike

A pair was taped out from a passing flock in a small private reserve along the Milpe Road, and another two were seen along a forest trail at Rio Canande.

Plain Antvireo

A pair were found calling from a vine tangle in the lowland forest at Rio Palenque.

Spot-crowned Antvireo

A calling bird was seen late one afternoon along a forest trail in the lowland reserve of Rio Canande

H Checker-throated Antwren

Heard calling from the undergrowth several times in the lowland forest sanctuary at Rio Silanche.

Moustached (Griscom's) Antwren

*Heard calling distantly in flocks in the Rio Canande area, although we had to wait until to our visit to the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation sanctuary of Rio Silanche before we nailed one coming through with a mixed flock, that also held a pair of **Orange-fronted Barbets**.*

Pacific Antwren

A rusty-headed female (that is decidedly smarter than the male), was seen on our way to Rio Canande, with another seen there the following day by Barbara, Colene, and Bill.

White-flanked Antwren

Two birds were seen in a rainforest tangle along one of the trails at Rio Canande.

Slaty Antwren

Recorded at two sites in the foothills: Mashpi and Milpe.

Dot-winged Antwren

Barbara, Colene, and Bill had a pair along a forest trail at Rio Canande, and later we all enjoyed further sightings at both Rio Silanche and Rio Palenque.

Long-tailed Antbird

Barbara found one of these smart antbirds creeping through a bamboo thicket at Refugio Paz de las Aves, after our morning of "antpitta action" there.

THAMNOPHILIDAE

Cymbilaimus lineatus

Taraba major

Thamnophilus atrinucha

Thamnistes anabatinus

Dysithamnus mentalis

Dysithamnus puncticeps

Epinecrophylia fulviventris

Myrmotherula ignota ignota

Myrmotherula pacifica

Myrmotherula axillaris

Myrmotherula schisticolor

Microrhopias quixensis

Drymophila caudata

H Dusky Antbird

Cercomacra tyrannina

Heard in the lowlands at both Rio Canande and Rio Silanche.

Chestnut-backed Antbird

Myrmeciza exsul

One showed briefly at Rio Canande, with another no less showy bird seen at Rio Palenque.

GO Esmeraldas Antbird

Myrmeciza nigricauda

Heard in the foothills at a small private reserve at Milpe, and later three pairs were heard along the start of the Chiriboga Road where just the briefest view was had by me, the birds all remaining frustratingly deep in cover the whole time.

Immaculate Antbird

Myrmeciza immaculata

Heard distantly at Milpe, a male later showed to most people in lowland forest along the Botrosa Road.

Spotted Antbird

Hylophylax naeviioides

Barbara and Colene at least were well-placed when a male bird came in along the Botrosa Road, although unfortunately for the rest of us it soon slinked back into the understorey where it refused to play ball again!

ANTHRUSHES

FORMICARIIDAE

Black-headed Antthrush

Formicarius nigricapillus

A close calling bird gave us the run around for some time, refusing to budge out of a thick patch of vegetation in the understorey at Rio Canande. However, we stuck to the task and continued to try and lure this smart denizen of the forest floor in. Finally, the bird brazenly strolled out onto an open patch of leaf litter where it proceeded to call back at us completely in the open for a cracking unhindered view of this extremely smart antthrush. A very satisfying moment!

H Rufous-breasted Antthrush

Formicarius rufipectus

A few distant calling birds were heard in a foothill forest patch at the start of the Chiriboga Road.

ANTPITTAS

GRALLARIIDAE

Giant Antpitta

Grallaria gigantea

One of the undoubted highlights of our morning at the so called "antpitta farm", better known as Refugio Paz de las Aves, was getting up close and personal with three different Giant Antpittas.

Moustached Antpitta

Grallaria alleni

Another highlight from our morning at the antpitta farm was two very showy Moustached Antpittas, including one actually sitting just a few feet from a close Giant Antpitta! Only here can such scenes be possible.

H Chestnut-crowned Antpitta

Grallaria ruficapilla

Heard calling distantly in the Upper Tandayapa Valley, and again along the Chiriboga Road.

Yellow-breasted Antpitta

Grallaria flavotincta

The third of our "triumvirate" of antpittas seen at Refugio Paz de las Aves, and on this occasion the most stubborn of the bunch. We took the long walk down to the river and positioned ourselves for the final part of our antpitta show. Angel and his brother were initially supremely confident that it would show, although after a thirty minute wait things were looking bleak. Other groups on site packed up, gave up and wandered back up the trail. Angel and Rodrigo were still not giving up though and stuck to the task, even though it was looking increasingly futile. We lingered on for further fifteen minutes, when Angel finally conceded we might have to give it up, and so we began our climb back up the trail, only for a whistle to go up from Rodrigo still trying to tempt it out down in the valley below. We quickly hurried back to watch as Rodrigo came back down the trail calling to the unseen antpitta behind that he was trying to tempt to its regular feeding area. Not long after the Yellow-breasted Antpitta jumped out onto an open rock and feasted on the worms laid out for it, then slinked back into the forest and we congratulated ourselves for our extreme patience that on this occasion brought us due rewards.

H Rufous Antpitta

Grallaria rufula

Several calling birds were heard in the temperate forest reserve of Yanacocha.

Tawny Antpitta

Grallaria quitensis

One was seen standing on the side of the road for a short time as we made our way into Yanacocha.

TAPACULOS

RHINOCRYPTIDAE

H Blackish (Unicolored) Tapaculo

Scytalopus (unicolor) latrans

Regularly heard calling around Yanacocha reserve, where it is a common but difficult bird to see.

