



A [Tropical Birding](#) custom tour

SOUTHERN ECUADOR CUSTOM “TARGET TOUR”

30th November – 11th December 2017

Tour Leader: Sam Woods (Report and all photos by Sam Woods/Tropical Birding Tours)



This **CRESCENT-FACED ANTPITTA** was a worthy winner of the bird-of-the-tour competition, following views like this near **Cerro Acanama**

*The species photographed in this report are indicated in **red***

INTRODUCTION

Southern Ecuador may arguably be one of the most underrated of all South American tours. In spite of the region holding not only plentiful birds, with high diversity, and a long, long list of regional specialties (some of which are easiest in this area), it remains less popular than say northern Ecuador. Yet it boasts a similarly lengthy list of specialties, and also offers excellent lodging and food throughout. This is in no small part due to a network of reserves and lodges set up by the Ecuadorian NGO, the Jocotoco Foundation, which have made finding some of the star species both easier, and provided very comfortable places in which to find them. We visited no fewer than 5 of their reserves (Yungilla, Buenaventura, Jorupe, Utuana, and Tapichalaca), and stayed in 3 lodges that they have built to do so. These sites were combined with Manglares Churute Ecological Reserve, El Cajas National Park, and Acanama near Saraguro.



The tour was designed for a well-traveled birder, who'd previously covered some of northern Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, and Venezuela. And yet, even on a relatively short tour of Southern Ecuador like this, well over 100 lifebirds were possible (he finished with around 120 new species). The focus was therefore, (being a custom-built tour to specific needs), was to target the birds he'd missed on previous trips, or had never been in range for, or are largely only possible in this region, and not a big bird list (thus there are some strange birds not recorded, which we would normally get on our longer, set departure tour, as they were simply not looked for).



To that end, we were highly successful; we worked hard for the birds, and ended up with a large list of some of South America's most prized or rare birds, including **Crescent-faced, Watkins's, and Jocotoco Antpittas** (left), **Long-wattled Umbrellabird**, the incredible **Rainbow Starfrontlet**, **Violet-throated Metaltail** (an Ecuadorian endemic confined to the south), the local form of **White-vented (Ecuadorian) Plumeleteer** (that likely will be split and then become another Ecuadorian endemic), the critically endangered **Pale-headed Brushfinch** (another country endemic), the secretive **Rufous-necked Wood-Rail**, the handsome **Ecuadorian Trogon**, **El Oro Parakeet** (an endangered Ecuador endemic virtually confined to one reserve), the rare and local **Red-faced Parrot** (that gave exceptional views), **Ochraceous Attila** (a near endemic to Ecuador), the very local **Ecuadorian (El Oro) Tapaculo** that gave rare, excellent looks, **Elegant Crescentchest**, from an endemic South American family, "**Pacific**" **Royal Flycatcher** in mangroves on the first day, **Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant** at arguably the most reliable

site for this rare species on Earth, **El Cajas National Park**, the very rare **Chestnut-bellied Cotinga**, a species first described in 1994, **Club-winged Manakin**, a species endemic to the Choco region to the north, but just reaching into range on this tour, the often difficult **Masked Mountain-Tanager** in the elfin forests overlooking Cerro Acanama, a fine **Giant Conebill**, and the very local **Tumbes Tyrant**, only discovered in Ecuador as recently as 2008, where a very small population exists. **90 specialties of the region were recorded on this tour!**

With such a stellar cast of birds, the choices for birds of the tour were many, but were decided as follows:

TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR

- | | | |
|---|--------------------------------|------------------------|
| 1 | CRESCENT-FACED ANTPITTA | Acanama |
| 2 | JOCOTOCO ANTPITTA | Tapichalaca |
| 3 | ECUADORIAN HILLSTAR | El Cajas National Park |
| 4 | WHITE-TIPPED SICKLEBILL | Buenaventura |
| 5 | TUMBES TYRANT | Zapotillo |

Day 1 (1st December): Manglares Churute Ecological Reserve to Yungilla (via El Cajas)

After a night arrival the evening before in Ecuador's second city, **Guayaquil**, we set out before dawn for **Manglares Churute Reserve** to the south of the city. Our journey there became overcomplicated, when the hotel in Guayaquil lost the keys to our vehicle, and the replacement vehicle also needed to be replaced itself on the way. While we waited we found a regional endemic, the locally common **Fasciated Wren**, some tiny **Pacific Parrotlets**, **Ecuadorian Ground-Dove**, and **Orange-crowned Euphonia** too. However, even though we arrived around an hour later than planned, the birding was excellent, and our early misfortunes were soon forgotten. We started out in the **La Flora** section of the reserve, birding in humid forest and then the mangroves for which the site is named. The forest was hot and bug-filled, but was worth the time, as we found one of our first targets, **Black-headed Antthrush** (below), which gave excellent views, as it sung to us from the forest floor...



In the forest there, we also found a flock of **Guira Tanagers**, but were frustrated by calling **Gray-breasted Flycatchers**, and could not locate the hoped-for **Pacific Royal Flycatcher**, which according to our on-site guide, **Jairo** was virtually silent in this dry period of the year. We continued trying, but finally decided to check the mangroves for another target bird instead. As we walked towards the boardwalk there, use of a **Pacific Pygmy-Owl** tape brought in some other birds of interest, including **Short-tailed Woodstar**, **Amazilia Hummingbird**, and **Orange-crowned Euphonia**. The tape also elicited a response from the owl, which was only poorly seen at that time. As we entered the mangroves, we quickly picked up on the call of a **Pacific Royal Flycatcher**, and Jairo swiftly located its source. By this point, we had all but given up on this species for this site anyway; (we had a further shot down the road at **Buenaventura Reserve**).

At the end of the boardwalk, we found the mud exposed, and therefore in perfect condition for another target species, which soon walked out of the mangroves and gave prolonged views: **Rufous-necked Wood-Rail** (next page). Nearby forest edge also brought us in contact with **Superciliated Wren**, **Ecuadorian Piculet**, and **Gray-and-gold Warbler**, all endemics to this dry Tumbesian region, which is shared only with northern Peru. We also enjoyed good looks at a male **Jet Antbird** there too. Our forest birding for the day was done, and next we targeted a more widespread species that is normally difficult to find in this part of Ecuador, but had fortuitously been located roosting by our own local guide on his farm recently! As we left *La Flora* though **Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl** was noted in a roadside wire. After passing a **Greater Ani** (rare in western Ecuador), we were soon staring at a roosting **Common Potoo** (below), as hoped...



In the same area, a **Pearl Kite** nest was also located. Then we moved on to a waterbird site, *La Lagartera*, also part of the same area. This was superb and packed with birds, scarce **Comb Ducks** stood alongside **Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks**, which were regularly spooked by a local **Peregrine Falcon** on the hunt. The hulking shapes of some **Horned Screamers** were also located in the marsh, a rare species in Ecuador and arguably the only place where it can be regularly found in the country. However, we were not there for waterbirds, but a *dove*, specifically the tiny **Plain-breasted Ground-Dove**, of which around a half dozen were seen, flashing their distinctive rufous wing patches in flight.

As lunchtime approached, we located a **Pied Lapwing** foraging along a muddy edge, noted several **Cocoi Herons**, and **Savanna Hawk**, before we finally reconnected with our original driver and vehicle, as an extra key had been flown in by then, and we enjoyed a few **Peruvian Meadowlarks** on the way out for lunch in nearby **Puerto Inca**.

After lunch, we headed towards **Yungilla**, driving through the highlands of **El Cajas National Park** on the way, where brief stops added two target birds, first **Tit-like Dacnis** foraging within the flaky *polylepis* trees up there, and also chalked up **Mouse-colored Thistletail**, removing that from our remaining target list in doing so. We also saw **Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant** (a rarity for which this is the best site in Ecuador), and **Blue-mantled Thornbill** before we left. In the evening, we stayed in an excellent guesthouse in **La Union**, a tiny town a stone's throw from **Yungilla Reserve**. A night time vigil for the rare **Buff-fronted Owl** was futile, in constant rain.



Day 2 (2nd December): Yungilla to Buenaventura (via Santa Rosa)

The night before had closed with rain falling, and similarly, the day opened with the same conditions, in spite of the local park ranger, **Enrique**, having predicted the night before that the morning would be clear! Nevertheless, we plowed on, and walked to a set of feeders within **Yungilla Reserve**, the haunt of one of the World's rarest birds, **Pale-headed Brushfinch**, all 340 of which are found within this one, small reserve (160 hectares). However, there is hope, as the species has been increasing in population size since 2003, due to the efforts of the reserve owners, the **Jocotoco Foundation**. In spite of its rarity, we felt in with a decent chance, as a feeder set up in recent years has proved very successful in attracting this extremely local species. The rain continued, but after a short wait the first of six or so **Pale-headed Brushfinches** visited, along with another species on our target list, **Gray-browed Brushfinch** (part of the **Stripe-headed Brushfinch** complex that was split up a few years ago). The regular **Chestnut-crowned Antpitta** also showed up too. We also located more *brushfinches* away from the feeders during a walk for further, more widespread target species for the tour, and found some of these, with **Purple-collared Woodstar**, **Golden (Southern Yellow) Grosbeak**, **Ecuadorian Thrush**, and **Rufous-chested Tanager**, before we pulled out, and headed south towards **Buenaventura Reserve**. However, we made some fruitful stops before and after lunch around the city of **Santa Rosa**. In between these we enjoyed some excellent seafood in **Puerto Jeli**, which has a notable local reputation for that. The shrimp ponds were packed with widespread species, like **Franklin's Gulls**, **Sandwich Terns**, **whistling-ducks**, more **Comb Ducks** (normally hard to find in Ecuador), **Aningas**, **Ringed and Green Kingfishers**, **Roseate Spoonbills**, and **Wattled Jacanas**. However, within the surrounding scrub, we found some good birds, by using the call of a **Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl** to stir up a frenzy of local birds, which held among them a handsome male **Crimson-breasted Finch** (next page), a handful of **Masked (Black-lored) Yellowthroats**, a party of **Parrot-billed Seedeaters**, multiple **Vermilion Flycatchers**, a single tail-wagging **Collared Antshrike**, several **Pacific Parrotlets**, **Croaking Ground-**

Doves, our first **Golden-faced (Loja) Tyrannulet**, and another **Superciliated Wren**. We also managed to call in a **White-throated Crake** during the afternoon, another requested species. We arrived at **Umbrellabird Lodge**, in **Buenaventura Reserve** in the late afternoon, following a **Buff-rumped Warbler** down the road, and flushing a **Pallid Dove** off the road, as we drove in approaching the lodge.



Day 3 (3rd December): Buenaventura

This was set up to be one of the big tour days, as we were scheduled to go after some huge target birds in the varied **Buenaventura Reserve**, which has a mixture of Andean foothill forest, from around 1310ft/400m to above 3940ft/1200m in altitude. As well as having a mix of altitude, **Buenaventura** also has an odd collection of birds, some associated with the wet **Choco** bioregion of northwest Ecuador, at the southern limit of their ranges, like **Esmeraldas Antbird**, **Club-winged Manakin**, and **Long-wattled Umbrellabird**, and some associated with the drier **Tumbesian** region of southwest Ecuador, like **Gray-backed Hawk**, **Red-masked Parakeet**, and **Ochraceous Attila**. The reserve is also home to two birds with tiny ranges, largely encompassed within this one, 2000-hectare reserve; **El Oro Parakeet**, and **Ecuadorian (El Oro) Tapaculo**. All of these, *and many more*, were on our target list for our day and a half within the area.

We started out by taking breakfast at the lodge (located in the lower reaches of the reserve) as light came quickly, and brought with it *hummingbirds* to the feeders surrounding us, and birds to the lights that had attracted moths through the night. This included a **White-whiskered Puffbird** sat on the railing below the light, while some **Rufous-headed Chachalacas** gathered in trees alongside.

A party of **Collared Aracaris** also plundered the local fruit feeders. A **Plumbeous Kite** arrived on its regular lodge-side perch too. In spite of the considerable action around us, we were disciplined and left for the “Umbrellabird Trail”, knowing one of our best chances to see this giant cotinga, would be shortly after dawn. One of the excellent lodge guides, Leo, accompanied us for the morning, and was invaluable in pointing us in the right direction for some tough species that day. Rain was falling lightly, though steadily, as we descended the trail, getting some looks at a **White-whiskered Hermit**, and a **Brownish Twistwing**, just as we reached the narrow valley where the *Long-wattled Umbrellabird* can usually be found. I felt the rain was not heavy enough to bother the *umbrellabird*, as did Leo. However, after some time there, and with none heard, we realized it was just not happening that morning, and we climbed back up the trail, vowing to return that afternoon. An old dirt road allows great access to the reserve’s varied forest, extending right from the lodge to the higher sections of the reserve, without a break in the forest along the way. We birded some of the lower sections, finding an extremely cooperative **Esmeraldas Antbird** by the roadside, and a **Slate-colored Grosbeak** a little higher up. The main thrust of our journey though was to reach the very upper part of the property, where the misty forests holds one of Ecuador’s rarest birds, the extremely local, *El Oro Parakeet*. This upper section is prone to long spells of low cloud hanging over the reserve. Restricting viewing, and so we were keen to get there before this descended on the area. We made it just in time, with clear skies greeting our arrival, and a small group of **El Oro Parakeets** perched in the trees being present at this time too. They had never come so easy! Shortly after, the clouds blew in and blocked the trees from view, by which time the parakeets had taken to the wing anyway. We had timed it perfectly, by sheer good fortune.



Our next stop was a set of hummingbirds in the upper part of the reserve, which brings in some notable species, not found around the lodge feeders. Notably, this included some “Choco” species more normally associated with sites around *Tandayapa* and *Mindo* in northern Ecuador, like **Violet-tailed Sylph**, **Brown Inca**, and the spectacular **Velvet-purple Coronet**. However, none of these were on our target list of birds, as the gentleman on the tour had visited that part before, so none of these were lifers, but another possible visitor would be, one with a taxonomic headache attached to it. Some people referring to it as *White-vented Plumeleteer* (e.g. on the eBird/Clements list), while others classify it under another species, *Bronze-tailed Plumeleteer*, (e.g. on the IOC list). Therefore, it is perhaps unsurprising that this distinctive form, (which is confined to southwest Ecuador and northern Peru), is also sometimes suggested as a distinct species, **Ecuadorian Plumeleteer** (page before). We waited a while, and finally noticed one sitting calmly below the feeders.

