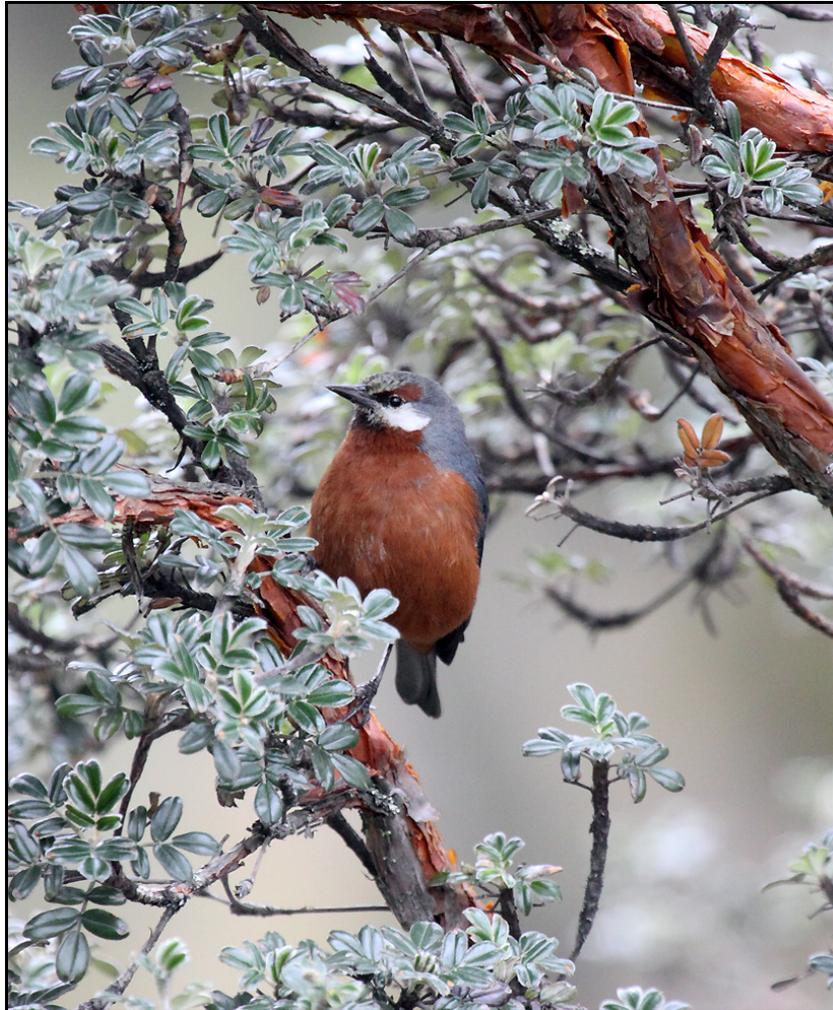


**TROPICAL
BIRDING**



Southern Ecuador: An 8 day custom tour
(Cerro Blanco, Buenaventura, Jorupe, Utuana, Tapichalaca & El Cajas)



GIANT CONEBILL El Cajas National Park

11 – 18 February 2010

Tour Leader: Sam Woods

All photos were taken by Sam Woods/Tropical Birding

INTRODUCTION

How much can you cram into just 8 days birding in the south of this megadiverse Andean country? Well, we managed the following: Horned Screamer, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Bearded Guan, Gray-backed Hawk, Semicollared Hawk, Ecuadorian Ground-Dove, Andean Lapwing, El Oro, Gray-cheeked, Red-masked & Golden-plumed Parakeets, Peruvian Pygmy-Owl, Swallow-tailed Nightjar, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Flame-throated, Purple-throated & Amethyst-throated Sunangels, Rufous-capped Thornbill, Ecuadorian Trogon, Ecuadorian Piculet, Mouse-colored Thistletail, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Henna-hooded & Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaners, Chapman's & Collared Antshrikes, Gray-headed Antbird, Barred Anttthrush, 5 species of antpitta (Jocotoco, Rufous, Tawny, Slate-crowned, & Watkins's Antpittas), Ocellated Tapaculo, Black-crested Tit-Tyrant, Green-and-black & Barred Fruiteaters, Long-wattled Umbrellabird, Club-winged Manakin, Slaty Becard, Chestnut-collared Swallow, Maranon Thrush, Gray-and-gold Warbler, Black-headed Hemispingus, Giant Conebill, Tit-like Dacnis, Golden-crowned, Rufous-throated, & Silvery Tanagers, Drab & Parrot-billed Seedeaters, White-headed & Bay-crowned Brush-Finches, and Crimson-breasted Finch to name but a few!!!