H Chocó Tapaculo

A bird I had hoped we would pick up at Rio Canande, although just one distantly calling bird was heard way up the trail from us that stubbornly refused to call again.

Nariño Tapaculo

Stefan walked into one of these skulking denizens of the forest floor along the Tandayapa Lodge trails.

Spillman's Tapaculo

Oftentimes one of the most tricky of all the tapaculos, despite being common in the Upper Tandayapa Valley. Barbara, Mary-Lou and I were treated to one coming out (uncharacteristically) in the open late one afternoon in the Upper Tanadayapa Valley.

H Ocellated Tapaculo

Despite several attempts to get distant calling birds to come in and give us a shot at them, we just could not get one anywhere near us unfortunately.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Brown-capped Tyrannulet

One was seen along a forest trails at Rio Canande, with others being heard in the lowlands of Palenque.

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet

Three sightings were made: at Rio Silanche, Rio Palenque, and along the Chiriboga Road.

White-tailed Tyrannulet

Regularly recorded in mixed feeding flocks within the Tandayapa Valley, with other sightings along the Chiriboga Road, the Old Nono-Mindo Road, and Refugio Paz de las Aves.

White-banded Tyrannulet

A few turned up in mixed feeding flocks at Yanacocha on our first morning.

White-throated Tyrannulet

Two birds were found within feeding flocks at Yanacocha.

Rufous-winged Tyrannulet

This delightful and sprightly tyrannulet was seen flitting around the Tandayapa Lodge garden one afternoon while we were trying to take in the frenetic hummingbird activity at their feeders.

NB. This species is confined to just northern Peru and western Ecuador, where it appears to undergo seasonal movements.

Yellow Tyrannulet

One came in with a mobbing flock of passerines when I popped a pygmy-owl tape when we first arrived at Rio Palenque.

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet

First seen along the way to Mashpi Forest in the foothills, others were seen within an open plantation on the edge of Rio Palenque reserve.

Gray Elaenia

One male was taped in within the lowland forest sanctuary at Rio Silanche.

Greenish Elaenia

A calling bird could not be located at Rio Silanche, although one was seen later coming into mob my pygmy-owl tape in a plantation on the edge of Rio Palenque.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia

Recorded at three lowland sites: La Celica en-route to Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Sierran Elaenia

Recorded several times in the Tandayapa Valley, and also around Refugio Paz de las Aves.

Torrent Tyrannulet

A pair of these water-loving flycatchers was found along an Andean river flowing alongside the Chiriboga Road.

Streak-necked Flycatcher

Just a couple of singles were observed in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Olive-striped Flycatcher

One was seen at Rio Silanche.

Scytalopus chocoensis

Scytalopus vicinior

Scytalopus spillmanni

Acropternis orthonyx

TYRANNIDAE

Ornithion brunneicapillus

Camptostoma obsoletum

Mecocerculus poecilocercus

Mecocerculus stictopterus

Mecocerculus leucophrys

Mecocerculus calopterus

Capsiempis flaveola

Tyrannulus elatus

Myiopagis caniceps

Myiopagis viridicata

Elaenia flavogaster

Elaenia pallatangae

Serpophaga cinerea

Mionectes striaticollis

Mionectes olivaceus

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher

Several calling birds could not be located at Rio Canande, although one was seen passing by in a mixed flock at Rio Silanche, and a final sighting was made in a plantation on the edge of Rio Palenque.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher

Recorded several times around Milpe.

Sooty-headed Tyrannulet

Two were seen at La Celica, en-route to Rio Canande, and another was seen in open country at Rio Palenque. Other unseen birds were heard around Rio Silanche.

Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet

The final addition of the tour was a single Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet seen along the Chiriboga Road on our last afternoon.

Chocó (Golden-faced) Tyrannulet

Two calling birds were seen well at a small private reserve at Milpe, and another was seen at La Celica. NB. This western form (**albigularis**) was recently (December 2008), split from **Golden-faced Tyrannulet Z. chrysops**, and is now considered a regional endemic species, confined to northwestern Ecuador and southwestern Colombia.

Ornate Flycatcher

This handsome flycatcher was first seen at Mashpi and Milpe in the foothills, and another very approachable pair was seen on our final day, along one of the lower sections of the Chiriboga Road.

Bronze-olive Pygmy-Tyrant

Just a brief sighting for few people at Mashpi Forest.

Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant

A pair of these tiny, tiny passerines was seen at Rio Silanche. This is the smallest passerine in the world at just 2½ inches or 6.5cm!

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant

Our first was seen at Milpe, with further sightings following at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher

A single bird was found in bamboo along the Chiriboga Road on our final afternoon.

Common Tody-Flycatcher

Singles were found at Milpe, La Celica (en-route to Rio Canande), Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher

Two singles were seen at Rio Canande, and another of these tiny flycatchers showed up sharing a tree with an even smaller bird, the **Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant Myiornis atricapillus**, at Rio Silanche.

Pacific Flatbill

One came through with a mixed flock at Rio Canande.

Yellow-margined Flycatcher (Flatbill)

A bird that came by with a mixed feeding flock at Rio Canande unfortunately did not linger for anyone else to see it.

White-throated Spadebill

One showed along a forest trail at Rio Palenque.

Golden-crowned Spadebill

One was seen well while we waited by a **Red-capped Manakin lek**, along a forest trail at Rio Canande.

Cinnamon Flycatcher

One was seen in a mixed feeding flock along the Old Nono-Mindo Road.

Tawny-breasted Flycatcher

One came through with a mixed flock at Milpe.

Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher

Two of these bright Myiobius flycatchers were seen in Rio Palenque, both birds coming in close to mob an owl tape.