Our next stop was to try for a *Rufous-winged Tyrannulet*, which we did not manage to find. However, a male **Club-winged Manakin** was located sitting within close range. Following this, we visited some nearby roadside forest in the hope of some other targets, and came upon an excellent feeding flock that kept us entertained for a while, and held two requested birds: the erratic **Rufous-winged Tyrannulet**, and the bulky **Ochre-breasted Tanager**. In addition to these participant lifebirds, we also noted **Flame-faced, Golden, Silver-throated, Blue-necked, and Rufous-throated Tanagers** within the same flock, and also located a super **Guayaquil Woodpecker** (another target bird), in the same active area.



Green Honeycreepers were regular visitors to the hummingbird feeders at **Umbrellabird Lodge**

In spite of lunch beckoning, we made a final foray in these higher portions of the reserve for one of Ecuador's most difficult birds, the **Ecuadorian (El Oro) Tapaculo**, which, (like the parakeet), has a global range restricted to almost entirely within the reserve, and numbering probably only a few thousand individuals at best. It is a notoriously difficult bird to hear, let alone see, as they are extremely patchily distributed within the reserve, many of the 100 or so territories being in parts of the property that are inaccessible to the public. This is where Leo's intimate knowledge of the bird was critical, as he is one of a team of Jocotoco Foundation staff that conduct annual surveys of the species. He took us straight to the only currently accessible place, and we played the call and waited, and waited. At first, we were only greeted with silence, with little bird activity at this late hour of midday, as expected. But, then, distantly, the repetitive call of the *tapaculo* reached our ears. However, in spite of some effort the bird remained downslope, and steadfastly refused to come nearer to us. There was only one option left, and that was to "go in", which essentially meant a scramble through thick vegetation (stopping for a **Crimson-rumped Toucanet** on the way down), on a very steep slope to delve deeper into its territory. This was very difficult, and therefore would not be done on most organized tours to the area, as it would have been near impossible with a larger group.

After struggling down the slope, we finally found a steady foothold, and then played the call again; this time the bird called close, and then appeared, and remained in a branch in full view! By this time, we were running late for lunch, but felt pretty justified with the *tapaculo* sighting making this all very worthwhile. We took lunch back at the lodge, while humming birds buzzed all around us, and we took some time to admire these post-lunch, where we added yet more hummingbirds to the day list, like **Violet-bellied Hummingbird** (photo page 39), **Green Thorntail**, and **Green-crowned Brilliant**, bringing our species list of hummingbirds for the day to 17 species! Hummingbirds were not the only visitors though, as **Bananaquits** (below) attended too, as did some very confiding male **Green Honeycreepers** (photo page before)...



In the afternoon, our main target was now clear. We had enjoyed a smashing day, with plentiful target birds in the bag, and some real specialties of the area. However, there was one gaping hole in our list: *Long-wattled Umbrellabird*. Therefore, we set off from the lodge just after 3pm, in readiness to walk down to the lek area again. However, as we pulled out of the lodge parking lot, *Jean-Francois* gestured towards something in the trees near the lodge, none other than a **Long-wattled Umbrellabird** (below) sat in beautiful light!



This **Long-wattled Umbrellabird** was appropriately photographed beside **Umbrellabird Lodge**

For the remainder of the afternoon, we walked a forest trail a little higher in the reserve, in the hope of a *Plain-backed Antpitta*, **Zeledon's Antbird**, **Tricolored (Choco) Brushfinch**, and **Ashy-throated (Bush-Tanager) Chlorospingus**. It was pretty quiet, but we still managed to get three out of the four, with the *antpitta* being the very predictable omission. We also upgraded our views of **Spotted Nightingale-Thrush** following a lengthy duel with the species! That night, after dinner, one of the regular **Black-and-white Owls** was in the mood to call, and call often right beside the lodge, and so was easily located sitting on one of its regular perches immediately alongside the restaurant.

Day 4 (4th December): Buenaventura to Jorupe via El Empalme

Having got the vast majority of our target birds at **Buenaventura** during the amazing day before, we were sitting pretty, with merely a slim list to be searching for. We spent most of the morning at this reserve, birding the lodge and lower road, before departing from one **Jocotoco Foundation** reserve for another, the very different **Jorupe**. However, in between, we birded two significant birding areas, both of which added key species for the tour. Around the lodge lights in the morning, we finally got looks at a **Greenish Elaenia**, a common species that had been taunting us. Again, a **Plumbeous Kite** took up its regular position overlooking the lodge, but another large shape was less expected, as a **Long-wattled Umbrellabird** flew in, and could be seen right from **Umbrellabird Lodge** itself, how very appropriate indeed. From there, we tried a trail with plentiful beautiful red **Heliconias** in bloom, a spectacular flower that is pollinated by the **White-tipped Sicklebill**, a much-wanted hummingbird that was merely glimpsed the day before. While I searched flowers lower down the trail **Jean-Francois** had the views of a lifetime, as one fed at close range at length, proving one of his favorite moments of the tour. Then, we walked down the road in the hope of hearing a **White-backed Fire-eye**.

We did see a **Pallid Dove** perched in a tree as we did so, another target, which we would like to have seen sitting in a more open spot. Finally, on entering a trail for a short distance we finally heard our target antbird, and after a lot of nervous excitement. The bird eventually calmed down, and a male perched out in the open.

Our last remaining major targets were **Ochraceous Attila** (right) and **Gray-backed Hawk**. The latter normally fairly



easy to find in the area, but foggy conditions the day before likely did not help with this cause; but while **Buenaventura** is traditionally a good site for the **attila**, local information indicated they were not calling at this time, and so we were unlikely to find one. In spite of this, we tried around a traditional site below the lodge, and quickly got a response from this ordinarily vocal bird. It ended up being as vocal as usual, and soon a pair launched themselves into the trees overhead and gave great views of its gingery body. This was one of the most highly rated birds of the tour by the participant. It is rare and local in Ecuador, and while it is also found in Peru, is very rarely seen there, so effectively Ecuador is the only reliable country for the species.

Masked (Black-lored) Yellowthroat also featured again further on down the road, as did fine views of the first **Red-masked Parakeets** (below) of the tour.

With sunny weather replacing the low cloud of the day before, we felt better about trying to find the **Gray-backed Hawk** too, but were embarrassingly upstaged by our driver Fernando who pointed one out to us that we had not noticed! He then rubbed this in, by finding a second bird on the way out from the reserve! However, it did not matter to me who found it, we had another specialty in the bag, and promptly removed this from our target list.



It was then time to head south towards Peru. As we traveled deeper into the Tumbes region (shared only with northern Peru), the landscape changed dramatically, as we swapped humid evergreen tropical rainforest for dry, semi-arid hills, with cacti, brushy scrub, and shorter, deciduous trees. This stark change in habitat opened up a whole new suite of birds on our avian hit list, and so we took lunch at a strategic spot along the way south, with some of these in mind. As we ate our lunch, we managed to get a local **Elegant Crescentchest** calling, and so lunch was soon eaten in a more hurried fashion. The bird proved typically challenging to see (although they look nothing like them, this family was formerly included within the *tapaculos*, with which they share the distinctive trait of being very secretive and tricky to lay eyes on). We decided the only way to see it, would be to get into the scrub with it, which we did, and promptly got great looks of the bird as it called in front above us, while our first **Black-capped Sparrow** also shared the same scrubby patch with us. While we were watching the *crescentchest*, the main birding reason for stopping at this place, had also began calling continuously: **Watkins's Antpitta** (next page) another Tumbes specialty.

Like so many *antpittas* do, it toyed with us for a while. Brief views were had of one individual, before we focused on another one, which we tracked down to a small, isolated forest patch, making us feel a little more confident at being able to see it. However, it had sat itself in a masterful place for not being seen. We shuffled this way and that, and finally, Jean-Francois located the bird buried in a tangle, which had been previously obscured by a rock, blocking our vision. This and the *crescentchest* were more than enough justification for the stop, but we also got our first **Scarlet-backed Woodpecker** and **Long-billed Starthroat**, and another **Collared Antshrike** and **Ecuadorian Piculet** too.



We made just one final stop for the day, before we reached **Jorupe Reserve**, and **Urraca Lodge**, in the evening. This was at another area of low trees and scrub, near **El Empalme**. We knew time was waning, and we also knew that the species we had come here for, **White-headed Brushfinch** could be a tricky customer, but not on this occasion, when four birds responded to tape, and emerged into a large tree in the open; arguably this is the most handsome of all the Ecuadorian brushfinches. The same area also held the only **Baird's Flycatcher** of the tour, another regional specialty, and our first **Tumbes Sparrow** (next page) too. After that we took the final leg of our journey (an hour further south, in sight of the Peruvian border), to the reserve in time for dinner. However, our birding was not done after that, as we made a check of the parking lot for **Peruvian Screech-Owl** (page 38) two of which were seen there, before we retired, following another very satisfying day in the field.



Day 5 (5th December): Zapotillo and Jorupe

Having checked into the lodge within **Jorupe Reserve** for three nights, it could appear we had plentiful time on our hands. However, the lodge acts as a base not only to explore the excellent surrounding forest, with its beautiful towering *Ceiba* trees, but also to make trips west to the dry scrub of **Zapotillo**, and also up into the nearby highlands, and another Jocotoco Foundation reserve, **Utuna**. So, there were three main areas to fit in, and many birds too. We started out by leaving the reserve early in the morning, to visit **Zapotillo**, where a tiny population of the **Tumbes Tyrant** (next page) was discovered in 2004, which promptly removed the species from the list of Peruvian endemics in the process! The reasoning behind visiting this area before we had even sampled the birds around the lodge was that the open brushy habitat at Zapotillo often makes it very hot and uncomfortable later in the day, and that can also be detrimental to bird activity. With this in mind, we arrived not long after first light, began walking the road indicated to us by one of the Jorupe guides, Leo, where the tyrant had most recently been seen. It did not take long to hear one, and this very cooperative individual soon emerged out of the thick brush from which it called to give superb open views. One of the other usual targets at the site is **Tumbes Sparrow**, which we did see, but had already chalked that species up the day before; **West Peruvian Dove** was also seen for the only time on the tour. The other main species of interest to us, was **Tumbes Hummingbird** (page 36), which responded quickly to playback of a *Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl* call. While far from picturesque, the local rubbish dump was active with birds, a **White-headed Brushfinch** (page 17) putting on quite a show there, along with **Golden (Southern) Yellow Grosbeak** (page 35), and **Collared Antshrike**. After picking up another male **Crimson-breasted Finch**, we decided to return to **Jorupe**, finding **Plumbeous-backed Thrush** and **White-edged Orioles**, two further regional specialties, on the return journey.



Tumbes Tyrant was discovered in Ecuador in 2008, where a tiny population exists near the town of **Zapotillo**

We arrived back at **Jorupe** mid-morning, which left us with plenty of time for further birding in that morning within the reserve, and to check the feeders for **Pale-browed Tinamous**. There was no sign of the tinamous unfortunately, but our time at the feeders was far from quiet, with the namesake bird of the lodge, the spectacular **White-tailed Jay** (*Urraca means Jay*), coming in regularly to feed in grain, as did a **Whooping Motmot**, several impressive **Guayaquil Squirrels** and a pack of **Rufous-headed Chachalacas**; a male **Ecuadorian Trogon** (page 18) was seen right above the feeders too. Also, we quickly picked up a calling **Gray-breasted Flycatcher**, and a **Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner**, during a short walk from the lodge before a super lunch, accompanied by their tasty local hot sauce (“aji”).

After lunch, we went for an extended walk in the surrounding forest with the reserve’s administrator and excellent local guide, **Leo** (*but not the same Leo that helped us in Buenaventura reserve*). Things could not have gone better during this, as first found a pair of **Blackish-headed Spinetails**, got better looks at the handsome **Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner**, after *Jean-Francois* located one quietly foraging on the forest floor. **Speckle-breasted Wren**, and several **Gray-and-gold Warblers** showed too.



White-headed Brushfinch at Zapotillo

As expected, finding **Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner** proved a little more difficult, but by the end of the afternoon had been gifted fantastic looks at this other key endemic. Similarly, we also located a pair of **Slaty Becards**, aided by Leo's intimate knowledge of the best spots. Back at the feeders in the late afternoon, we hoped, again, for a visit from one of the local **Pale-browed Tinamous**, which had visited at this hour the day before. Sadly though, despite plenty of other attendees, including a small group of furtive **Blue Ground-Doves**, there was no sign of the *tinamous*, except for their constant calling the in the late afternoon from the hills around the reserve. We had, unquestionably, enjoyed a brilliant day, packed with many of the target birds and specialties that we were seeking in the area. However, this was soured a little by the failure of the *tinamou* to appear, and then a post dinner attempt at finding the rare and unpredictable **Buff-fronted Owl**, ended with close calls from an individual (which was unexpected itself, as they seem to call only rarely), and then a frustrating flight view in the spotlight, as it flew away never to call again that night, (while we were there anyway).



Ecuadorian Trogon poses above the feeders at Urraca Lodge, Jorupe

Day 6 (6th December): Utuana, Sozoranga, and Jorupe

Today saw us visit an entirely new area of the southwestern highlands of the Andes, where a handful of specialties occur that are only shared with northern Peru. This meant a return to forest, and cloud forest at that, accessible just an hour's drive from the extremely different **Jorupe Reserve**. As we left **Jorupe** a pair of **Watkins's Antpittas** hopped just in front of the vehicle, in the reserve's parking lot. Our main destination was another Jocotoco reserve, **Utuana**, but before we reached there we took a littler side trip into the tiny Andean town of **Sabianga**, where a group of over 40 **Chestnut-collared Swallows** (next page) were nesting in the center of town. Between there and the reserve, we made some short roadside stops for **Black-cowled Saltator** (page 37), and also found a boisterous of party **Three-banded Warblers**, a calling male **Chapman's Antshrike** (page 37), and a single **White-winged Brushfinch**.