This short tour covered the deciduous woods of Cerro Blanco (61m/200ft) near sea level on the outskirts of Ecuador's largest city Guayaquil, then traveled up into the western foothills of the Andes at Buenaventura (525m/1722ft). We then continued our journey south into the border province of Loja, where we then birded the humid deciduous woodlands in Jorupe (555m/1820ft)reserve. From there we journeyed eastwards, higher into the Andes, checking the Utuana (2550m/8366ft) reserve in the southwestern highlands, followed by a short visit to the dry, arid interandean valley at Catamayo (1250m/4101ft). This was followed by a trip up into the temperate zone on the east slope of the Andes at Tapichalaca (2485m/8153ft), and finally finished off in the high Andes, in the paramo grasslands, high altitude lakes, and polylepis woodland patches in El Cajas (up to 4150m/13,615/ft).

ITINERARY

February 10	Arrival in Guayaquil/night Guayaquil
February 11	Cerro Blanco to Buenaventura/night Zaruma
February 12	Buenaventura/night Zaruma
February 13	Buenaventura & El Empalme to Macara/night Macara
February 14	Jorupe & Sozoranga/night Macara
February 15	Utuana & Catamayo to Tapichalaca/night Tapichalaca
February 16	Tapichalaca & Valladolid/night Tapichalaca
February 17	Tapichalaca to Cuenca/night Cuenca
February 18	El Cajas NP to Guayaquil/night Guayaquil
February 19	Departure from Guayaquil

DAILY LOG

Day 1 (February 11)

CERRO BLANCO & BUENAVENTURA

We began the day on the outskirts of Guayaquil, in the reserve of **Cerro Blanco** in an area of humid semi-deciduous woodland. The weather was troublesome this morning and so our time was a bit limited although we managed to pick up a few Tumbesian birds before we began our journey south into El Oro province, and the Buenaventura reserve. A male **Ecuadorian Trogon** was the pick of the draw at Cerro Blanco, although we also saw our first bold **Fasciated Wrens**, another regional endemic in **Sooty-crowned Flycatcher**, and a gorgeous male **Crimson-breasted Finch** that made the visit well worthwhile in spite of the difficult wet conditions.



As we headed south from Guayaquil we passed flooded fields and marshes that held a number of wetland species, including a lone **Horned Screamer** and dozens upon dozens of **Snail Kites** perched by the roadside. Finally, we entered into El Oro province and stopped in for a late afternoon visit to one of the famous sets of feeders within the **Buenaventura** reserve. The feeders hold not only a wide variety of species, but also

dozens of individuals making for quite a show. Many **Violet-bellied Hummingbirds** and tiny **Green Thorntails** dominated the feeders, competing with the odd **Green Honeycreeper** (see photo above) and the local **Emerald-bellied Woodnymph**, and even a **White-whiskered Hermit** dropped in for a star turn.

While the hummers were of course a major attraction, my “real” reason for dropping in to the feeders was to check if a special endemic was around the lodge that had been in this area during a visit only a few weeks before. We were not disappointed as a mob of three **Rufous-headed Chachalacas** were found lurking in a near *cecropia* as hoped (**see photo**). With heavy rains descending on us, we retired to our hotel, hoping for more pleasant weather in the morning for our “Umbrellabird Mission” the following day...



Day 2 (February 12)

BUENAVENTURA

A full day was spent in this [Jocotoco Conservation Foundation](#) reserve in the western foothills of the Andes that protects a number of notable local, rare species. We took our breakfast pre-dawn and made sure we were heading down into a forested valley within the reserve just after first light. As we walked down into the heart of the rainforest we listened intently for the low mooring calls of our target species, the very odd **Long-wattled Umbrellabird** that comes to this area just after dawn to call to attract females. Alarmingly as we made our way into the bottom of the valley we heard no evidence of them at all, and the nerves soon kicked in! We wandered to the spot where I had come upon them a few weeks before and waited impatiently, until suddenly just behind us a deep low, cow like call alerted us to a male umbrellabird in the area. We stared up into the tangled branches overhead and paced around to try and find the culprit, when a large black shape landed in the trees overhead, although was perched with its back to us and its most famous appendage was frustratingly

largely hidden from us. The scope was put into action and we were soon all lapping up this rare and impressive cotinga all the same. The bird did not stay for long, although soon after we found another that chose an open dead snag for its calling post, and this one behaved impeccably extending its strange long wattle to its full impressive length (said to be 30cm at maximum length, although we could not all help but think this one was decidedly longer!) A fantastic performance indeed.