Flavescent Flycatcher

One was seen in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Mionectes oleagineus

Leptopogon superciliaris

Phyllomyias griseiceps

Phyllomyias uropygialis

Zimmerius (chrysops) albigularis

Myiobius ornatus

Pseudotriccus pelzelni

Myiornis atricapillus

Lophotriccus pileatus

Poecilatriccus ruficeps

Todirostrum cinereum

Todirostrum nigriceps

Rhynchocyclus pacificus

Tolmomyias assimilis flavotectus

Platyrinchus mystaceus

Platyrinchus coronatus

Pyrrhomyias cinnamomeus

Myiobius villosus

Myiobius sulphureipygius

Myiophobus flavicans

H Orange-crested Flycatcher

Frustratingly, a calling bird in the Milpe Bird Sanctuary could not be located.

Bran-colored Flycatcher

One was seen near the town of Nanegalito, and another was seen along the Milpe Road late one afternoon.

Smoke-colored Pewee

Recorded at Paz de las Aves, and Mashpi, and also heard along the Chiriboga Road.

Western Wood-Pewee

This migrant from the north was seen at a number of sites, including Mashpi, Milpe, La Celica, and Rio Silanche.

Acadian Flycatcher

One of these boreal migrants was found near the parking lot at the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation reserve at Milpe.

Black Phoebe

*A few were seen perched atop boulders along the Rio Alambi, on the Old Nono-Mindo Road on our first afternoon, where we were treated to **Andean Cock-of-the-rocks** and **Beautiful Jays** along the same superb birding road. Others were also seen along the Rio Toachi, on the Chiriboga Road on our final day.*

Masked Water-Tyrant

This striking, ground-dwelling flycatcher was encountered regularly in the lowlands.

Crowned Chat-Tyrant

Two birds were seen alongside the temperate forest trail at Yanacocha.

Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant

Two different birds were observed in the Tandayapa Valley.

Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant

One was seen alongside the rushing Rio Alambi, on the Old Nono-Mindo Road, on our first afternoon.

NB. This flycatcher is closely associated with Andean streams and rivers.

Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant

One was seen at Yanacocha on our first morning.

Long-tailed Tyrant

A number of these were seen along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

Ochraceous Attila

One was seen in a plantation on the edge of Rio Palenque reserve.

*NB. This highly localized species is currently listed as **VULNERABLE**, as it is decreasing within its limited range in western Ecuador, and northern Peru. There is also a single old record from Colombia too.*

Rufous Mourner

One was found perched close along a forest trail at Rio Canande.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher

One was seen just outside the garden at Tandayapa Lodge, others were seen at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque, and finally one was seen along the Chiriboga Road on our final day.

Boat-billed Flycatcher

Several were seen in open country en-route to Rio Canande.

Rusty-margined Flycatcher

Commonly recorded in the lowlands, and in the foothills around Milpe too.

Social Flycatcher

Several were identified at Rio Silanche, La Celica, and around Rio Canande.

Golden-crowned Flycatcher

Two birds were seen en-route to Mashpi Forest.

Streaked Flycatcher

Encountered frequently in the lowlands, especially around Rio Canande. Others were seen at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Piratic Flycatcher

Two were seen en-route to Rio Canande, with another two seen in lowland forest near there, along the Botrosa Road.

Myiophobus phoenicomitra

Myiophobus fasciatus

Contopus fumigatus

Contopus sordidulus

Empidonax virescens

Sayornis nigricans

Fluvicola nengeta

Ochthoeca frontalis

Ochthoeca diadema

Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris

Ochthoeca rufipectoralis

Colonia colonus

Attila torridus

Rhytipterna holerythra

Myiarchus tuberculifer

Megarynchus pitangua

Myiozetetes cayanensis

Myiozetetes similis

Myiodynastes chrysocephalus

Myiodynastes maculatus

Legatus leucophaeus

Snowy-throated Kingbird

Recorded several times around Milpe, Rio Canande, and also once at Rio Palenque too.

Tropical Kingbird

Commonly encountered throughout the tour, especially in lowland and foothill areas.

Tyrannus niveigularis

Tyrannus melancholicus

COTINGAS

Green-and-black Fruiteater

Two sightings were made in the Upper Tandayapa Valley, the first involving at least three birds.

H Barred Fruiteater

Definitely one of the frustrating misses of the tour was having several close calling birds at Yanacocha that on this occasion we just could not pin down.

Orange-breasted Fruiteater

*Sitting within this exceptionally gifted and colorful crowd of cotingas it is hard to pick out some of the best ones with such tough competition, although this was picked out as one of the tour highlights at the end of the trip. Thanks to Hans we all got great looks at a male near Refugio Paz de las Aves on our second day, and then we also saw two to three birds, including another breathtaking male at Mashpi a few days later. The latter male lingered for some time in a nice low tree affording us spectacular looks at him, and so it was unsurprisingly picked as **ONE OF THE BIRDS OF THE TRIP**.*

Scaled Fruiteater

A male was found after hearing its strange, raptor-like call at the Mindo Cloudforest Foundation reserve of Milpe.

Andean Cock-of-the-rock

*One of the ultimate, classic Andean birds. We stopped off at a lek on our way from Yanacocha to Tandayapa Lodge on our first afternoon and had three to four birds displaying in the 'scope. Better views still were had the following day at Refugio Paz de las Aves, where a purpose built blind overlooks a lek where several vermillion-red males displayed and called noisily a short time after dawn. Another unsurprising candidate for **BIRD OF THE TRIP***

Rufous Piha

Arguably one of the very loudest birds in Ecuador, heard regularly in the lowland forests of Rio Canande, where at least three different birds were seen.