Once we reached **Utuana**, we found the entrance track in good condition allowing us to drive directly to the hummingbird feeders, deeper inside the reserve (this is not always possible following heavy rains). However, we did not start at the feeders but searched for one of the most wanted birds of the day nearby. It did not take Leo long to locate a pair of **Black-crested Tit-Tyrants**, which came in close on several occasions.



At least 42 **Chestnut-collared Swallows** were busy nest building in the tony town of **Sabianga**, near **Jorupe**

Next up, were the feeders themselves, where **Rainbow Starfrontlet** was quite rightly the most desired bird, but was also the most abundant species in attendance as usual, but a handful of **Purple-throated Sunangels**, was visiting too. Others that species came in also included, **Speckled Hummingbird** and **Mountain Velvetbreast**. Having enjoyed the hummingbirds, we set off for three main other target birds within the reserve, the bamboo loving **Gray-headed Antbird**, **Jelski's Chat-Tyrant**, and **Piura Hemispingus**. A fair amount of walking was required, but we did soon locate an active **Jelski's Chat-Tyrant**, and then, much later found a pair of vocal **Piura (Black-eared) Hemispingus** (next page), which came in close for wonderful views of this beautiful tanager. Other birds we found in the reserve included multiple **Line-cheeked Spinetails**, **Crimson-mantled Woodpecker**, and **Blue-capped and Silvery Tanagers**. However, the **Gray-headed Antbird** remained both unseen and unheard, by the time we reached the vehicle to take our boxed lunch in the field.

We headed on down the road after lunch, trying likely bamboo patches for **Gray-headed Antbird**, finally hearing one, but not getting close, and also having the same experience with a calling **Rusty-breasted Antpitta**, which fell silent once we had crawled through dense vegetation to try to get it.



***Piura Hemispingus**, regarded as a distinct species under IOC taxonomy, but as a distinctive form of Black-eared under Clements/eBird taxonomy, is endemic to the Tumbes region*

We also visited **El Tundo Reserve** close to **Sozoranga**, where we found another bird on our list, **Bay-crowned Brushfinch** (next page). We returned to **Urraca Lodge** in **Jorupe** in time for a possible late afternoon showing from the **Pale-browed Tinamou**. We made it back in time for a performance, but it failed to materialize, instead we got further looks at the local **White-tailed Jays** (next page) and **Black-capped Sparrows**, feeding where we'd hoped the *tinamou* would be, while a **Red-masked Parakeet** was found perched beside the lodge too. Thus, following a 5:30pm sighting on the day we had arrived, the further two days had drawn a blank at this time when we'd been ready on site. To make matters worse, we heard it had come in that morning around 7am, rubbing salt in to the wound. Therefore, our plan for the following morning had become crystal clear; wait at feeders for as long as possible, before we had to move on out for another **Jocotoco Foundation** reserve, **Tapichalaca** in the temperate cloud forests on the other, (eastern) side of the Andes...



Day 7 (7th December): Jorupe to Tapichalaca (via Utuana area)

We took our final breakfast as light came to the feeders at **Jorupe Reserve**, with the usual suspects quickly in attendance; **White-tailed Jays**, **Black-capped Sparrows**, a **Whooping Motmot**, and an **Ecuadorian Thrush**. A **Yellow-tailed Oriole** made itself conspicuous around the lodge too, while the usual **Amazilia (Loja) Hummingbirds** (below) regularly fed on flowers alongside. Then, suddenly, there was an intruder in their ranks, and a plump shape walked out of the woods, and on to the spread of grain on the forest floor: **Pale-browed Tinamou**, finally, at the final attempt.



Amazilia (Loja) Hummingbirds were seen frequently in the **southwest**

With that, we hit the road and pulled out of the parking lot in **Jorupe**, seeing some perched **Red-masked Parakeets**, but only high-flying **Gray-cheeked Parakeets**, our final **Gray-and-gold Warblers** of the tour, and finding a small party of **Tumbes (Short-tailed) Swifts**, right as we exited the reserve for the last time. Our route to **Tapichalaca** saw us pass by the road beneath **Utuana** reserve one more time, and so we concentrated on the patchy bamboo stands along this highway, to try and find either **Rusty-breasted Antpitta** or **Gray-headed Antbird**, but preferably both! We failed to even hear the *antpitta*, after trying several spots, but did talk a local farmer into letting us onto his property, where we could hear an *antbird* calling upslope. It was typically skulking, but eventually good views were obtained. Other birds seen in these areas that morning included, more **Three-banded Warblers**, and our only (distant), **Andean (Slaty) Thrush** of the trip.

In the late afternoon, we rolled into **Tapichlaca Reserve**, and checking into **Casa Simpson**, the lodge on the property. However, we spent little time checking in, as the hummingbird horde at the feeders was likely to hold some lifers for Jean-Francois and so we soon abandoned the bags for the feeders. **Little (Flame-throated) Sunangel**, **Amethyst-throated Sunangel**, and **Chestnut-breasted Coronet** were all requested species; other visitors included, **Long-tailed Sylph**, **Collared Inca**, and **Speckled Hummingbird**. One of the local rangers had also advised us to be vigilant for a local **Undulated Antpitta** on a nearby trail, and so after getting the hummingbirds “required”, we slowly walked the trail, soon hearing another regional specialty, **Chusquea Tapaculo**, which is quite common in the reserve. In spite of its abundance, I was not expecting it



to come out and sit in the open on the trail for some time! Having walked one way through the stated area for the antpitta, and come up blank, we slowly walked back, returning to the lodge empty-handed. However, it was a bright evening, and there was still light along the trail way past six, and so we gave it one more try. As Sam rounded a corner, right there on the trail in full sight was the speckled form of an **Undulated Antpitta** (left). Both man and antpitta were clearly equally stunned, as it quickly took off into the

forest before Jean-Francois could get to see it, as he was out of view just behind. So, we chose to back off in the hope that it would return to the trail, once we were out of sight. We awaited a solid five minutes and then crept back towards the corner, where on reaching the corner it was immediately on view just 15 feet away! A magic end to the day. A try that night, after dinner, for **Rufous-banded Owl** was rather less successful, with some very close encounters, but only audible ones, the bird never letting us in sight of it.

Day 8 (8th December): Tapichalaca and Valladolid area

This day encompassed all that is great about birding in southern Ecuador. Sites close to each other of a very different nature, and subsequently birdlist. We started out by spending the morning within the wet cloud forests in **Tapichalaca Reserve**, at some 8530ft/2600m elevation, and then, after lunch descended quickly into the foothills below the small Andean town of **Valladolid**, dropping around 4920ft/1500m in doing so, and entering a whole new world of birds.

The first major target of the day, in this particular reserve, was all too obvious, the bird that gave the foundation its name, and the species that led to the foundation of the foundation, the **Jocotoco Antpitta**, a bird discovered in the reserve (which was not a protected area back then) in 1997, and subsequently led to the formation of the NGO, which later evolved to now own a network of fantastic reserves in Ecuador, mostly located in the south. While there was also a **Chestnut-naped Antpitta** on offer, being regularly fed worms behind the lodge at the time, we decided not to visit on that bird, in favor of spending more time looking for

birds which would be lifers along the trail up to the *Jocotoco Antpitta* feeding station. As we started up the trail, we quickly saw some **Scaly-naped Parrots** pass overhead, and heard one of these targets, **Orange-banded Flycatcher**, another specialty of the region.



It proved easy to hear, but initially difficult to see, until one was found calling from within a feeding flock that also held **Lacrimose and Hooded Mountain-Tanagers**, the stunning **Grass-green and Golden-crowned Tanagers**, **Pearled Treerunner**, **Streaked Tuftedcheek**, **Blue-backed Conebill**, **Yellow-breasted (Rufous-naped) Brushfinch**, and some tail-wagging **Gray-hooded Bush-Tanagers** (the latter one of the birds on our “hit list”). We also saw some raucous **Golden-plumed Parakeets** in the area too. As we made our way steadily to the *antpitta* feeding station (knowing that we had a rendezvous with the local ranger, Franco, there at 8am), we rapidly picked up many new species. Some of these were specific targets like, **Barred Fruiteater**, **White-browed Spinetail**, **Rufous Spinetail** (which literally crawled to within 3 feet of us!), a noisy **Yellow-billed Cacique**, and a pair of confiding **Plain-tailed Wrens**, which (*atypically*) emerged out of the dense, dark bamboo, and into the open. Others were not new for Jean-Francois, *but were new for the trip*, such as **Black-throated Tody-Tyrant**, and a good perched view of a **Speckle-faced (White-capped) Parrot**.

As we neared the feeding station of the *antpitta*, (in good time), we visited a blind, where the hoped-for **White-throated Quail-Dove** (above) was feeding on grain out front on arrival. There were actually three

different nervy birds present, which, once they got a little too nervous, reacted by walking straight towards us, a very unexpected and odd technique that allowed us extremely close views just below the hide.

All too soon, we had arrived at the shelter to find not the ranger, but a young *antpitta* waiting for us, a



Jocotoco Antpitta (left) no less. Once Franco arrived, we managed to see one adult and a very vocal juvenile regularly over the next hour or so, our visit to the shelter extended longer than usual due to a sudden and heavy downpour delaying our departure. These fantastic birds were joy to watch, and if you are going to be tardy in a place due to rain, there can be much worse places to than in regular sight of one of South America's most iconic birds, hopping around at our feet!

The rain moved on, and so did we. The remainder of the morning was rather slow though, we could not make a *Barred Antthrush* come anywhere near us, and we could not locate a *Bearded Guan* anywhere. However, we did come across a small feeding flock that held **Black-capped Hemispingus** and **Plushcap** within it. We arrived back at the lodge just in time for lunch, and then decided on an afternoon visit to lower elevations, below the town of **Valladolid**, as that was where the localized *Maranon Thrush* can be found, and it was at these lower areas that now offered us the most target species.

We visited the ruins at **La Florida**, where we stopped a little short of them for a calling **Olive-chested Flycatcher**,

which showed shortly after. We also saw another bird we were looking for there, that seemed fairly common on site, **Mottle-backed Elaenia**.

Then Sam found a **Maranon Thrush** (next page) foraging in a local papaya tree, which was lured into some closer trees, so we could admire its distinctive heavily dappled underside. The site also produced a beautiful **Yellow-cheeked (Green-backed) Becard** (page 38) too, before we left to check out a forest patch a little lower down. This one was busy with birds; **Spotted, Blue-necked, Bay-headed and Silver-beaked Tanagers** all present. Although, the bird we had really come for was also present, a nice male **Lined Antshrike**. A later try for a roadside *Andean Potoo* that had been seen just four days before, unfortunately did not produce the bird, and only Sam saw a poorly timed hawking moment from a female **Swallow-tailed Nightjar**, while making a pit stop!



Day 9 (9th December): Tapichalaca to Saraguro

On this day, we started out in one cloud forest, in **Tapichalaca**, and swapped to another in the late afternoon, around **Saraguro**, with visits to the Antennas Road near **Cerro Acanama**, and nearby **Huashapamba**. In **Tapichalaca**, our main focus was to try and find the common **Crowned Chat-tyrant**, which had been strangely inconspicuous the day before, try several spots for **Barred Anthrush**, and also hope to find a **Bearded Guan** too. Near the trailhead for the **Jocotoco Antpitta** we noticed two guans perched in the trees, and so quickly recovered that one, and then a short way up the trail itself, we found a **Crowned Chat-Tyrant** perched within the bamboo. We also had **Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant** along the same trail, and got great views of a pair of **Golden-plumed Parakeets**. On the way up the antpitta feeding station, we, again, watched feeding **White-throated Quail-Doves** at their designated feeder, while we arrived at the **Jocotoco Antpitta** station to find an adult waiting for the arrival of the local ranger, but it instead got us, minus the worms that it wished for. The bird even followed us further along the trail for a while, just to make sure we were not carrying any food for it, before trotting back towards the now infamous shelter. On the way back down the trail, we finally got a close response from a **Barred Anthrush**, which walked into the exact clearing we had hoped it would, but it quickly retreated before crossing the trail as we would have liked.

Just before leaving the reserve for points north, we saw a final **Amethyst-throated Sunangel** (below) perched out in the open, after which, we drive north towards the famous cultural town of **Saraguro**.



In the afternoon, we began by visiting **Cerro Acanama**, where good weather greeted our arrival, not always a given at this high altitude (10,820ft/3,300m). However, the pleasant climate did not produce many birds, with highlights being another **Bearded Guan**, a pair of **Agile Tit-Tyrants**, the local **Mountain Caracara** (in Ecuador), and an odd dwarf deer, the **Northern Pudu**. We closed the day with a try for **Red-faced Parrot** at nearby **Huashapamba**, where there was plenty of activity, with **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan**, **Turquoise Jay**, **Black-crested Warbler**, **Glowing Puffleg**, and **Red-crested Cotinga**, but no parrots unfortunately. The best sighting of the afternoon was a confiding pair of **Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonias**. Sadly though, none of these birds were ones that we were the specific ones we were looking for. We retired for the night in the lazy town of **Saraguro**, knowing we had nearly full day to try and put this right the following day...

Day 10 (10th December): Saraguro area (Acanama and Huashapamba) to Cuenca

The penultimate day of the tour was arguably the very best of all, with some real quality to the birds seen. As we started up the road towards the antennas that overlook nearby **Cerro Acanama**, things did not look especially good for us though, as a thick blanket of cloud covered the higher reaches, where our birding began. In spite of the inhibiting conditions, we found an early target with a **Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet**, and then heard one of the rarest birds of the tour: **Chestnut-bellied Cotinga** (next page).

Another Tropical Birding tour had swept through the area a short time before, and had found the bird in the very same spot, which was our reason for choosing this particular patch of stunted elfin forest. The bird called several times, and we even managed to find the silhouetted shape of a cotinga on top of a bush, but the heavy mist prevented us from ruling out the conspecific *Red-crested Cotinga*. A little less mist and several more calls of the bird later, and Jean-Francois located one of the birds perched in the bushes, which then moved around us, and was photographed a couple of times in somewhat challenging conditions for photography.