With the umbrellabird still in our minds we wandered back out of the valley to a wide track that passes through magnificent foothill forest, and hosts another local species of great interest to us. As we emerged out of the trail the trail head was beeping with the sound of displaying **Club-winged Manakins**. This rusty manakin is sometimes referred to as the “cricket” bird as it makes this strange mechanical sound by rubbing its strange shaped wings together at high speed. Recent research has shown that they shake their wings at 107 times per second, faster than the wing beats of a hummingbird! We got to watch a male going through this whole high speed process and hear their distinctive beeping that results from this strange behavior first hand, watching as they lifted their black-and-white wings over their heads in full display. Superb. Once we had had our fill of the manakin, we wandered along the road to a display area for another strange rainforest bird, this time a flycatcher, the **Brownish Twistwing**, which performed to perfection and gave great looks to us all.

With mist often descending over the reserve in the afternoons we opted to go up to a higher sector of this superb reserve and visit the nesting area of one of the reserve’s rarest birds, the Ecuadorian endemic El Oro Parakeet. However, before we made it to that key spot, we were distracted on the drive up by a **Chocó Toucan**, a small group of perched **Red-masked Parakeets**, and several **Gray-backed Hawks** that gave superb aerial views during this sunny morning. Just before we reached the parakeet zone we also bumped into a small group of **Rufous-throated Tanagers** feeding on some roadside fruits. We trudged through a muddy cow pasture to an area of forest edge where a number of nest boxes have been erected by the foundation for the 200 or so **El Oro Parakeets** that exist within the reserve. Sadly, the nest box that we had enjoyed watching one of these parakeets peer out of just a few weeks previously had since been abandoned. However, all was not lost as these gregarious parakeets had a number of other boxes in the area, and we struck lucky with the third box checked, that not only had a parakeet present, peering out of its hole on our arrival, but also had another four parakeets perched right on top of it. We then lingered in the area and enjoyed several groups of these extremely rare parakeets flying around and playing in the trees overhead, with seemingly no concern at all for our presence immediately below them. The camera left in the van seemed very stupid indeed at that point!

We then lunched at the lodge, racking up hummingbirds that totaled 15 species for the day, and also admiring a male **Gartered Trogon** sitting quietly by the restaurant. Then we returned to the forest picking up the striking **Guayaquil Woodpecker**, in addition to a **Rufous Motmot**.

Day 3 (February 13)

BUENAVENTURA & EL EMPALME

A final few hours were spent in Buenaventura before we journeyed further south into the province of Loja, and our hotel in the border town of Macara (with Peru visible not far beyond). Our morning was pretty quiet in general, with **Sickle-winged Guan** added, further views of **Gray-backed Hawks** (both perched in the reserve and soaring overhead during an unscheduled car repair en-route), a pair of **Crested Caracaras**, and another perched **Red-masked Parakeet**, along with a male **Western Slaty-Antshrike**, **Russet Antshrike**, an **Andean Solitaire**, and a pair of **Tricolored Brush-Finches**. During our journey into Loja we had an unsettling period when we realized a bolt had fallen off our van en-route and we had to make an emergency repair that slowed our progress somewhat. The result of this is we had just ten minutes or so to stop at **El Empalme** on the way, although was well worth it for the pair of **White-headed Brush-Finches**, and confiding **Tumbes Sparrow** that showed up during our short visit, in addition to a few more striking **Fasciated Wrens**. We then checked into a hotel in Macara and enjoyed a fine seafood spread in a local restaurant, rightly famous for its superb “mariscos”.