Olivaceous Piha

One was seen briefly in a fruiting tree at Paz de las Aves, and another was seen at Mashpi.

Black-tipped Cotinga

Carla came up trumps when she found a female bird along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande, and on the same afternoon Colene and Bill were treated to a snow-white male that appeared by the lodge, the latter an unusual location for the species ordinarily.

Purple-throated Fruitcrow

Two sightings of this highly vocal cotinga were made in the Rio Canande area, with another sighting in Rio Silanche.

COTINGIDAE

Pipreola riefferii

Pipreola arcuata

Pipreola jucunda

Ampelioides tschudii

Rupicola peruvianus

Lipaugus unirufus

Snowornis cryptolophus

Carpodectes hopkei

Querula purpurata

MANAKINS

Golden-winged Manakin

One male was seen all too briefly at Refugio Paz de las Aves, although two males were seen well feeding a fruiting tree within the Mindo Cloudforest reserve at Milpe.

Blue-crowned Manakin

Two different, electric blue-capped males were seen along a forest trail at Rio Canande.

White-bearded Manakin

Their loud fire cracking displays were heard around Milpe, Rio Silanche, Rio Palenque. Colene got lucky when she walked into a displaying male in full swing, while the rest of us enjoyed our best views along a forest trail at Rio Palenque.

Red-capped Manakin

A male and female were seen by all in Rio Canande.

PIPRIDAE

Masius chrysopterus

Lepidothrix coronata

Manacus manacus

Pipra mentalis

TITYRAS AND ALLIES

Black-crowned Tityra

A single bird was seen at Rio Silanche.

Masked Tityra

Recorded at Milpe, Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

H Thrush-like Schiffornis

A close calling bird was heard at Rio Canande.

Barred Becard

A single male was seen within a mixed feeding flock within the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Cinnamon Becard

Recorded regularly both in the foothills and lowlands throughout.

White-winged Becard

Just the two sightings: one in the Tandayapa Valley, and another at Mashpi.

Black-and-white Becard

Recorded at Mashpi, Milpe, and Rio Silanche.

One-colored Becard

Another regular becard of the foothills and lowlands, which we saw them on most of our days there.

VIREOS

Brown-capped Vireo

Several were seen in the Tandayapa Valley, and at the end of the trip along the Chiriboga Road.

Red-eyed Vireo

Small numbers were seen throughout, with just the one-day with no sightings. Recorded from the subtropics down into the lowlands.

Lesser Greenlet

This dowdy greenlet was first seen near La Celica en-route to Rio Canande, and later seen again at both Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo

One managed to avoid most people's gazes, when it came through in a large feeding flock along the Milpe Road. One showed much better in the MCF reserve of Rio Silanche.

Rufous-browed Peppershrike

A singing bird was 'scoped in an open plantation along the forest edge at Rio Palenque.

CROWS JAYS AND MAGPIES

Turquoise Jay

A highlight of our first morning was a small troop of these bright blue jays, that were later seen again in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Beautiful Jay

This scarce jay is a regional endemic and therefore was a high priority for this endemic-focused tour. After picking up White-capped Dippers, Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant, and watched a flurry of activity at an Andean cock-of-the-rock lek along the Old Nono-Mindo Road, we bumped into a noisy flock of these navy-blue jays, before we finally arrived at Tandayapa Lodge on our very first day.

SWALLOWS

Blue-and-white Swallow

Commonly recorded throughout the tour, from the subtropical zone down.

White-thighed Swallow

Recorded on just two days, along the Milpe Road, and then at La Celica, en-route to Rio Canande.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow

One of the most commonly encountered swallows in the lowlands.

Gray-breasted Martin

A couple of birds were seen swooping in to drink, along the Palenque River.

TITYRIDAE

Tityra inquisitor

Tityra semifasciata

Schiffornis turdina

Pachyramphus versicolor

Pachyramphus cinnamomeus

Pachyramphus polychopterus dorsalis

Pachyramphus albogriseus

Pachyramphus homochrous

VIREONIDAE

Vireo leucophrys

Vireo olivaceus

Hylophilus decurtatus

Vireolanius leucotis

Cyclarhis gujanensis

CORVIDAE

Cyanolyca turcosa

Cyanolyca pulchra

HIRUNDINIDAE

Pygochelidon cyanoleuca

Atticora tibialis

Stelgidopteryx ruficollis

Progne chalybea

Barn Swallow

One was seen at Rio Canande.

Hirundo rustica

WRENS

Band-backed Wren

First seen along the Botrosa Road, and later again at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Rufous Wren

Several of these temperate wrens were seen in the Jocotoco Foundation reserve of Yanacocha on our first day.

Sharpe's (Sepia-brown) Wren

A few came through with an understorey flock in an area of subtropical forest along the Old Nono-Mindo Road.

H Plain-tailed Wren

Heard several times along the Chiriboga Road.

H Whiskered Wren

Heard a number of times at Rio Palenque, although none would come in.

Bay Wren

Good views of this striking wren were had at Mashpi.

Stripe-throated Wren

Heard regularly along the forest trails at Rio Canande, where finally one was seen well at the end of our afternoon there.

Speckle-breasted Wren

A small group of these Tumbesian wrens was found in a thick stand of bamboo on the edge of Palenque reserve. This species is right at the northern extremity of its range there.

House Wren

One was seen at Rio Palenque, and others were heard around Paz de las Aves.

Mountain Wren

One showed up in Refugio Paz de las Aves, and another was seen in the Tandayapa Valley.

H Sedge (Grass) Wren

Some distantly calling birds were heard on our way up to Yanacocha.

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren

Seen a number of times in and around the Tandayapa Valley.