The next major target in the area was unquestionable, *Crescent-faced Antpitta*, a denizen of mossy forest and bamboo close to the treeline. This proved much tougher to find, and indeed we had heard that several recent tours through the area had failed to find one. We tried some spots that I knew from the past, but drew a blank on calls, and so traveled deeper into the forest and finally heard one calling far off. We chased after the sound, made some hikes up steep slopes, but still could not get close to the bird that seemed reluctant to call after then. We did get a pair of extremely close **Chusquea Tapaculos** foraging in the forest while we searched though, as well as a **Buff-winged Starfrontlet**. Eventually, we conceded defeat on that individual antpitta, and agreed it would be better to try and find another one back near the road. With lunchtime approaching fast, and the sun now having burned off the mist, activity was very minimal, and our hopes were receding. Back along the road, we heard and saw several **Sedge (Grass) Wrens**, found a perched **Viridian Metaltail**, and also viewed a **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle** being ceaselessly harassed by one of the local **Mountain Caracaras**. Finally, after hearing nothing of the antpitta from the road, we stumbled on to another inconspicuous trail, which seemed to have potential. Sam traveled down the trail for a few hundred meters, and then ran back meet Jean-Francois near the trailhead panting, after having heard a close antpitta not far from him. We returned to the place, and sure enough, the bird was still calling, *and calling close*. A quick period of playback and we watched as the bird flew from one side of the trail to the other, but buried itself deep within the mossy forest and out of sight. We played again, and the **Crescent-faced Antpitta** (next page) reacted with vigor, landing in a tree, within full view of Sam, but unfortunately narrowly obscured from Jean-Francois. We moved position, played again, and were genuinely astonished when the bird came in again and landed on the nearest branch to us, completely unobscured, merely 12 feet from our faces! It was pretty sure at this point we were watching the bird of the tour, the views were simply unbeatable.

We walked away with the bird still calling behind us, and with total satisfaction. By now it was after midday, and so we drove up the top of the road for a spot of lunch in the field. At that point rain suddenly moved in, and heavy at that, which kept us within the sanctuary of the vehicle for more than an hour, while we waited for this to pass. Eventually, the rain passed and the distinctive form of **Cerro Acanama** was again visible in front of us.



*It may have taken a full morning to find one, but that was all forgotten when we clapped eyes on this superb **Crescent-faced Antpitta**, which must be one of South America's top birds*

We had one bird that provided unfinished business on the mountain, *Masked Mountain-Tanager*, which was best looked for in the elfin forest at the top end of the road, and particularly as part of a local feeding flock. In short, locate the flock and the chances of locating the species increases dramatically. And so. We walked towards another set of antennas, where we soon found a **Mouse-colored Thistletail**, had some low flybys from several Golden-plumed Parakeets, and enjoyed views of the surrounding mountains. Then, we noticed some *tanagers* moving through the low trees around us; **Lacrimose and Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers** drew our attention, before the dazzling blue-and-gold form of a **Golden-crowned Tanager** held our total attention, at least for a short time before a bulky tanager that buried itself in the bush behind peaked our interest. Soon after, we had *the bird* (**Masked Mountain-Tanager**, [next page](#)) in view just behind the gorgeous *Golden-crowned*, sharing the same binocular view.



This **Masked Mountain-Tanager** was found in a mixed feeding flock with the gorgeous **Golden-crowned Tanager** and **Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager** too

With that, we returned to the van, and drove on down the road, planning to revisit **Huashapamba** again. As we made our way down we found another band of **Bearded Guans**, which included a young bird among them. On reaching the forest edge at **Huashapamba**, we played the call to see if it would help us locate some **Red-faced Parrots** (next page), and were quickly replied to. One bird was soon located at the top of one of the trees, but Sam had forgotten to press stop on the I-Pod and it quickly flew directly towards us, landing in the nearest tree along with several other individuals, to give us absolutely cracking views of this rare and local parrot in beautiful afternoon sunlight...On the way to **Cuenca** after this, we drew a blank during a short search for the local **White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant** around the town of **Ona**, but were more than happy with our day's tally; **cotinga**, **antpitta**, **mountain-tanager**, and **parrot** all in the bag was well beyond our expectations!



Day 11 (11th December): El Cajas National Park to Guayaquil (DEPARTURE)

All too soon, the final day had arrived. We had blazed a trail through some of the best birding hotspots of Southern Ecuador, and blitzed our target list, having seen more than we had expected. However, we had one more highly significant site to go; **El Cajas National Park**, just outside the colonial city of **Cuenca**. This park covers largely an area of high Andean grasslands (known as *paramo*), with patches of *polylepis forest* and scrub dissecting this. We started though, around a lake (accompanied by a knowledgeable local guide, Milton), **Laguna Llaviuco** (also sometimes written as *Lllaviucu*), in the lowest section of the park, at an elevation (10,500ft/3200m), where dense temperate forests still grow around the edges of it. Our main reason for stopping there, aside from the fact that it is beautiful spot, where the mist rises off the lake, with steep mountains as a backdrop, was to try and find the **Ecuadorian (Virginia) Rail** (note: the form is considered a distinct species under IOC, but as a form of Virginia Rail under Clements/eBird), in the reeds at the fringes of the lake. Our first spot got an instant reaction from the bird, both vocally and visually, but it did not stay long enough for all to see. After lacking at another spot, Milton walked us to the far end of the lake, where we scoured the muddy edges for any sign of one feeding.

Milton soon spotted one that then swam out into the open, and crossed into a patch of reeds, from where it emerged several times. Other birds in attendance on the lake included **Slate-colored (Andean) Coot**, **(Andean) Ruddy Duck**, **Andean Teal**, and **Andean Gull**. Around the reedy edges Sedge (Grass) Wrens regularly belted out their songs, and were also seen several times, while the forest and forest edges supplied **Andean Guan**, the smart **Pearled Treerunner**, **Superciliaried Hemispingus**, and **Spectacled (Whitestart) Redstart**. **Tyrian Metaltails** visited some local blooms, as did the incredible **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, which used an antenna above the main gate as a lookout. **Great Sapphirewing**, the second largest hummingbird in the world was also seen on site there.



From there, we rose higher towards the entrance to another section of the park, but making a strategic stop for the **Violet-throated Metaltail** (above) on the way up, which flew in and land in the apex of a tall pine. A couple more of these hummingbirds, which is a very local species, confined to southern Ecuador, were also seen closer a little after then too, in a stop that also brought us a pair of confiding and vocal **Many-striped Canasteros**. Another stop produced one of two **Tawny Antpittas** seen that day. Moving higher still (to around 12,800ft/3900m), we entered another section of the park, and visited its main centerpiece attraction, **Laguna Torreadora**, a large lake with patches of *polylepis* forest at its edges, and *paramo* grassland around this too. The *polylepis* was of particular interest to us, as it held a specialist of this habitat, **Giant Conebill**, which Jean-Francois was keen on finding, as he'd missed this in the same habitat on a previous Peru habitat. Our local guide, Milton located one quickly, but it went to ground, before we arrived by his side, only finding **White-throated Tyrannulet**, and **Hooded Siskin**, which seemed to be within a small feeding flock with the *conebill*.

We combed the *polylepis* patch, circling it completely several times, and not finding, or hearing anything of the *conebill*, but finding another specialty, **Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant** (below), which gave fantastic views. **El Cajas**, and this lake in particular are arguably the most reliable site in Ecuador for this rare and local highland flycatcher.



*Laguna Torreadora in El Cajas National Park is arguably the best site in the country for the rare and local **Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant***

Finally, a **Giant Conebill** began calling, though it still proved difficult to find, until it emerged on to an open, emergent snag, to great relief all round. Lunchtime was first approaching as the clock struck noon, but we decided to have a quick check on some local *Chuquiragua* flowers, the main food plant of the **Ecuadorian Hillstar** (next page), one of the most wanted birds of the day. While only a small patch, a quick play of the call swiftly brought in a male that landed a few meters away, and remained there to cause a frenzied burst of camera activity at this optimum opportunity! **Tit-like Dacnis**, **Blue-mantled Thornbill**, and **Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant** were also seen in the same area too. A low flying **Variable Hawk** was also seen. A scout around the area finally located a confiding **Paramo (Plain-capped) Ground-Tyrant**, which was the signal to return to the vehicle, pick up our packed lunch, and visit the local café to take coffee and a good local hot chocolate to accompany this with.



A male **Ecuadorian Hillstar** sits on its favored food plant (**Chuquiragua**) in **El Cajas National Park**

After lunch, we bid farewell to our local guide, who headed back to his home city, **Cuenca**, while we continued on up the road that leads to **Guayaquil**. We had one final stop scheduled in the highlands though, to try and locate a **Paramo Pipit**. Before we had reached the specific location for this species, we noticed an **Aplomado Falcon** standing sentry on a roadside boulder. The open grasslands where we hoped to find the **Paramo Pipit** initially seemed *pipit-less*, although there were some further, distant **Paramo (Plain-capped) Ground-Tyrants, Andean Gulls, and Andean Teal**. However, on playing their song, several birds quickly answered, and Jean-Francois found a bird that steadily walked towards us, well within binocular range, as it sang back at us from tussocks of grass.

With evening flights out, and all of the main target birds in the bag, it was then time to head straight for **Guayaquil**, re-packing in a gas station en-route to the international airport there. While we did not stop, as we were not confident about travel times in the peak of afternoon traffic, plenty of birds were found as we descended rapidly out of the highlands into the wetland areas that lead into the city of **Guayaquil**; **Snail Kites, Limpkins, Roseate Spoonbill, Wattled Jacanas**, and even a lone **Snowy-throated Kingbird** were seen on the return journey, before we pulled into the airport.

We had enjoyed a superb trip, that had been rarely affected by any serious periods of rain, and had seen some of the region's best birds (**90 country/regional endemics were recorded**), such as **Pale-browed Tinamou, El Oro Parakeet, Red-faced Parrot, Ecuadorian Trogon, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Ecuadorian (White-vented) Plumeleteer, Velvet-purple Coronet, Jocotoco, Watkins's, and Crescent-faced Antpittas, Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner, Ecuadorian Tapaculo, Elegant Crescentchest, White-tailed Jay, Tumbes Tyrant, Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant, Ochraceous Attila, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Chestnut-bellied Cotinga, White-headed and Pale-headed Brushfinches, Crimson-breasted Finch, Giant Conebill, Tit-like Dacnis, Piura Hemispingus, and Masked Mountain-Tanager, among many, many others.**

SOME OTHER PHOTOS FROM THIS TOUR...



Golden (Southern Yellow) Grosbeak at the rubbish dump in **Zapotillo**, near the Peruvian border

Photos on the following pages:

Page 36: **Tumbes Hummingbird** (top) and **Fasciated Wren**

Page 37: **Chapman's Antshrike** (top) and **Black-cowled Saltator**

Page 38: **(West) Peruvian Screech-Owl** (top) and **Yellow-cheeked (Green-backed) Becard**









Violet-bellied Hummingbirds were abundant at the feeders by **Umbrellabird Lodge** in **Buenaventura**

ANNOTATED CHECKLISTS:

BIRDS

The taxonomy of the bird 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 up until **August 2017**.*

H denotes a species that was *HEARD*, but not seen.

GO denotes a species that was seen by the *GUIDE ONLY*.

EC denotes an Ecuadorian endemic

RE denotes a regional endemic (based on those defined by Ridgely and Greenfield in their landmark field guide; this tour touched on **seven** of these-**Choco Lowlands, West Slope of Andes, Tumbesian Lowlands, Southwestern Highlands, Interandean Slopes and Valleys, East Slope of Andes, and the Rio Marañon**).

TINAMOUS: TINAMIDAE

Pale-browed Tinamou *Crypturellus transfasciatus* **RE**

A single male bird came into the feeders at Jorupe Reserve early on our final morning there.

SCREAMERS: ANHIMIDAE**Horned Screamer** *Anhima cornuta*

This local species in Ecuador, was seen around Manglares Churute on the first morning (5 were seen).

DUCKS, GEESE and WATERFOWL: ANATIDAE**Black-bellied Whistling-Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

Many were seen at Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

Fulvous Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor*

Seen in good numbers in Manglares Churute and also in Santa Rosa.

Comb Duck *Sarkidiornis melanotos sylvicola*

A genuinely scarce and local species in Ecuador, seen at Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa, with a maximum of 15.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*

Hundreds were seen at Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis*

Around twenty birds were seen at Santa Rosa.

Yellow-billed Pintail *Anas georgica*

Three were seen at Manglares Churute.

Andean Teal *Anas andium andium*

Around fifteen birds were seen in El Cajas National Park on our final day.

(Andean) Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis ferruginea*

4 were seen loafing on Laguna Llaviucu in El Cajas NP.

NOTE: This is split as **Andean Duck O. ferruginea** under IOC, with lumped under Ruddy Duck in Clements/eBird.

GUANS, CHACHALACAS, CURASSOWS: CRACIDAE**Rufous-headed Chachalaca** *Ortalis erythroptera* **RE**

Close views were had of groups that came to the feeders at both Buenaventura and Jorupe Reserves.

Bearded Guan *Penelope barbata* **RE**

A pair was seen at Tapichalaca, and then two further sightings came at Acanama.

Andean Guan *Penelope montagnii* **H**

Heard at Laguna Llaviucu, in El Cajas.

Crested Guan *Penelope purpurascens* **H**

Heard on one occasion in Buenaventura, although not pursued.

Sickle-winged Guan *Chamaepetes goudotii* **H**

Also heard in Buenaventura, and not looked for either.

GREBES: PODICIPEDIDAE**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps*

Many were seen in Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

STORKS: CICONIIDAE**Wood Stork** *Mycteria Americana*

Two were seen in flight between Guayaquil and Manglares Churute.

FRIGATEBIRDS: FREGATIDAE**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens*

Seen around Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: PHALACROCORACIDAE**Neotropic Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

Scattered sightings in lowland wet areas.