Day 4 (February 14)

JORUPE & SOZORANGA

Just after dawn we traveled the short distance east of town to the deciduous woods of Jorupe reserve, another superb Jocotoco Conservation Foundation sanctuary, and a great spot for many Tumbesian specialties. We enjoyed an excellent morning in the reserve picking up almost all the possible Tumbesian birds we were after. The day began brightly with a troop of lovely **White-tailed Jays** right at the gate. Not too much further up the track we bumped into a local guide who led us straight to a pair of **Blackish-headed Spinetails** calling from a tangle. We then focused on getting to grips with **Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaners** that were very vocal during our visit but not exactly easy to see nonetheless. A few fleeting glimpses were endured first before one individual behaved much

better and allowed us a good close up look. A wide open track passes through rich deciduous woodland that is dotted with massive *ceiba* trees. The open nature of the woodland makes for great birding, and allowed us to pick up many target species in quick succession. Two small parrots were found perched within the huge *ceibas* and allowed us prolonged views in the telescope, with first a pair of **Gray-cheeked Parakeets** (an endangered Tumbesian parakeet with a tiny world range in southern

Ecuador and northern Peru), and then a tiny, tiny pair of **Pacific Parrotlets**. Within the scrub that lines the understory below the massive buttresses of the *ceibas* we found a dapper **Black-capped Sparrow**, and trees overhead held both the widespread **Yellow-tailed Orioles** (see photo on page 6) and the Tumbesian specialty, **White-edged Oriole**.

We then birded around the newly built Urracas (the Spanish word for jay) Lodge where one single large *ceiba* tree held three species of becard, including a nesting pair of **Slaty Becards** (another endangered Tumbesian passerine). On the trails behind the lodge we tracked down, (after a little bushwhacking), a **Watkins's Antpitta** perched in a tangle in full song, as well as a pair of melodic **Speckle-breasted Wrens**. We also found a pair of bright rusty **Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaners** that were giving all the indications that they were nesting in the area, and also a superb



pair of **Gray-breasted Flycatchers** that had recently been found nesting right next to the lodge by the master nest finder Harold Greeney. Normally this would be a tricky species, being local and thinly distributed, although proved very easy as they were perched right around their nest cavity in view of the lodge restaurant. Another nest stakeout also paid off as we watched a fantastic **Red-billed Scythebill** clasp to the trunk of the tree by the lodge veranda that it has chosen to nest in. Our morning ended with an extended showing of a **Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl** that was being battered by a pair of **Rufous-browed Peppershrikes** that were regularly dive-bombing this tiny owl (see photo).

After a fine slap up lunch at Urracas Lodge we left the reserve and ventured higher into the mountains to patches of forest around the town of **Sozoranga**. We stopped at a tiny Andean village en-route to admire the few remaining **Chestnut-collared Swallows** that were nesting under the roofs of the houses along the main street in town. At Sozoranga we got to work on finding a number of local species. First we tracked down a calling female **Chapman's Antshrike** that allowed us to line it up in the scope, and then Terry alerted us to a superb **Black-cowled Saltator** in the trees above. Then in the late afternoon we finally found the bird we had really come here for, an excellent **Elegant Crescentchest** that was observed calling in the scope for some time. An excellent way to round out what had been a superb days birding in the endemic rich Tumbesian region.

Day 5 (February 15)

UTUANA & CATAMAYO

On this short tour we just had one shot at getting some of the southwestern highland endemics that occur in the **Ututana** area. A number of rare and local species exist within and around the reserve, many of which can only be found in extreme southern Ecuador and northern Peru. We kicked off with one of these shortly after dawn when a pristine pair of **Piura Hemispingus** put in an appearance, shortly after followed by another pair of these striking tanagers. Two other standout tanagers were found from the same spot, where both **Silvery and Rufous-chested Tanagers** also showed up. The same stretch of bamboo-choked forest also held a number of vocal **Line-cheeked Spinetails** too. Moving our way up this mountain road the early morning mist soon cleared and we found our first **Jelski's Chat-Tyrants** of the morning. However, the star find of the day came a short time later when a low guttural call emanating from a thick stand of bamboo led us to a male **Gray-headed Antbird**, a very rare Tumbesian endemic listed as globally vulnerable by Birdlife International. With our time limited on this custom trip we then drive on up to the reserve and made our way to the superb hummer feeders within Ututana reserve. This is another Jocotoco Conservation Foundation property that has an exciting set of hummingbird feeders. Unlike Buenaventura's feeders the diversity at these highland feeders is not that high, although they still held two key birds for us. They are worth the entry fee alone for the commonest visitor to them, the dazzling multicolored **Rainbow Starfrontlet** that dominated proceedings and our attentions there. Small numbers of **Purple-throated Sunangels** dropped in too, and the occasional **Mountain Velvetbreast** also made a short appearance although was always seen off by one of the attendant starfrontlets! The area around the feeders provided some great birding too, with a pair of adorable **Black-crested Tit-Tyrants**, and also a pair of the often tricky **Bay-crowned Brush-Finch** too.