Scaly-breasted (Southern Nightingale) Wren

One showed well in the lowland forest at Rio Canande.

TROGLODYTIDAE

Campylorhynchus zonatus

Cinnycerthia unirufa

Cinnycerthia olivascens

Thryothorus euophrys

Thryothorus mystacalis

Thryothorus nigricapillus

Thryothorus leucopogon

Thryothorus sclateri

Troglodytes aedon

Troglodytes solstitialis

Cistothorus platensis aequatorialis

Henicorhina leucophrys

Microcerculus marginatus

DIPPERS

White-capped Dipper

Always a top draw bird for visiting birds, and a classic species of rushing, high Andean rivers. A couple were seen along the Rio Alambi on our way through to Tandayapa Lodge on our first day, (during a fantastic afternoon that also produced a group of Beautiful Jays, and a group of lekking male Andean Cock-of-the-rocks, in addition to a Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant). Finally, a last sighting was made along the Rio Toachi on the Chiriboga Road on our final day. One of the "Rio Trio", associated with rushing Andean rivers, along with Torrent Duck, and Torrent Tyrannulet. All of which were seen during our final day along the Chiriboga Road.

CINCLIDAE

Cinclus leucocephalus

GNATCATCHERS

Tawny-faced Gnatwren

Several of these rusty-faced "wrens" were found along the trails at Rio Canande.

Long-billed Gnatwren

Two separate sightings were made within the lowland forest of Rio Palenque.

Tropical Gnatcatcher

Gnatcatchers in many areas of the world can be highly responsive to the call of a pygmy-owl, oftentimes being the one of the first passerines to come in to scold and mob the call. A few of these birds came in likewise at Rio Palenque on playing a Pacific Pygmy-Owl tape.

POLIOPTILIDAE

Microbates cinereiventris

Ramphocaenus melanurus

Polioptila plumbea

Slate-throated Gnatcatcher

Two different birds were found within mixed flocks along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande during our first afternoon there.

Poliophtila schistaceigula

THRUSHES AND ALLIES

HAndean Solitaire

Commonly heard in the subtropical zone, although unfortunately we just could not get one close enough to see.

H Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush

One was heard calling at dusk in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

Swainson's Thrush

One was seen in the Upper Tandayapa Valley, and another in the lowlands at Rio Canande.

Black Solitaire

For me anyway the absolute TOP BIRD OF THE TRIP, although no one else backed me up on this when we were reviewing the trip at our farewell dinner! One of the rarest birds seen, and one that is hard to get ordinarily on this trip that does not get in to the heart of their range, which is further north, close to the Colombian border. Another one of our guides managed to find one at a new site, Mashpi, just a few days before, so I decided to change the schedule slightly at the promise of this and many other good birds there. In a morning spent at Mashpi we did not hear the solitaire at all but did pick up a number of Glistening-green Tanagers, Rose-faced Parrots, a number of Moss-backed Tanagers, Orange-breasted Fruiteaters, Pale-eyed Thrush, and Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers making the trip all very worthwhile. We decided to lunch beside the area where the solitaire had been seen two days earlier, and just moments after taking a bite of my sandwich heard its unmistakable whistle nearby. I jumped out of the vehicle alerted everyone, and then spent some time trying to locate it with no success. After some time no further calls were heard and it looked like it may have moved on, and just as we were on the verge of returning to our lunch the bird piped up and began whistling again. Another frantic ten minutes followed before finally the bird relented and perched right out in the open where this dapper thrush could be seen well by all. A great sighting, that was well worth all the stress in finding it!

Pale-eyed Thrush

Another good turn up at Mashpi, where a male was teed up in the 'scope.

Spectacled (Ecuadorian) Thrush

Singles were seen at Paz de las Aves, in the Tandayapa Lodge "garden", at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque. NB. This was recently lumped with Bare-eyed Thrush, and given the name Spectacled Thrush. This "form", or species, if split, is confined to humid regions in western Ecuador and NW Peru.

Great Thrush

Commonly recorded in temperate areas and upper subtropics (Yanacocha, Upper Tandayapa Valley, and the upper sections of the Chiriboga Road).

Glossy-black Thrush

Although heard on a number of occasions, seen only once, when a male was scoped up in the Upper Tandayapa Valley.

TURDIDAE

Myadestes ralloides

Catharus fuscater

Catharus ustulatus

Entomodestes coracinus

Turdus leucops

Turdus nudigenis maculirostris

Turdus fuscater

Turdus serranus

NEW WORLD WARBLERS

Tropical Parula

Scattered sightings were made in the foothills and lowlands.

Blackburnian Warbler

A sprinkling of sightings were made around the Tandayapa Valley, with further sightings at Milpe, and on the Chiriboga Road.

Black-and-white Warbler

One was found wintering along the Milpe Road.

American Redstart

A female was found wintering in a plantation at Rio Palenque.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat

A singing male showed well late one afternoon along the Milpe Road.

Masked (Black-lored) Yellowthroat

A male was found at La Celica, en-route to Rio Canande.

PARULIDAE

Parula pitiayumi

Dendroica fusca

Mniotilta varia

Setophaga ruticilla

Geothlypis semiflava

Geothlypis aequinoctialis auricularis

Slate-throated Redstart (Whitestart)

A number of these "whitestarts" were seen within mixed feeding flocks at various sites.

Spectacled Redstart (Whitestart)

Seen first at Yanacocha, with further sightings in the Upper Tadayapa Valley.

Gray-and-gold Warbler

This sharp-dressed warbler was seen along a forest trail at Rio Palenque.

Golden-bellied (Chocó) Warbler

Our first sighting came at Mashpi Forest, with further sightings within several large mixed feeding flocks at Milpe.