PELICANS: PELICANIDAE**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis*

One was seen at Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

ANHINGAS: ANHINGIDAE

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Seen regularly around Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi*

A few were seen around Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Good numbers were seen around Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Lots were seen in the wetland areas around Manglares Churute.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

3 were found at Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Just one was seen near Santa Rosa.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Recorded on most days of the tour.

Striated (Green-backed) Heron *Butorides striata*

A few were seen at Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax caledonicus*

Recorded at Santa Rosa, and also at Laguna Llaviucu in El Cajas NP.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*

2 were seen at the Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*

A handful were seen at Santa Rosa.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja*

Around fifteen birds were seen at Santa Rosa, and another in flight just south of Guayaquil.

NEW WORLD VULTURES: CATHARTIDAE

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Commonly encountered on most days of the tour.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Recorded on all but one day of the tour.

HAWKS, EAGLES & KITES: ACCIPITRIDAE

Pearl Kite *Gampsonyx swainsonii*

A nesting bird was seen near Manglares Churute, on the farm of Jairo Lara, our local guide there.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*

One was seen hovering above La Lagartera.

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*

Seen a number of times in and around Buenaventura; also seen in Utuana.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*

Hundreds of these kites were seen around Manglares Churute and the roadside marshes just south of Guayaquil.

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea*

A regular individual took up its post, beside Umbrellabird Lodge in Buenaventura on both days there.

Sharp-shinned (Plain-breasted) Hawk *Accipiter striatus ventralis*

One was seen at El Tundo Reserve near Sozoranga.

NOTE: While lumped under Clements/eBird taxonomy, this is split as **Plain-breasted Hawk A. ventralis** on IOC list.

Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis*

Just two were seen, at La Lagartera (Manglares Churute).

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris*

One was seen near Sozoranga.

Harris's Hawk***Parabuteo unicinctus***

Seen twice in the area around Jorupe Reserve in the southwest.

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle***Geranoaetus melanoleucus***

One of these majestic eagles was seen being mobbed relentlessly by a **Mountain Caracara** at Acanama.

Gray-backed Hawk***Pseudastur occidentalis*****RE**

Our driver, Fernando, found two different individuals as we were making our way out of Buenaventura.

RAILS, GALLINULES & COOTS: RALLIDAE**White-throated Crake*****Laterallus albigularis***

One was a couple of times at Laguna Tembeadera, near Puerto Jeli.

Virginia (Ecuadorian) Rail***Rallus limicola aequatorialis***

Two different birds were seen at Laguna Llaviucu, El Caja, one of which swam across some open water in full view.

NOTE: This is considered a distinct species on the IOC list, but not under Clements/eBird.

Rufous-necked Wood-Rail***Aramides axillaris***

Excellent, long looks were had in the La Flora section of Manglares Churute, due to an ideal tide during our visit.

Purple Gallinule***Porphyrio martinica***

Jean-Francois saw one of these near Puerto Jeli.

Common Gallinule***Gallinula galeata***

Hundreds were seen around Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa areas.

Slate-colored (Andean) Coot***Fulica ardesiaca***

Around ten birds were present on the lake in the Llaviucu Valley, El Cajas NP.

LIMPKIN: ARAMIDAE**Limkin*****Aramus guarauna***

Many were seen between Manglares Churute and Guayaquil on our return journey there (more than 20 birds).

STILTS AND AVOCETS: RECURVIROSTRIDAE**Black-necked Stilt*****Himantopus mexicanus***

Seen in good numbers at Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS: CHARADRIIDAE**Andean Lapwing*****Vanellus resplendens*****H**

Their alarm calls were had in El Caja National Park on our final day.

Pied Lapwing***Vanellus cayanus***

This bird is rare in western Ecuador, where we saw one in Manglares Churute.

JACANANAS: JACANIDAE**Wattled Jacana*****Jacana jacana***

Many were seen in roadside ditches between Guayaquil and Manglares Churute, and inside that reserve too.

SANDPIPERS & ALLIES: SCOLOPACIDAE**Spotted Sandpiper*****Actitis macularius***

A few were seen in both Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

GULLS, TERNS & SKIMMERS: LARIDAE**Andean Gull*****Chroicocephalus serranus***

Good numbers were seen during our time on and around Nosy Ve.

Franklin's Gull***Leucophaeus pipixcan***

About 40 birds were seen resting at Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.

Gull-billed Tern***Gelochelidon nilotica***

A few were seen in the Santa Rosa area.

Sandwich Tern***Thalasseus sandvicensis***

20 or more birds were seen resting on the ponds at Santa Rosa.

PIGEONS & DOVES: COLUMBIDAE**Rock Pigeon*****Columba livia***

Scattered sightings around urban areas.

Pale-vented Pigeon***Patagioenas cayennensis****Many were seen on roadside wires around Manglares Churute.***Band-tailed Pigeon*****Patagioenas fasciata****This highland pigeon was seen at Tapichalaca and Acanama.***Plain-breasted Ground-Dove*****Columbina minuta****This is scarce and local species in Ecuador, and so we visited La Lagartera for this specifically, and found 5 birds there.***Ecuadorian Ground-Dove*****Columbina buckleyi*****RE***This common endemic was seen close to Guayaquil, around Manglares Churute, Zapotillo, and Jorupe.***Croaking Ground-Dove*****Columbina cruziana****Recorded in Santa Rosa, Jorupe, and Zapotillo.***Blue Ground-Dove*****Claravis pretiosa****A group of around 7 birds came into the feeders at Urraca Lodge several times.***White-tipped Dove*****Leptotila verreauxi****Seen regularly through the tour, including at the Jorupe feeders.***Pallid Dove*****Leptotila pallida*****RE***Seen twice in the Buenaventura Reserve, once perched, and once as it flushed off of the entrance road.***White-throated Quail-Dove*****Zentrygon frenata****Seen on both visits to the White-throated Quail-Dove feeder in Tapichalaca, with up to three birds there.***West Peruvian Dove*****Zenaida meloda****Just recorded in the dry scrub of Zapotillo, near the Peruvian border.***Eared Dove*****Zenaida auriculata****Seen in Yungilla and also around Ona on this tour.***CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE****Squirrel Cuckoo*****Piaya cayana****Recorded at Manglares Churute and Utuana only.***Striped Cuckoo*****Tapera naevia****Recorded several times at Utuana, and also in Santa Rosa.***Greater Ani*****Crotophaga major****A rare bird in western Ecuador, where we saw one just outside Manglares Churute.***Smooth-billed Ani*****Crotophaga ani****Seen in good numbers on the tour.***Groove-billed Ani*****Crotophaga sulcirostris****Seen regularly in the Jorupe/Zapotillo area in particular.***OWLS: STRIGIDAE****(West) Peruvian Screech-Owl*****Megascops roboratus*****RE***We enjoyed good views of two separate birds in the parking lot of Jorupe Reserve.***Spectacled Owl*****Pulsatrix perspicillata*****H***Heard calling close in Jorupe, but this was not a target, we did not try to see it.***Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl*****Glaucidium peruanum*****RE***Two birds were seen in Manglares Churute, and others were heard regularly in Jorupe.***Black-and-white Owl*****Ciccaba nigrolineata****One was sat beside Umbrellabird Lodge (Buenaventura Reserve) one night, where a pair called regularly.***Buff-fronted Owl*****Aegolius harrisii****A very frustrating experience; one responded close, but was only seen in flight. It always called from dense vegetation.***Rufous-banded Owl*****Ciccaba albitarsis*****H***A frustrating miss, as it was heard very close by the lodge at Tapichalaca, but would fly away, when approached.***NIGHTJARS & ALLIES: CAPRIMULGIDAE****Common Pauraque*****Nyctidromus albicollis****A few were seen in Jorupe reserve.*

Swallow-tailed Nightjar *Uropsalis segmentata* **GO**

Sam saw a female hawking insects one evening near the lodge at Tapichalaca.

POTOOS: NYCTIBIIDAE**Common Potoo** *Nyctibius griseus*

Ordinarily a tough bird to find on this circuit, we were lucky that our local guide Jairo Lara has recently (a month previous) found one roosting on his farm near Manglares Churute.

SWIFTS: APODIDAE**Chestnut-collared Swift** *Streptoprocne rutila*

Seen near Buenaventura and also around Utuana.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris*

A couple of small groups were seen in Utuana.

Short-tailed (Tumbes) Swift *Chaetura brachyura ocybetes* **RE**

A small party of these was found by the entrance to Jorupe Reserve.

NOTE: Split, and a Tumbesian endemic, in the Ridgley/Greenfield guide, but not by either IOC or Clements/eBird.

Gray-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*

Seen in the Buenaventura area.

HUMMINGBIRDS: TROCHILIDAE**White-necked Jacobin** *Florisuga mellivora*

Plentiful at the Umbrellabird Lodge (Buenaventura) feeders.

White-tipped Sicklebill *Eutoxeres Aquila*

Prolonged, excellent looks in Buenaventura led Jean-Francois to pick this in his TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

White-whiskered Hermit *Phaethornis yaruqui* **RE**

One was seen calling from inside the forest at Buenaventura.

Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae*

A handful were seen at the Umbrellabird Lodge feeders in Buenaventura.

Lesser (Green) Violetear *Colibri cyanotus*

Recorded once in Buenaventura, at the upper feeders.

Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliothryx barroti*

One was seen by the lodge one morning in Buenaventura.

Amethyst-throated Sunangel *Heliangelus amethysticollis*

Recorded regularly in Tapichalaca, including at the Casa Simpson feeders. Also seen at Huashapamba.

Little (Flame-throated) Sunangel *Heliangelus micraster* **RE**

Seen at the Casa Simpson feeders at Tapichalaca.

Purple-throated Sunangel *Heliangelus viola* **RE**

A regular visitor, in small numbers to the feeders in Utuana Reserve. Also seen near Saraguro too.

Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii*

One of the most abundant hummingbirds at the Umbrellabird Lodge feeders (Buenaventura).

Speckled Hummingbird *Adelomyia melanogenys*

Observed at the feeders at both Utuana and Tapichalaca Reserves.

Long-tailed Sylph *Aglaiocercus kingie*

A single came to the Tapichalaca feeders during our short stint there.

Violet-tailed Sylph *Aglaiocercus coelestis* **RE**

Several were seen at the Jardon de Colbries feeders in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve.

Ecuadorian Hillstar *Oreotrochilus Chimborazo* **RE**

A stunning male came in and perched a few meters from us at Laguna Torreadora in El Cajas NP.

ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.

Blue-mantled Thornbill *Chalcostigma stanleyi*

Seen on a handful of occasions in El Cajas NP.

Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina*

A few were seen in the lower section of El Cajas National Park.

Viridian Metaltail***Metallura williami***

A single was seen in the elfin forest at Acanama.

Violet-throated Metaltail***Metallura baroni***

EC

Three different individuals were seen just in El Cajas NP.

Glowing Puffleg***Eriocnemis vestita***

One was seen inside the forest at Huashapamba.

Shining Sunbeam***Aglaeactis cupripennis***

A few of these aggressive orange hummingbirds were seen inside El Cajas NP.

Brown Inca***Coeligena wilsoni***

RE

A single visited the upper feeders in Buenaventura reserve.

Collared Inca***Coeligena torquata***

Seen regularly in Tapichalaca, also again at Acanama.

Rainbow Starfrontlet***Coeligena iris***

RE

This spectacular hummingbird was the dominant visitor at the Utuana feeders.

Buff-winged Starfrontlet***Coeligena lutetiae***

A few were seen near Saraguro.

Mountain Velvetbreast***Lafresnaya lafresnayi***

Seen at the Utuana feeders in the Southwest highlands.

Sword-billed Hummingbird***Ensifera ensifera***

A wonderfully cooperative individual was stand sing sentry above the gate to Llaviucu in El Cajas NP.

Great Sapphirewing***Pterophanes cyanopterus***

The second largest hummingbird on Earth, was seen at Laguna Llaviucu in El Cajas.

Chestnut-breasted Coronet***Boissonneaua matthewsii***

An abundant visitor at the Casa Simpson feeders in Tapichalaca.

Velvet-purple Coronet***Boissonneaua jardini***

RE

One was seen at the upper feeders in Buenaventura Reserve.

Fawn-breasted Brilliant***Heliodoxa rubinoides***

Recorded in both Buenaventura and Tapichalaca reserves.

Green-crowned Brilliant***Heliodoxa jacula***

Regularly visited the feeders by Umbrellabird Lodge.

Long-billed Starthroat***Heliopteryx longirostris***

Seen near the town of Catacocha, and also again in Jorupe Reserve.

Purple-collared Woodstar***Myrtis fanny***

2 were seen in Yungilla Reserve, and the later another near the town of Catacocha.

Short-tailed Woodstar***Microstilbon burmeisteri***

RE

This tiny bird was seen in Manglares Churute.

White-vented (Ecuadorian) Plumeleteer *Chalybura buffonii intermedia* RE

This local form was seen three times in Buenaventura Reserve, near the lodge feeders, and at the upper feeders.

NOTE: This is a taxonomic puzzle, some placing it under **White-vented Plumeleteer** (Clements/eBird), while others under **Bronze-tailed** (IOC). It has also been suggested it is a distinct species, and therefore a regional endemic.

Crowned (Emerald-bellied) Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica hypochlora* RE

Seen just the once, near the Umbrellabird Lodge feeders in Buenaventura.

NOTE: This is currently lumped by both IOC and Clements/eBird with **Crowned Woodnymph**.

Tumbes Hummingbird***Leucippus baeri***

RE

A singleton was seen at the **Tumbes Tyrant** site in Zapotillo, west of Jorupe.

Amazilia (Loja) Hummingbird***Amazilia amazilia alticola***

RE

Regularly recorded in the lowlands of the Southwest (i.e. Manglares Churute, Santa Rosa, Jorupe).