With that our time came to a close in the southwestern highlands and we had to begin our journey further east towards our next destination, Tapichalaca, another Fundacion Jocotoco reserve. Before we reached the temperate forests of Tapichalaca though I made a short, but special, stop in a dry arid area of the highlands near the city of **Catamayo**. This can be finch heaven, and so it proved on this day. In just fifteen minutes on site (and with a little help from a pygmy-owl call), we found the scarce **Drab Seedeater**, the distinctive **Parrot-billed Seedeater**, and Chestnut-throated Seedeater, in addition to **Peruvian Meadowlark**, **Croaking Ground-Dove**, and even

another **Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl**. In complete contrast to these arid areas within the dry interandean valley, we climbed up to the wet temperate forests on the east slope of the Andes. Shockingly though this notoriously wet area was not rainy at all and we enjoyed a late afternoon in and around **Tapichalaca** without a drop of rain and picking up some cool temperate birds like a fancy flock that held both **Golden-crowned Tanager** and **Black-headed Hemispingus**, perched views of a group of **Golden-plumed Parakeets**, and even a **Swallow-tailed Nightjar** that dropped down on to the entrance track into the lodge at dusk (while a **Rufous-bellied Nighthawk** hawked insects on the wing overhead).

Day 6 (February 16)

TAPICHALACA

We spent the morning within the temperate forest of **Tapichalaca**, and in the afternoon ventured down slope away from this wet area to the drier patches of foothill forest just south of **Valladolid**.

Of course the morning's focus was on the reserve's most famous resident, the **Jocotoco Antpitta**, a rare and endangered *grallaria*, first described in 1997. A two kilometer walk is necessary to get to the area for this striking antpitta, which has become remarkably easy to see in recent years, as the rangers within the reserve have habituated a number of individuals. Although it is hard not to hurry straight to the spot, we held ourselves back and took in many other species along the way. A misty morning opened with the local **Orange-banded Flycatcher** calling at us continually from some roadside trees, and continued with a **Slaty Finch** or two found within the vast patches of seeding bamboo. Not far from there we also found another local flycatcher, the cute **Black-throated Tody-Tyrant**. Once we entered the narrow forest trail that leads to the antpitta feeding area, we managed to track down a calling **Slate-crowned Antpitta** sitting inconspicuously in a large stand of *chusquea* bamboo that chokes this highland reserve. A few quiet flock



were also picked up slinking through the understorey some of which held a striking troop of **Black-capped Hemispingus** in their midst. Slowly but surely we ventured

higher up the trail and closer to our morning's main target, although along the way we passed by another feeding area, this one a grain-filled bird table with a blind overlooking it, that had a **White-throated Quail-Dove** in attendance as hoped. Finally, we reached the "Jocotoco Knoll", where we were stunned by the regular juvenile **Jocotoco Antpitta** hopping around right at our feet (**see photo on page 9**), with no indication of the shyness that this species is more usually known for! Unfortunately on this day the regular pair of adults was a no show, although the youngster was entertaining enough. This spot proved a hotspot of note, also producing our first fruiteater of the morning with a male **Green-and-black Fruiteater** that was arguably outshone by the multicolored **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan** observed from the very same spot just minutes apart. Not far up the same rich forest trail we found another *cotinga*, with a female **Barred Fruiteater** found feeding in a fruiting tree by the trailside.

Late in the morning we wandered back down the trail and returned to the lodge for lunch. The hummer feeders at **Casa Simpson** were as busy as ever, with **Flame-throated Sunangels** fighting with **Amethyst-throated Sunangels**, **Chestnut-breasted Coronets**, **Collared Incas**, **Speckled**



Hummingbirds, and **Long-tailed Sylphs** for a place at the sugar feeders. After lunch we opted to check the flowering shrubs along the roadside close to the lodge for Tapichalaca's most important hummer, the **Rufous-capped Thornbill**, that has been erratic lately at the feeders and much more reliable in the flowering roadside shrubs. This was proved pretty quickly when ten minutes into our search we found one perched up that allowed us to thoroughly examine its rufous cap and glittering emerald-green beard with the use of the scope.