Black-crested Warbler

One showed late in the afternoon in the Upper Tadayapa Valley, and another couple were seen along a temperate forest section of the Chiriboga Road on our final day.

Russet-crowned Warbler

Recorded at just one site: the Upper Tadayapa Valley.

Three-striped Warbler

Five sightings were made: several in the Tadayapa Valley, at Milpe, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Buff-rumped Warbler

One of these ground-dwelling warblers was seen hopping around the flowerbeds in the MCF sanctuary at Milpe.

Myioborus miniatus

Myioborus melanocephalus

Basileuterus fraseri

Basileuterus chrysogaster chlorophrys

Basileuterus nigrocristatus

Basileuterus coronatus

Basileuterus tristriatus

Phaeothlypis fulvicauda

BANANAQUIT

Bananaquit

One came in to feed on sugar water in the feeders in the Milpe Bird Sanctuary, with further sightings around Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

COEREBIDAE

Coereba flaveola

TANAGERS AND ALLIES

Superciliaried Hemispingus

Several turned up in mixed flocks within the temperate forest at Yanacocha on our first morning.

Black-eared (Western) Hemispingus

One of the last new birds of the trip, a pair was seen in a dense stand of chusquea bamboo along the Chiriboga Road on our last afternoon.

Rufous-chested Tanager

A very smart orange tanager that was seen by Mary-Lou, Barbara and I, in the Upper Tadayapa Valley late one afternoon.

Cinereous Conebill

A number of these tanagers were seen in the temperate zone at Yanacocha on our first morning.

Blue-backed Conebill

Mixed feeding flocks held a number of these handsome conebills at the Yanacocha reserve.

Capped Conebill

Seen a number of times in many of the feeding flocks in the Tadayapa Valley.

Plush-capped Finch (Plushcap)

Another late addition, with two separate sightings along the Chiriboga Road on our final afternoon. One bird was in an understorey flock with a pair of Western Hemispingus, another bamboo-loving bird they frequently seem to associate with.

Dusky Bush-Tanager

One of the most numerous of the endemics that were the focus of the tour, regularly recorded in the Upper Tadayapa Valley, with further sightings at Refugio Paz de las Aves, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager

Recorded in the foothills at both Mashpi and Milpe.

Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager

A pair were seen along a lower section of the Chiriboga Road, on our final day.

Guira Tanager

Seen at Rio Silanche and also along the Chiriboga Road.

THRAUPIDAE

Hemispingus superciliaris

Hemispingus melanotis ochraceus

Thlypopsis ornata

Conirostrum cinereum

Conirostrum sitticolor

Conirostrum albifrons

Catamblyrhynchus diadema

Chlorospingus semifuscus

Chlorospingus flavigularis

Chlorospingus canigularis

Hemithraupis guira

Scarlet-and-white Tanager

One of the most stunning tanagers anywhere, and capped with the fact it is also a scarce Chocó endemic, it is therefore one of Ecuador's most highly desired tanagers. Marcia found a dazzling male along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande. Barbara also got lucky at Rio Silanche seeing a male there too, where it has become very rare in recent years.

Dusky-faced Tanager

A group of these understorey tanagers was found along a trail in the lowland forest of Rio Canande.

Ochre-breasted Tanager

Several of these "beefy" tanagers passed by with a large mixed feeding flock at Milpe, one of which even allowed us to tee it up in the 'scope. Others were also seen in the lowlands at Rio Canande.

Scarlet-browed Tanager

Several were found within a mixed flock along the Botrosa Road on our first afternoon around Rio Canande. The same flock also held another Chocó endemic, **Lita Woodpecker**. Another bird was glimpsed in another flock along a forest trail at Canande the following day.

White-shouldered Tanager

Recorded en-route to Canande, and also at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Tawny-crested Tanager

Seen on two days around Rio Canande

White-lined Tanager

Recorded at Milpe, and Rio Canande.

Summer Tanager

This boreal migrant was found at Milpe, Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Flame-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Tanager

Recorded on all days in the lowlands and foothills, where it was one of the commonest birds of forest edge and open areas.

Blue-gray Tanager

Regularly recorded in the foothills and lowlands.

Palm Tanager

Recorded at Milpe, Rio Silanche, and Rio Canande.

Blue-capped Tanager

A few singles were seen at Refugio Paz de las Aves, Upper Tandayapa Valley, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Blue-and-yellow Tanager

One was heard in an area of eucalypts on the road up to Yanacocha.

Moss-backed Tanager

At least four birds were seen in an area of foothill forest at Mashpi. In one flock a Moss-backed was in company with another Chocó specialty, the **Glistening-green Tanager**.

Hooded Mountain-Tanager

Three sightings were made: Firstly in temperate forest at Yanacocha, and then later twice in the Tandayapa Valley.

Black-chested Mountain-Tanager

Two birds came through in a mixed flock at Yanacocha that also held several **Hooded Mountain-Tanagers**, and a few **Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers** too.

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager

Several small groups came through with some fast-moving mixed flocks at Yanacocha, on our first day, and a few more were seen in an area of temperate forest along the Chiriboga Road on our last day.

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager

One of the most stunning and common birds within mixed feeding flocks within the subtropical zone. Recorded regularly in the Tandayapa Valley, at Paz de las Aves, and lastly along the Chiriboga Road.

Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager

We enjoyed a very good run with this Chocó specialty on this tour, with four sightings in all: first coming across a single bird near Refugio Paz de las Aves, a flock of four or more birds at Mashpi Forest, another few were found along the Old Nono-Mindo Road later the same day, and finally a small group were found along the lower part of the Chiriboga Road on our final day of the tour.