Andean Emerald***Amazilia franciae***

Recorded regularly in Buenaventura Reserve, at their feeders.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird*Amazilia tzacatl**Seen several times on the early part of the tour (i.e. Manglares Churute and Buenaventura).***Violet-bellied Hummingbird***Damophila julie**This extremely handsome hummingbird was one of the most abundant at the Umbrellabird Lodge feeders.***TROGONS: TROGONIDAE****Golden-headed Quetzal***Pharomachrus auriceps***H***Heard in Buenaventura, although not pursued, as it was not a target bird for us on this custom tour.***Ecuadorian Trogon***Trogon mesurus***RE***A magnificent male was seen perched above the feeders at Jorupe Reserve.***Gartered (N. Violaceous) Trogon***Trogon caligatus**One was seen by Sam from a moving car, near Buenaventura.***Collared Trogon***Trogon collaris***H***One was heard in Buenaventura.***MOTMOTS: MOMOTIDAE****Whooping (Blue-crowned) Motmot** *Momotus subrufescens argenticinctus**One or two same in to the feeders at Jorupe regularly.***Broad-billed Motmot***Electron platyrhynchum**One was found by our local guide, Leo, in Buenaventura.***KINGFISHERS: ALDEDINIDAE****Ringed Kingfisher***Megaceryle torquata**Seen several times around the wetlands visited on the tour (i.e. Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa).***Green Kingfisher***Chloroceryle americana**One was seen at Manglares Churute, and a couple more were seen in Santa Rosa.***PUFFBIRDS: BUCCONIDAE****White-whiskered Puffbird***Malacoptila panamensis**One was seen perched beside the lights at Umbrellabird Lodge on our first morning there (Buenaventura).***NEW WORLD BARBETS: CAPITONIDAE****Red-headed Barbet***Eubucco bourcierii***H***Heard once in Buenaventura.***TOUCANS: RAMPHASTIDAE****Crimson-rumped Toucanet***Aulacorhynchus haematopygus**One was seen at the place where we got to see an Ecuadorian Tapaculo so well a few moments later.***Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan***Andigena hypoglauca**Seen well by Jean-Francois at Huashapamba.***Collared (Pale-mandibled) Aracari** *Pteroglossus torquatus erythropygius* **RE***A small group of these small toucans came in to the Buenaventura feeders on both mornings there.**NOTE: This form is split off as an endemic species by IOC, but not under Clements/eBird.***Yellow-throated Toucan (Chest-mand.) Toucan** *Ramphastos ambiguus swainsonii**Heard regularly during our stay at Buenaventura.***Choco Toucan***Ramphastos brevis***RE****H***Heard at Buenaventura a few times, but no attempt was made to see them.***WOODPECKERS: PICIDAE****Ecuadorian Piculet***Picumnus sclateri***RE***Seen first at Manglares Churute, and then again near Catacocha.***Scarlet-backed Woodpecker***Veniliornis callonotus**One was seen near Catacocha.***Crimson-mantled Woodpecker***Colaptes rivolii**One was found in Utuana Reserve in the Southwest highlands.***Powerful Woodpecker***Campephilus pollens***H***Heard at a site on the way to Tapichalaca.*

Guayaquil Woodpecker***Campephilus guayaquilensis*****RE***A female gave us good looks in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve. Also heard in Jorupe.***FALCONS & CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE****Mountain Caracara*****Phalcoboenus megalopterus****Two to three birds were seen near Saraguro.***Crested Caracara*****Caracara cheriway****Seen on a few occasions on the first part of the tour (e.g. in Manglares Churute).***Laughing Falcon*****Herpetotheres cachinnans*****H***One was heard during our morning in Manglares Churute.***American Kestrel*****Falco sparverius****Seen on just a few days, with good views of a pair in Ona south of Cuenca on one of these days.***Apomado Falcon*****Falco femoralis****This high altitude falcon was seen near the highest point at El Cajas NP.***Peregrine Falcon*****Falco peregrinus****One was seen terrorizing the local waterbirds at Manglares Churute Ecological Reserve.***PARROTS: PSITTACIDAE****Gray-cheeked Parakeet*****Brotogeris pyrrhoptera*****RE***Seen around Manglares Churute, and Jorupe, but unusually never perched on this tour in spite of numerous sightings.***Red-faced Parrot*****Hapalopsittaca pyrrhops*****RE***One of the undoubted highlights of the tour was not only seeing this rare and elusive parrot, but seeing them very, very well, which is an extremely rare thing (see photo earlier in report).***Speckle-faced (White-capped) Parrot *Pionus tumultuosus seniloides****Excellent views of a perched bird were had at Tapichalaca.***Bronze-winged Parrot*****Pionus chalcopterus****Several groups were seen in Buenaventura.***Scaly-naped Parrot (Amazon)*****Amazona mercenarias****Several small parties passed over us at Tapiachalaca.***Pacific Parrotlet*****Forpus coelestis*****RE***Seen on two or three occasions, and very well near Guayaquil and in Santa Rosa.***El Oro Parakeet*****Pyrrhura orcesi*****EC***This extremely local Ecuadorian endemic was seen in Buenaventura Reserve, which basically covers its entire range.***Golden-plumed Parakeet*****Leptosittaca branickii****This handsome parakeet gave us some good looks at Tapichalaca.***Red-masked Parakeet*****Psittacara erythrogenys*****RE***Seen first perched at Buenaventura, and then again in Jorupe Reserve.***TYPICAL ANTIBIRDS: THAMNOPHILIDAE****Great Antshrike*****Taraba major*****H***Heard near Puerto Jeli.***Chapman's Antshrike*****Thamnophilus zarumae*****RE***Three birds were seen in Utuana.***Lined Antshrike*****Thamnophilus tenuipunctatus****A male was seen in patchy habitat below Valladolid, near Tapichalaca***Collared Antshrike*****Thamnophilus bernardi*****RE***Recorded at five sites, Manglares Churute, Santa Rosa, near Catacocha, Zapotillo, and Jorupe.***Black-crowned (Western Slaty) Antshrike *Thamnophilus atrinucha****Seen a handful of times in Manglares Churute and Buenaventura.***Uniform Antshrike*****Thamnophilus unicolor****Seen twice in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve.***Russet Antshrike*****Thamnites anabatinus****One was seen within an impressive mixed feeding flock in the upper section of Buenaventura.*

Plain Antvireo	<i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i>	
<i>Seen on a couple of occasions in Buenaventura.</i>		
Slaty Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i>	
<i>A male was seen at Buenaventura.</i>		
Dot-winged Antwren	<i>Microrhopias quixensis</i>	
<i>A single sighting in Buenaventura.</i>		
Jet Antbird	<i>Cercomacra nigricans</i>	
<i>A male showed well in the La Flora section of Manglares Churute.</i>		
White-backed Fire-eye	<i>Pyriglena leuconota</i>	
<i>A male gave good looks in the lower section of Buenaventura.</i>		
Chestnut-backed Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza exsul</i>	H
<i>Heard regularly in Buenaventura, although never searched for on this custom target tour.</i>		
Esmeraldas Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza nigricauda</i>	RE
<i>After some effort a bird moved in close and gave super views in Buenaventura, at the southern edge of their range.</i>		
Zeledon's (Immaculate) Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza zeledoni macrorhyncha</i>	
<i>A male of this species was seen one afternoon in Buenaventura.</i>		
Gray-headed Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza griseiceps</i>	RE
<i>This scarce and local endemic, a specialist of bamboo, was eventually seen close near Utuana.</i>		
CRESCENTCHESTS: MELANOPAREIIDAE		
Elegant Crescentchest	<i>Melanopareia elegans</i>	RE
<i>This handsome endemic was seen well near the town of Catacocha.</i>		
ANTPITTAS: GRALLARIIDAE		
Undulated Antpitta	<i>Grallaria squamigera</i>	
<i>A confiding bird was seen up close late in the afternoon on the trail behind Casa Simpson in Tapichalaca.</i>		
Scaled Antpitta	<i>Grallaria guatemalensis</i>	H
<i>Two different birds were heard calling distantly at Buenaventura.</i>		
Chestnut-crowned Antpitta	<i>Grallaria ruficapilla</i>	
<i>The regular individual was seen at the feeder in Yungilla.</i>		
Watkins's Antpitta	<i>Grallaria watkinsi</i>	RE
<i>Seen well on two occasions, once in Catacocha, and a pair hopped around the vehicle in the Jorupe parking lot!</i>		
Jocotoco Antpitta	<i>Grallaria ridgelyi</i>	RE
<i>This rare bird was, as usual, seen very well at the worm feeders at Tapichalaca (1 ad, 1 juv).</i>		
Chestnut-naped Antpitta	<i>Grallaria nuchalis</i>	H
<i>There was one being fed behind the lodge at Tapichalaca, but was not looked for as it was not on the target list.</i>		
Rufous Antpitta	<i>Grallaria rufula</i>	H
<i>Heard regularly around Tapichalaca, and also in the Llaviucu Valley.</i>		
Tawny Antpitta	<i>Grallaria quitensis quitensis</i>	
<i>Two were seen in El Cajas NP.</i>		
<i>NOTE: There has been a recent suggestion (HBW) that Tawny Antpitta is better treated as 3 different species.</i>		
Rusty-breasted Antpitta	<i>Grallaricula ferruginepectus</i>	H
<i>In spite of much effort below Utuana, we only heard several distant birds.</i>		
Slate-crowned Antpitta	<i>Grallaricula nana</i>	H
<i>Not targeted on this custom tour, heard around Tapichalaca.</i>		
Crescent-faced Antpitta	<i>Grallaricula lineifrons</i>	RE
<i>This highly-ranked world bird, was seen following an epic search at Acanama, where one bird showed extremely well.</i>		
<i>Easily voted for as BIRD OF THE TOUR.</i>		
TAPACULOS: RHINOCRYPTIDAE		
Ocellated Tapaculo	<i>Acropternis orthonyx</i>	H
<i>As this had been on a previous tour by the client, calling birds at Tapichalaca and Acanama were not looked for.</i>		

Ash-colored Tapaculo <i>Heard once in Tapichalaca.</i>	<i>Myornis senilis</i>	H
Blackish (Unicolored) Tapaculo <i>Heard at several sites, Yungilla, Utuana, and Acanama.</i>	<i>Scytalopus latrans</i>	H
Ecuadorian (El Oro) Tapaculo <i>This is one of the hardest tapaculos to see; getting amazing views of this very local species was a major highlight.</i>	<i>Scytalopus robbinsi</i>	EC
Chusquea Tapaculo <i>Seen extremely well in Tapichalaca.</i>	<i>Scytalopus parkeri</i>	RE
Paramo Tapaculo <i>Heard in elfin forest near Saraguro.</i>	<i>Scytalopus opacus</i>	H
ANTTHRUSHES: FORMICARIIDAE		
Black-headed Antthrush <i>Excellent looks were obtained of a singing bird in the buggy forest at Manglares Churute.</i>	<i>Formicarius nigricapillus</i>	
Barred Antthrush <i>One was lured in at Tapichalaca.</i>	<i>Chamaeza mollissima</i>	
OVENBIRDS & WOODCREEPERS: FURNARIIDAE		
Olivaceous Woodcreeper <i>Singles were seen on a couple of days at Jorupe.</i>	<i>Sittasomus griseicapillus aequatorialis</i>	
Plain-brown Woodcreeper <i>One was seen in Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i>	
Spotted Woodcreeper <i>3 were seen in Buenaventura in various mixed flocks.</i>	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythropygius</i>	
Streak-headed Woodcreeper <i>Recorded in Buenaventura and Jorupe Reserves.</i>	<i>Lepidocolaptes souleyetii</i>	
Montane Woodcreeper <i>Seen at Utuana.</i>	<i>Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger</i>	
Streaked Tuftedcheek <i>One was found foraging with a mixed flock in the temperate cloud forests of Tapichalaca.</i>	<i>Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii</i>	
Pale-legged (Pacific) Hornero <i>Very abundant in the dry areas of the southwest, seen very regularly.</i>	<i>Furnarius leucopus cinnamomeus</i>	RE
Chestnut-winged (Bar-winged) Cinclodes <i>Seen up in the highlands, in the high Andean grasslands of El Cajas NP.</i>	<i>Cinclodes albidiventris</i>	
Stout-billed Cinclodes <i>A high Andean bird, seen in El Cajas NP.</i>	<i>Cinclodes excelsior</i>	
Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner <i>One was seen at Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Anabacerthia variegaticeps</i>	
Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner <i>This often difficult endemic was straightforward on this tour, being seen in Jorupe and Utuana reserves.</i>	<i>Syndactyla ruficollis</i>	RE
Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner <i>Good views were had of two different birds in Jorupe Reserve, a particularly handsome member of this group.</i>	<i>Clibanornis erythrocephalus</i>	RE
Spotted Barbtail <i>Heard only in Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Premnoplex brunnescens</i>	H
Pearled Treerunner <i>Seen in mixed flocks in the temperate forests of Tapichalaca and in the Llaviucu Valley.</i>	<i>Margarornis squamiger</i>	
Andean Tit-Spintail <i>One was seen in El Cajas NP.</i>	<i>Leptasthenura andicola</i>	
White-browed Spintail <i>Seen twice within Tapichalaca Reserve.</i>	<i>Hellmayrea gularis</i>	
Many-striped Canastero <i>4 birds were seen in El Cajas National Park.</i>	<i>Asthenes flammulata</i>	

Mouse-colored Thistletail***Asthenes griseomurina***

Seen first in El Cajas NP, then later in the elfin forest at Acanama too.

Line-cheeked Spinetail***Cranioleuca antisiensis*****RE**

Seen at both Buenaventura and Utuana, with multiple sightings coming at the latter site.

Azara's Spinetail***Synallaxis azarae***

Seen in Utuana and heard at several other forested sites.

Rufous Spinetail***Synallaxis unirufa***

One came in extremely close (to within 4 feet) at Tapichalaca.

Blackish-headed Spinetail***Synallaxis tithys*****RE**

A pair was seen up close, late one afternoon in Jorupe Reserve.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: TYRANNIDAE**Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet*****Camptostoma obsoletum***

Recorded regularly in the lowlands of the southwest.

White-tailed Tyrannulet***Mecocerculus poecilocercus***

Recorded in the southwest highlands at Utuana.

White-banded Tyrannulet***Mecocerculus stictopterus***

A few were seen in the lower section of El Cajas NP.