Chrysothlypis salmوني

Mitrospingus cassinii

Chlorothraupis stolzmanni

Heterospingus xanthopygius

Tachyphonus luctuosus

Tachyphonus delatrii

Tachyphonus rufus

Piranga rubra

Ramphocelus flammigerus icteronotus

Thraupis episcopus

Thraupis palmarum

Thraupis cyanocephala

Thraupis bonariensis

Bangsia edwardsi

Buthraupis montana

Buthraupis eximia

Anisognathus igniventris

Anisognathus somptuosus

Anisognathus notabilis

Grass-green Tanager

This large, deep green tanager with the burnt red face, and bright orange bill and feet, is rightly a crowd favorite. Several sightings were made in the Tandayapa Valley.

Fawn-breasted Tanager

One was seen at Refugio Paz de las Aves, with another en-route to Rio Canande showing to just the guide.

Glistening-green Tanager

For this tour we decided to check a new area, Mashpi Forest, with great success. We came across a number of feeding flocks with this Andean gem among them during our morning there, with five or six birds seen in all.

Gray-and-gold Tanager

Our first sighting came on the Botrosa Road near Rio Canande, although better views came the following day at the MCF Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary, where several sightings were made.

Blue-whiskered Tanager

This smart Chocó tanager made a brief appearance in a passing flock at Rio Silanche.

Golden Tanager

Recorded first at Paz de las Aves refuge, and then later in the Tandayapa Valley, Milpe, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Silver-throated Tanager

One was seen in the Tandayapa Valley, and another was found in the foothill reserve of Milpe.

Flame-faced Tanager

Several small groups of this striking tanager were seen in and around the Paz de las Aves refuge.

Rufous-throated Tanager

For me, a massively underrated species, a smart bird scaled black on the underparts and sporting a deep orange throat. Several birds came through low within a mixed feeding flock in the MCF Milpe Bird Sanctuary, and another single was found feeding in a fruiting tree at Mashpi Forest.

Bay-headed Tanager

Recorded at a number of sites, including Milpe, the Botrosa Road, Rio Silanche, Rio Palenque, and on the Chiriboga Road.

Rufous-winged Tanager

Just a few birds were seen briefly, coming through within a mixed feeding flock along one of the trails at Rio Canande.

Golden-naped Tanager

Scattered sightings were made in the Tandayapa Valley, and also in the Paz de las Aves refuge.

Metallic-green Tanager

Just the one bird was seen in the lower Tandayapa Valley.

Blue-necked Tanager

This striking tanager with the electric blue hood (just why is it not called Blue-HOODED Tanager?!), was found at Milpe, La Celica, Rio Palenque, and on the Chiriboga Road.

Golden-hooded Tanager

One was seen along the Botrosa Road, just before we finally left Rio Canande behind. Two sightings were also made in the MCF Rio Silanche Bird Sanctuary.

Beryl-spangled Tanager

Encountered a number of times in the Tandayapa Valley, and also around Refugio Paz de las Aves.

Blue-and-black Tanager

Three sightings were made in the Tandayapa Valley, and a final bird was seen on our last day along the Chiriboga Road.

Black-capped Tanager

A single bird was found down from Tandayapa village, and another was seen at Refugio Paz de las Aves.

Black-faced (Yellow-tufted) Dacnis

This shockingly bright tanager was first seen perched up in a cecropia beside the MCF Milpe Bird Sanctuary parking lot. Another pair was found en-route to Rio Canande, two further sightings were made in Rio Silanche, and a final sighting was made at Rio Palenque.

Chlorornis riefferii

Pipraeidea melanonota

Chlorochrysa phoenicotis

Tangara palmeri

Tangara johannae

Tangara arthus

Tangara icterocephala

Tangara parzudakii

Tangara rufigula

Tangara gyrola

Tangara lavinia

Tangara ruficervix

Tangara labradorides

Tangara cyanicollis

Tangara larvata

Tangara nigroviridis

Tangara vassorii

Tangara heinei

Dacnis lineata aequatorialis

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis

Three sightings were made on the tour, although unfortunately on all occasions the birds came through in a fast-moving feeding flock and so did not linger for long. Our first came en-route to Rio Canande, with another later the same afternoon in lowland forest along the Botrosa Road, and finally another was seen on the Botrosa Road a few days later.

Blue Dacnis

Two birds were seen in the Rio Canande area.

Scarlet-breasted Dacnis

Another very special Chocó tanager, the male of which has a vivid red belly, royal blue upperparts, and a piercing pale eye. Single birds were seen on all three of our days around Rio Canande.

Green Honeycreeper

Recorded daily in the lowlands of Rio Canande, Rio Palenque, and Rio Silanche.

Purple Honeycreeper

Seen at Rio Canande, Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Swallow-Tanager

A small group of electric blue males were seen en-route to Mashpi, with others seen at Milpe, La Celica, and along the Chiriboga Road.

Dacnis venusta

Dacnis cayana

Dacnis berlepschi

Chlorophanes spiza

Cyanerpes caeruleus

Tersina viridis

SPARROWS AND SEEDEATERS

Blue-black Grassquit

Several sightings were made in the lowlands.

Variable Seedeater

Commonly encountered along roadsides in lowlands.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater

Another regular seedeater, seen on most days in lowland areas.

Thick-billed (Lesser) Seed-Finch

Two females were found in the La Celica area on the way to Rio Canande.

Plain-colored Seedeater

A small group was found on the approach road to Yanacocha.

Glossy Flowerpiercer

Commonly encountered at the Yanacocha reserve.

Black Flowerpiercer

One was seen along the road into Yanacocha.

White-sided Flowerpiercer

Just two sightings: a female in the Tandayapa Valley, and a male along the Chiriboga Road.

Masked Flowerpiercer

Many birds were seen during our first morning in Yanacocha.

Tanager Finch

One of the rarest birds on the tour, and for that reason we kept trying a stakeout for the bird despite a number of failed attempts. Then finally late one afternoon we heard the high-pitched call emanating from the undergrowth, and finally we all got cracking views of this rare and unique Chocó brush finch, much to my relief. This capped a mega day where we had started the day with **Rose-faced Parrots**, continued with **Glistening-green and Moss-backed Tanagers**, enjoyed many **Toucan Barbets**, bumped into the rare **Black Solitaire**, then found a **Flammulated Treehunter**, before finishing with this very localized species. Days like this can only happen in the northwest of Ecuador!

Tricolored Brush-Finch

A pair was seen in the Tandayapa Valley, and further birds were seen along the Chiriboga Road too.

NB. Some authors, (e.g. in Ridgely, R. S. & Tudor, G. 2009. **Birds of South America. Passerines**.

Christophe Helm, London.), split the "form" in the northwest of Ecuador and southwest of Colombia as **Chocó Brush-Finch, A. crassus**. When split the species becomes a regional endemic.

Yellow-breasted (Rufous-naped) Brush-Finch

A few were seen at Yanacocha on our first morning.

EMBERIZIDAE

Volatinia jacarina

Sporophila corvina

Sporophila nigricollis

Oryzoborus (angolensis) funereus

Catamenia inornata

Diglossa lafresnayii

Diglossa humeralis

Diglossa albilatera

Diglossa cyaneus

Oreothraupis arremonops

Atlapetes tricolor crassus

Atlapetes latinuchus spodionotus

Crimson-breasted Finch

Six or more birds were seen at Rio Palenque, including a number of striking males.

Orange-billed Sparrow

Recorded at Milpe, Rio Canande, and Rio Palenque.

Stripe-headed Brush-Finch

One showed well at the end of our morning in Yanacocha.

Black-striped Sparrow

One was seen briefly at La Celica en-route to Rio Canande, and another showed much better along the Chiriboga Road.

Rufous-collared Sparrow

Scattered sightings throughout the tour.

Rhodospingus cruentus

Arremon aurantirostris

Arremon torquatus

Arremonops conirostris

Zonotrichia capensis

SALTATORS AND CARDINALS

Buff-throated Saltator

Recorded en-route to Rio Canande, at Rio Silanche, and Rio Palenque.

Black-winged Saltator

A few birds were seen in the Tandayapa Valley, Mashpi, La Celica, and at Rio Silanche.

Slate-colored Grosbeak

Heard calling regularly at Milpe, and along the Botrosa Road, where good views were had of a single bird on our last morning in the Canande area.

Golden-bellied (Southern Yellow) Grosbeak

Two were seen on our drive up to the JCF reserve at Yanacocha.

Rose-breasted Grosbeak

One was seen along the Milpe road, and another found in the lowlands at Rio Canande.

CARDINALIDAE

Saltator maximus

Saltator atripennis

Saltator grossus

Pheucticus chrysogaster

Pheucticus ludovicianus

TROUPIALS AND ALLIES

Scrub Blackbird

Recorded a number of times on the trip: at Milpe, en-route to Rio Canande, and around Rio Palenque.

Shiny Cowbird

A few were seen en-route to Rio Canande, at Rio Silanche, and around Rio Palenque.

Giant Cowbird

One was seen rather unexpectedly, in the town of Nanegalito close to Tandayapa Lodge.

go Yellow-tailed Oriole

One popped into view at Rio Palenque, though sadly did not linger. Another bird was heard calling near the reserve at Rio Silanche.

Scarlet-rumped Cacique

At least three birds were seen associating with a mixed feeding flock in the lowland MCF reserve of Rio Silanche, and another sighting was made at Rio Palenque.

Chestnut-headed Oropendola

A single bird was seen perched in a palm along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande. This species is rare in Ecuador, where it is at the very southern edge of its range that extends into Central America.

ICTERIDAE

Dives warszewiczi

Molothrus bonariensis

Molothrus oryzivorus

Icterus mesomelas

Cacicus uropygialis

Psarocolius wagleri

SISKINS AND ALLIES

Orange-crowned Euphonia

Two sightings of pairs were made along the Botrosa Road on one day.

Thick-billed Euphonia

Recorded in the town of Nanegalito near Tandayapa Lodge, near Rio Canande, and at Rio Palenque.

Fulvous-vented Euphonia

A male was found along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

White-vented Euphonia

A single male was seen in lowland forest along the Botrosa Road, near Rio Canande.

FRINGILLIDAE

Euphonia saturata

Euphonia lanirostris

Euphonia fulvicrissa

Euphonia minuta

Orange-bellied Euphonia

Euphonia xanthogaster

Recorded at a number of sites, including the Tandayapa Valley, Milpe, and around Rio Canande.

Andean Siskin

Carduelis spinescens

A large flock was seen in an area of open, highland scrub on our drive up to the Yanacocha reserve.

Yellow-bellied Siskin

Carduelis xanthogastra

A pair came in to mob our pygmy-owl tape at Rio Palenque, along with a crowd of other birds that included Crimson-breasted Finch, Long-billed Starthroat, Baron's Hermit, Amazilia Hummingbird, Blue-necked Tanager, and Yellow-crowned and Yellow Tyrannulets among others.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

PASSERIDAE

House Sparrow

Passer domesticus

A few were seen in urban areas, around Santo Domingo, Pedro Vicente Maldonado and en-route to Rio Canande.