White-throated Tyrannulet***Mecocerculus leucophrys***

A few shared a polylepis patch with a **Giant Conebill** in El Cajas NP.

Rufous-winged Tyrannulet***Mecocerculus calopterus***

This erratic species was located in a mixed feeding flock in the upper part of the Buenaventura Reserve.

Black-crested Tit-Tyrant***Anairetes nigrocristatus*****RE**

This impossibly cute flycatcher was seen in Utuana, situated in the southwest highlands.

Agile Tit-Tyrant***Uromyias agilis***

A pair showed up at Acanama, near Saraguro.

Mouse-colored (Tumbesian) Tyrannulet *Phaeomyias murina tumbezana* RE

Seen twice; at Manglares Churute, and near Catacocha.

NOTE: This is not split within Clements/eBird, but is considered a distinct species under IOC.

Pacific Elaenia***Myiopagis subplacens*****RE**

A common sound within Jorupe Reserve, where several were seen too.

Greenish Elaenia***Myiopagis viridicata***

Seen a couple of times within Buenaventura Reserve, and also seen in Manglares Churute.

White-crested Elaenia***Elaenia albiceps***

Regularly recorded at Utuana.

Mottle-backed Elaenia***Elaenia gigas***

Half a dozen birds were seen in the foothills below Valladolid.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher***Mionectes oleaginous***

One was seen in Manglares Churute.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher***Leptopogon superciliaris***

Seen in Buenaventura only.

Sooty-headed Tyrannulet***Phyllomyias griseiceps*****H**

Heard in Buenaventura reserve.

Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet***Phyllomyias uropygialis***

One was seen in the stunted elfin forest at Acanama.

Golden-faced (Loja) Tyrannulet***Zimmerius chrysops flavidifrons*****RE**

Seen in Utuana best, but also recorded in Santa Rosa, Manglares Churute, and Buenaventura.

NOTE: This is split on the IOC list, but not under the Clements/eBird list.

Ornate Flycatcher***Myiotriccus ornatus***

One was seen in the Buenaventura Reserve.

- Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant** *Pseudotriccus ruficeps* H
 Heard several times in Tapichalaca.
- Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant** *Euscarthmus meloryphus*
 Seen well on several occasions, in Manglares Churute, Yungilla, and El Emapalme.
- Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant** *Lophotriccus pileatus*
 Seen at Manglares Churute.
- Black-throated Tody-Tyrant** *Hemitriccus granadensis*
 Heard multiple times, and also seen once by chance at Tapichalaca.
- Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher** *Poecilotriccus ruficeps*
 Two were seen in the southwest highlands in Utuana Reserve.
- Common Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum cinereum*
 Seen on several occasions in the lowlands.
- Brownish Twistwing** *Cnipodectes subbrunneus*
 One showed well in the lower part of Buenaventura Reserve.
- Yellow-olive Flycatcher (Flatbill)** *Tolmomyias sulphurescens aequatorialis*
 One was seen within Jorupe Reserve.
- White-throated Spadebill** *Platyrinchus mystaceus*
 One was observed from the road in the Buenaventura.
- (Pacific) Royal Flycatcher** *Onychorhynchus coronatus occidentalis* RE
 Having been informed they were currently not singing by our local guide in Manglares Churute, we were surprised (and relieved), to find a calling bird in the mangroves there. NOTE: Split in IOC, but not in Clements/eBird.
- Cinnamon Flycatcher** *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomeus*
 A few were seen in the temperate areas of Tapichalaca and Acanama.
- Orange-banded Flycatcher** *Nephelomyias lintoni* RE
 This endemic flycatcher was seen in the cool temperate forest at Tapichalaca.
- Olive-chested Flycatcher** *Myiophobus cryptoxanthus*
 One was seen at a ruins site just south of Valladolid, downslope from Tapichalaca.
- Bran-colored Flycatcher** *Myiophobus fasciatus*
 A handful of birds were seen in the western lowlands.
- Gray-breasted Flycatcher** *Lathrotriccus griseipectus* RE
 After being frustrated by several calling birds in Manglares Churute, we were happy to get good looks at Jorupe.
- Smoke-colored Pewee** *Contopus fumigatus* H
 Heard calling around Tapichalaca.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee** *Contopus virens*
- Tropical (Tumbes) Pewee** *Contopus cinereus punensis* RE
 Several seen in Jorupe and Utuana. NOTE. This is an endemic species on the IOC list, but a subspecies under Clements.
- Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans*
 Recorded at three sites: Buenaventura, El Empalme, and Valladolid.
- Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus*
 Commonly encountered in the dry southwest.
- Plain-capped (Páramo) Ground-Tyrant** *Muscisaxicola alpinus*
 Around half a dozen birds were seen between two separate sites in El Cajas NP.
- Smoky Bush-Tyrant** *Myiotheretes fumigatus*
 2 birds were seen on the way up for the *Jocotoco Antpitta* in Tapichacala.
- Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant** *Cnemarchus erythropygius*
 This rare and local flycatcher was, oddly, not one of the target birds on this trip, but we got it twice in El Cajas anyway.

Tumbes Tyrant***Tumbezia salvini*****RE**

This former Peruvian endemic, was discovered in Ecuador by Alan Davies, Ruth Miller, and Nick Athanas back in 2008, where a small population persists near Zapotillo, where we got cracking looks at a single bird.

ONE OF THE TOP FIVE BIRDS OF THE TOUR.**Crowned Chat-Tyrant*****Ochthoeca frontalis***

One was seen well along the Jocotoco Antpitta trail at Tapichalaca, another was heard near Saraguro.

Jelski's Chat-Tyrant***Ochthoeca jelskii*****RE**

After some effort, we eventually found a pair within the Utuana Reserve in the southwest highlands.

Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant***Ochthoeca diadema***

One turned up during one of our trail walks at Tapichalaca.

Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant***Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris***

One was seen by a waterfall in Tapichalaca.

Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant***Ochthoeca fumicolor***

2 birds were seen in the paramo grasslands of El Cajas National Park.

Ochraceous Attila***Attila torridus*****RE**

This logistical endemic (i.e. Ecuador is the only place it ever gets seen regularly), was seen in Buenaventura.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher***Myiarchus tuberculifer***

Seen in a Buenaventura.

Sooty-crowned Flycatcher***Myiarchus phaeocephalus***

One was seen in Manglares Churute.

Boat-billed Flycatcher***Megarynchus pitangua***

Recorded in both Buenaventura and Jorupe reserves.

Rusty-margined Flycatcher***Myiozetetes cayanensis***

A few were seen in the Manglares Churute area on our first day in the lowlands of the west.

Social Flycatcher***Myiozetetes similis***

Observed during our afternoon below the town of Valladolid, near Tapichalaca.

Baird's Flycatcher***Myiodynastes bairdii*****RE**

One was seen close to El Empalme, just after our first **White-headed Brushfinches** of the tour.

Streaked Flycatcher***Myiodynastes maculatus***

One was recorded in El Empalme.

Snowy-throated Kingbird***Tyrannus niveigularis*****RE****GO**

Sam saw one on the return journey to Guayaquil airport from Manglares Churute at the tour end, but we had not time to stop for it by this point!

Tropical Kingbird***Tyrannus melancholicus***

Recorded regularly throughout the tour.

COTINGAS: COTINGIDAE**Green-and-black Fruiteater*****Pipreola riefferii***

One was encountered in Tapichalaca.

Barred Fruiteater***Pipreola arcuate***

A male was observed foraging in Tapichalaca, on the way up to see the **Jocotoco Antpitta**.

Chestnut-bellied Cotinga***Doliornis remseni*****RE**

A pair of these very rare cotingas was seen at Acanama, thanks to recent details provided by Nick Athanas.

Red-crested Cotinga***Ampelion rubrocristatus***

Several birds featured in our time around Saraguro.

Long-wattled Umbrellabird***Cephalopterus penduliger*****RE**

Staying at Umbrellabird Lodge in Buenaventura, we felt compelled to see this bird, but failed on our first mornings attempt. We returned in the afternoon, but Jean-Francois found one from the car before we even got there! Presumably the same bird was seen again right beside the lodge the following morning too.

MANAKINS: PIPRIDAE**Golden-winged Manakin** *Masius chrysopterus**A female was seen in Buenaventura.***Club-winged Manakin** *Machaeropterus deliciosus* RE*A male was seen, thanks to the local guide, Leo's, intimate knowledge of its whereabouts. Not vocal at this time.***TITYRAS AND ALLIES:****Northern (Thrush-like) Schiffornis** *Schiffornis veraepacis rosenbergi**A single bird was heard calling near the umbrellabird lek at Buenaventura, but was not pursued.***Green-backed (Yellow-cheeked) Becard** *Pachyramphus viridis xanthogenys**This beautiful becard was seen at a ruins site south of Valladolid, near Tapichalaca.***Slaty Becard** *Pachyramphus spodiurus* RE*A pair was seen in Jorupe Reserve during an afternoon there.***Cinnamon Becard** *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus**A few were seen in Buenaventura.***Black-and-white Becard** *Pachyramphus albogriseus**Two birds were found in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve.***One-colored Becard** *Pachyramphus homochrous**A handful of birds were seen at Buenaventura, including by the lodge lights in the early morning.***VIREOS: VIREONIDAE****Red-eyed Vireo** *Vireo olivaceus**Just one was seen near Valladolid.***Lesser Greenlet** *Pachysylvia decurtata**A handful was seen at both Manglares Churute and Buenaventura.***Rufous-browed Peppershrike** *Cyclarhis gujanensis**Singles were seen near Catacocha, at Jorupe, and below Utuana.***CROWS, JAYS & MAGPIES: CORVIDAE****Turquoise Jay** *Cyanolyca turcosa**Seen in the temperate forests of Tapichalaca and Acanama.***White-tailed Jay** *Cyanocorax mystacalis* RE*Up to 6 birds were seen daily in Jorupe reserve; a regular feeder bird there at Urraca Lodge (Urraca=Jay).***SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE****Blue-and-white Swallow** *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca**Scattered sightings in the Andes throughout.***Brown-bellied Swallow** *Orochelidon murina**Regularly recorded at highland sites, like Tapichalaca and El Cajas.***Southern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis**A few were seen around Buenaventura and Valladolid.***Gray-breasted Martin** *Progne chalybea**Regularly encountered on roadside wires in the western lowlands.***Bank Swallow (Sand Martin)** *Riparia riparia**One was seen hawking above a lake near Puerto Jeli.***Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica**Around 20 birds were seen over a large lake near Puerto Jeli.***Chestnut-collared Swallow** *Petrochelidon rufocollaris* RE*42 were seen at a nesting site in the village of Sabianga.***WRENS: TROGLODYTIDAE****House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon**Seen on at least three days of the tour.*

Mountain Wren	<i>Troglodytes solstitialis</i>	
<i>Recorded at the highland sites of Tapichalaca, Acanama, and El Cajas.</i>		
Sedge (Grass/Paramo) Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis aequatorialis</i>	
<i>Seen at high elevation sites, such as Acanama and El Cajas NP.</i>		
Fasciated Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus fasciatus</i>	RE
<i>An abundant regional endemic, seen near Guayaquil, in Buenaventura, Jorupe and other sites in between.</i>		
Plain-tailed Wren	<i>Pheugopedius euophrys</i>	
<i>Excellent views were had of this often elusive, bamboo-dwelling, wren in Tapichalaca.</i>		
Whiskered Wren	<i>Pheugopedius mystacalis</i>	H
<i>Heard calling along the reserve road in Buenaventura.</i>		
Speckle-breasted Wren	<i>Pheugopedius sclateri</i>	RE
<i>This handsome wren was seen near Catacocha, and also in Jorupe.</i>		
Bay Wren	<i>Cantorchilus nigricapillus</i>	
<i>Recorded in Buenaventura Reserve.</i>		
Superciliated Wren	<i>Cantorchilus superciliaris</i>	RE
<i>This endemic wren gave us a good show in both Manglares Churute and at Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds.</i>		
Rufous Wren	<i>Cinnycerthia unirufa</i>	
<i>Two were seen in the temperate forest at Tapichalaca.</i>		
Sharpe's (Sepia-brown) Wren	<i>Cinnycerthia olivascens</i>	H
<i>Heard in Tapichalaca reserve.</i>		
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>	
<i>Recorded in Buenaventura.</i>		
Song Wren	<i>Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus</i>	H
<i>Heard along the reserve road that snakes through the forest at Buenaventura.</i>		
GNATCATCHERS: POLIOPTILIDAE		
Tawny-faced Gnatwren	<i>Microbates cinereiventris</i>	H
<i>Heard once in Buenaventura Reserve.</i>		
Tropical Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila plumbea</i>	
<i>Regularly encountered in the southwest lowlands.</i>		
THRUSHES AND ALLIES: TURDIDAE		
Andean Solitaire	<i>Myadestes ralloides</i>	
<i>One was found in the upper part of the Buenaventura Reserve.</i>		
Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus fuscater</i>	H
<i>Heard singing in both Yungilla and Utuana.</i>		
Spotted Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus dryas</i>	
<i>Seen at two different spots in Buenaventura.</i>		
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	
<i>Just a couple of sightings, within the reserve at Buenaventura.</i>		
Plumbeous-backed Thrush	<i>Turdus reevei</i>	RE
<i>Our first came on the journey between Zapotillo and Jorupe, with others later at the latter site.</i>		
Ecuadorian Thrush	<i>Turdus maculirostris</i>	RE
<i>Recorded on five days of the tour, in Yungilla, near Catacocha, and Jorupe.</i>		
Black-billed Thrush	<i>Turdus ignobilis</i>	
<i>A few were seen below the town of Valladolid, below Tapichalaca.</i>		
Marañon Thrush	<i>Turdus maranonicus</i>	RE
<i>At least four were seen below Valladolid.</i>		
(Andean) Slaty Thrush	<i>Turdus nigriceps nigriceps</i>	
<i>One was seen distantly, and later heard singing, below Utuana.</i>		
Great Thrush	<i>Turdus fuscater</i>	
<i>Commonly recorded in the highlands.</i>		

Glossy-black Thrush *Turdus serranus*

Two different birds were seen in Utuana.

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS: MIMIDAE**Long-tailed Mockingbird** *Mimus longicaudatus*

Regularly recorded in the southwest lowlands.

WAGTAILS AND PIPITS: MOTACILLIDAE**Paramo Pipit** *Anthus bogotensis*

Three birds were heard calling, and one seen well, in El Cajas NP.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: PARULIDAE**Masked (Black-lored) Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis aequinoctialis auricularis* **RE**

Four were seen at Santa Rosa Shrimp Ponds, and then another was seen in the lower part of Buenaventura.

Olive-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis semiflava*

A singing bird was seen on the upper road in Buenaventura.

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitiayumi*

Recorded at three sites; Manglares Churute, Jorupe, and Valladolid.

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

One was found in a large feeding flock in the upper section of the Buenaventura Reserve.

Yellow (Mangrove) Warbler *Setophaga petechia peruviana*

A few were seen in both Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa.

Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus*

One was seen in Tapichalaca.

Three-banded Warbler *Basileuterus trifasciatus* **RE**

Encountered multiple times in the Utuana area.

Citrine Warbler *Myiothlypis luteoviridis* **H**

Heard in Tapichalaca.

Black-crested Warbler *Myiothlypis nigrocristata*

Seen at four sites: Yungilla, Utuana, Huashapamba, and the Llaviucu Valley.

Buff-rumped Warbler *Myiothlypis fulvicauda*

Seen on a few occasions in Buenaventura, including foraging along the entrance road.

Gray-and-gold Warbler *Myiothlypis fraseri* **RE**

This handsome endemic was seen on at least five days, at Manglares Churute, Buenaventura, and Jorupe.

Russet-crowned Warbler *Myiothlypis coronate*

recorded in Tapichalaca, and in the lower section of El Cajas NP.

Slate-throated Redstart (Whitestart) *Myioborus miniatus*

Recorded in at least Yungilla and Utuana.

Spectacled Redstart (Whitestart) *Myioborus melanocephalus*

Seen in the temperate sites of Tapichalaca, Acanama, and El Cajas.

TANAGERS AND ALLIES: THRAUPIDAE**Black-capped Hemispingus** *Hemispingus atropileus*

One was seen creeping through a mat of bamboo in Tapichalaca.

Superciliaried Hemispingus *Hemispingus superciliaris*

Just the one was seen in the Llaviucu Valley in El Cajas NP on the final day of the tour.

Black-eared (Piura) Hemispingus *Hemispingus melanotis piurae* **RE**

This extremely handsome tanager was seen in Utuana, where a pair was seen.

NOTE: While Clements/eBird categorize this as a subspecies, IOC lists it as a distinct, endemic, species.

Gray-hooded Bush Tanager *Cnemoscopus rubrirostris*

Three birds came through with a mixed flock in Tapichalaca.

Rufous-chested Tanager *Thlypopsis ornate*

A single was seen in Yungilla.

- White-shouldered Tanager** *Tachyphonus luctuosus*
Recorded on three days of the tour, including within Manglares Churute, and also Buenaventura.
- White-lined Tanager** *Tachyphonus rufus* **GO**
One was seen by Sam between Utuana and Tapichalaca.
- Flame-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Tanager** *Ramphocelus flammigerus icteronotus*
Recorded daily in Buenaventura.
- Silver-beaked Tanager** *Ramphocelus carbo*
Double figures were seen during our afternoon around Valladolid, below Tapichalaca.
- Hooded Mountain-Tanager** *Buthraupis montana*
This temperate species was seen in Tapichalaca and the higher site of Acanama too.
- Masked Mountain-Tanager** *Buthraupis wetmorei* **RE**
Excellent views were at Acanama, where one perched in the same view as a gorgeous **Golden-crowned Tanager!**
- Grass-green Tanager** *Chlorornis riefferii*
Two accompanied a diverse mixed flock in Tapichalaca.
- Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager** *Anisognathus lacrymosus*
Seen on two different days, both involving birds in mixed feeding flocks, at Tapichalaca, and Acanama.
- Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager** *Anisognathus igniventris*
This temperate forest species was seen in the Saraguro area.
- Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager** *Dubusia taeniata* **H**
Heard calling in the mist at Tapichalaca.
- Golden-crowned Tanager** *Iridosornis rufivertex*
This stunning black, blue, and golden tanager was seen in a flock with a **Masked Mountain-Tanager** at Acanama.
- Fawn-breasted Tanager** *Pipraeidea melanonota*
A single was seen in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve.
- Blue-gray Tanager** *Thraupis episcopus*
Commonly encountered in the western lowlands.
- Palm Tanager** *Thraupis palmarum*
Just a couple noted on this tour.
- Blue-capped Tanager** *Thraupis cyanocephala*
One was seen in Utuana Reserve.
- Silvery (Silver-backed) Tanager** *Tangara viridicollis*
One was noted inside Utuana Reserve.
- Blue-necked Tanager** *Tangara cyanicollis*
Just two sightings, at Buenaventura in the west and below Valladolid in the eastern Andes.
- Rufous-throated Tanager** *Tangara rufigula* **RE**
A pair was seen in a diverse feeding flock in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve.
- Spotted Tanager** *Tangara punctate*
One was seen just below Valladolid in the eastern Andes.
- Blue-and-black Tanager** *Tangara vassorii*
One was seen inside Utuana reserve.
- Bay-headed Tanager** *Tangara gyrola*
A couple of sightings were had in Buenaventura, and then another single was seen below Valladolid.
- Flame-faced Tanager** *Tangara parzudakii*
A few were accompanying a big mixed flock in Buenaventura Reserve.
- Golden Tanager** *Tangara arthus*
In the west, seen in a mixed flock in Buenaventura, with another seen near Valladolid on the eastern side of the Andes.
- Silver-throated Tanager** *Tangara icterocephala*
A few birds were seen in Buenaventura on the western side of the Andes.
- Black-faced Dacnis** *Dacnis lineata lineata*
A female was seen during our afternoon below Valladolid, near Tapichalaca.

Green Honeycreeper

Only seen in Buenaventura, where they were abundant at the hummingbird feeders at Umbrellabird Lodge.

Guira Tanager

A small party were found inside the forest at Manglares Churute.

Blue-backed Conebill

Found within a mixed flock at Tapichalaca.

Giant Conebill

This much wanted inhabitant of polylepis forest in the high Andes was finally located in El Cajas NP.

Tit-like Dacnis

This handsome high altitude tanager was seen several times inside El Cajas NP.

Glossy Flowerpiercer

Seen at several highland sites, including near Saraguro.

Masked Flowerpiercer

Recorded in the Utuana area.

Plushcap

This beautiful bamboo-dweller was seen in Tapichalaca by Jean-Francois.

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch

Noted on multiple occasions inside El Cajas NP.

Saffron Finch

Regularly seen in the southwestern lowlands.

Blue-black Grassquit

Recorded in the Santa Rosa area.

Parrot-billed Seedeater

This odd-billed seedeater, was seen at Santa Rosa, where around 10 birds were found around the shrimp ponds.

Thick-billed (Lesser) Seed-Finch

One was seen at Buenaventura.

Variable Seedeater

Recorded on multiple occasions in the western lowlands and foothills.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater

A good number were seen in the upper part of the Buenaventura Reserve.

Plain-colored Seedeater

Good numbers of them were seen at Laguna Llaviucu in El Cajas NP.

Crimson-breasted Finch

This extremely handsome finch was seen at Santa Rosa, and then again at Zapotillo.

Bananaquit

Only recorded at Buenaventura, where they were regulars at the Umbrellabird Lodge feeders.

Dull-colored Grassquit

Seen once near Yungilla reserve.

Buff-throated Saltator

Seen a couple of times in Buenaventura.

Streaked Saltator

Seen on four days in the southwestern lowlands and foothills.

Black-cowled Saltator

Two were seen below Utuana, a handsome endemic species.

Slate-colored Grosbeak

A pair was heard and then seen in Buenaventura.

Chlorophanes spiza**Hemithraupis guira****Conirostrum sitticolor****Oreomanes fraseri****Xenodacnis parina**

RE

Diglossa lafresnayii**Diglossa cyanea****Catamblyrhynchus diadema****Phrygilus unicolor****Sicalis flaveola****Volatinia jacarina****Sporophila peruviana**

RE

Sporophila funereal**Sporophila corvina****Sporophila nigricollis****Catamenia inornata****Rhodospingus cruentus**

RE

Coereba flaveola**Tiaris obscurus****Saltator maximus****Saltator striatipectus****Saltator nigriceps**

RE

Saltator grossus**NEW WORLD BUNTINGS AND SPARROWS: PASSERELLIDAE****Yellow-throated Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager) Chlorospingus flavigularis**

3 were seen by Umbrellabird Lodge in Buenaventura.

Ashy-throated Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager) *Chlorospingus canigularis*

A vocal and responsive pair was seen in the upper part of Buenaventura Reserve.

Common Chlorospingus (Bush-Tanager) *Chlorospingus flavopectus*

A small party of these tanagers was seen in Buenaventura.

Tumbes Sparrow***Rhynchospiza stolzmanni*****RE**

Excellent views of this sparrow were had in El Empalme and also at the Tumbes Tyrant site in Zapotillo.

Yellow-browed Sparrow***Ammodramus aurifrons***

A few were seen below the town of Valladolid.

Gray-browed (Stripe-headed) Brushfinch *Arremon assimilis*

A regular at the Yungilla feeders, which also attracted **Pale-headed Brushfinches** and **Chestnut-crowned Antpitta**.

Orange-billed Sparrow***Arremon aurantirostris***

Singles were seen in both Manglares Churute and Buenaventura.

Black-capped Sparrow***Arremon abeillei*****RE**

Our first came while searching for **Elegant Crescentchest** near Catacocha; others visited the feeders at Jorupe.

Rufous-collared Sparrow***Zonotrichia capensis***

Commonly encountered in highland areas.

White-headed Brushfinch***Atlapetes albiceps*****RE**

Four of these gorgeous brushfinches were seen near El Empalme, and then another gave unbeatable looks in Zapotillo.

Tricolored (Choco) Brushfinch***Atlapetes tricolor crassus*****RE**

An active pair was seen in the upper part of Buenaventura. NOTE: This is considered a distinct, endemic species (**Choco Brushfinch**) in IOC, but not yet split under eBird/Clements.

Pale-naped Brushfinch***Atlapetes pallidinucha*****H**

Heard singing at Huashapamba.

Yellow-breasted (Rufous-naped) Brushfinch *Atlapetes latinuchus*

Seen a few times in Tapichalaca and near Saraguro too.

White-winged Brushfinch***Atlapetes leucopterus dresseri***

One was seen near Utuana.

Pale-headed Brushfinch***Atlapetes pallidiceps*****RE**

This extremely rare species is found in only one place in the world, Yungilla, where at least 6 different birds were seen.

Bay-crowned Brushfinch***Atlapetes seebohmi*****RE**

A pair showed well, right on cue, in El Tundo Reserve, near Sozoranga in the southwest highlands.

TROUPIALS AND ALLIES: ICTERIDAE**Peruvian Meadowlark*****Sturnella bellicose***

Recorded in both Manglares Churute and Santa Rosa at the start of the tour. A handsome blackbird.

Scrub Blackbird***Dives warszewiczi***

A common species in the dry lowlands of the southwest, where many were encountered.

Great-tailed Grackle***Quiscalus mexicanus***

A few were seen sitting on boats around Puerto Jeli, a local species in Ecuador.

Shiny Cowbird***Molothrus bonariensis***

Regularly recorded on roadsides in the wetter areas of the southwest lowlands (i.e. just south of Guayaquil).

White-edged Oriole***Icterus graceannae*****RE**

A pair of these gorgeous endemics was seen between Zapotillo and Jorupe.

Yellow-tailed Oriole***Icterus mesomelas***

Seen well with Jorupe Reserve, by Urraca Lodge.

Yellow-billed Cacique***Amblycercus holosericeus***

This odd, bamboo-dwelling cacique, was seen well in a chusquea stand on the way up to see the **Jocotoco Antpitta**.

Yellow-rumped Cacique***Cacicus cela***

Seen at Manglares Churute.

Russet-backed Oropendola*Heard below Utuana.****Psarocolius angustifrons*****H****SISKINS AND ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE****Orange-crowned Euphonia*****Euphonia saturate****First encountered south of Guayaquil on a roadside when our vehicle broke down, then again in Manglares Churute.***Thick-billed Euphonia*****Euphonia laniirostris****Encountered in Manglares Churute, Buenaventura, and at several sites around Jorupe.***Orange-bellied Euphonia*****Euphonia xanthogaster****Three were seen in the Jardin de Colobries in the upper part of Buenaventura.***Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia*****Chlorophonia pyrrhophrys****A pair of these beautiful finches was seen while searching for Red-faced Parrot at Huashapamba.***Hooded Siskin*****Spinus magellanicus****A small group were seen in the polylepis forest beside Laguna Toreadora, in El Cajas NP. Two others at Buenaventura.***Olivaceous Siskin*****Spinus olivaceus****One was seen below the town of Valladolid, below Tapichalaca.***OLD WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERIDAE****House Sparrow*****Passer domesticus****One was seen on the return journey to Guayaquil at the end of the tour.***MAMMALS****Mantled Howler*****Alouatta palliate****Heard in La Flora (Manglares Churute), and Jean-Francois later had one along the roadside.***Guayaquil Squirrel*****Sciurus stramineus****This large and handsome squirrel was omnipresent at the Urraca Lodge feeders (Jorupe Reserve).***Central American Agouti*****Dasyprocta punctate****Seen just the once, in Buenaventura.***South American Coati*****Nasua nasua****Seen around the Umbrellabird Lodge feeders in Buenaventura, a very bold animal there!***Mountain (Andean) Coati*****Nasuella olivacea****One was seen scampering along the trail at Tapichalaca.***Brazilian Rabbit (Tapeti)*****Sylvilagus brasiliensis****A few were seen in El Cajas NP.***Northern Pudu*****Pudu mephistophiles****This tiny, scarce deer was seen near Saraguro. A lucky sighting.*