We then spent a few hours lower down near the town of **Valladolid** that gave us a shot at a few foothill species that were not possible elsewhere on the tour. The afternoon's prize find though was seen in the subtropical forest between Tapichalaca and Valladolid, where a perched juvenile **Semicollared Hawk** was observed at close range (**see photo above**). While there we picked up a number of **Marañon Thrushes**, a very local species confined to the extreme south of Ecuador and northern Peru, as well as **Olive-chested Flycatchers**, **Mottle-backed Elaenia**, and **Golden-eared Tanagers**. At the close of the day we returned again to the lodge and

enjoyed the same female **Swallow-tailed Nightjar** hawking insects at dusk over the lodge drive.

Day 7 (February 17)

TAPICHALACA to CUENCA

Our penultimate days birding involved a last morning in the exciting temperate reserve of **Tapichalaca**, before we journeyed north into the province of Azuay and the scenic colonial city of Cuenca. This would be our base for exploring the high Andes of El Cajas on our final days birding.

Initially the day started slowly with a little light rain and low activity dogging our initial efforts. We did pick up two different **Chusquea Tapaculos**, including one that was visiting a compost pile with a pair of **Chestnut-capped Brush-Finches** behind the lodge. With low activity on that trail we decided to return again to the Jocotoco Trail, with a view to trying to catch up with one of the regular adults that were AWOL the day before, and also target some gaps on our list. This was not a morning of huge quantity of birds, although some top quality species made star appearances. We were greeted by the now very familiar juvenile Jocotoco Antpitta, which actually followed us along the trail for a good ten-fifteen minutes! Still though no sign as yet of the adults we continued higher up the trail, tried a recent spot for Ocellated Tapaculo but getting



no response we carried on along the trail but were stopped in our tracks by the atmospheric calls of a **Barred Antthrush** that drifted up from the forest to us. Knowing they can often be tempted in I put the I-pod to work, and after some time this intricately patterned antthrush strutted into view below us, and was even observed calling from the forest floor.

After taking in this scarce and difficult Andean bird we began our descent back down the trail, and were again abruptly stopped in our tracks, this time by a pair of calling **Ocellated Tapaculos (see photo)**, calling from the very same spot I had tried just a short time before. It soon became apparent the birds were calling extremely close, and the first short burst of playback bought both birds clumsily moving through the undergrowth towards us. Their path could be traced by the vigorous movements of the vegetation in front of us. Finally, both birds came in real close and emerged out of the shadows to call in prominent positions time and

again for a truly memorable showing from this classic, polka-dotted Andean bird. He birds were so excitable that they regularly called back at us from an open perch, bringing us the best views that I had even experienced of this classic Andean bird. At one point I looked on, incredulous as one of the pair abandoned normal protocol and jumped out onto the open path beside me! A truly memorable encounter with this species and for me anyway the very best bird of the trip. Having got more than we bargained for out of this very bold pair of tapaculos we continued our return to the lodge for departure although once again were distracted as we descended, this time by the fashionably late arrival of the pair of adult **Jocotoco Antpittas** that we just could not resist observing for some time. Finally, we checked out of the lodge, and headed



north for Cuenca, taking in a last minute flock before we left this fascinating reserve that contained several **Golden-crowned Tanagers** among others. Late in the afternoon we checked into our Cuenca hotel, that came complete with naturally fed hot baths, and a **Chiguanco Thrush** in the garden.

Day 8 (February 18)

EL CAJAS NATIONAL PARK

Our final day of birding involved a foray into the high Andean grasslands, known as paramo, that are dotted with scenic lakes and patches of *polylepis* woodland in **El Cajas National Park**. Before we visited these Andean moors though, we started around **Laguna Llaviucu**, a tranquil lake surrounded by stunted Andean cloud forest. The sounds of **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucans** could be heard from deep within the forest, though we began with a **White-capped Dipper** feeding in the rapids of a river en-route, a lone **Red-crested Cotinga** standing sentry in the temperate forest, and an **Andean Guan** sitting quietly in a treetop. On surveying the calm waters of the lake we found several displaying **Andean Ruddy Ducks** at the edges of the reeds, a few **Andean Teal** dabbling at the lake edge, and an **Andean Gull** feeding over the lake. The sedges on the lake fringe held a pair of calling **Sedge (Grass) Wrens**, although a call from the near forest led us into the cloud forest, where a pair of superb **Rufous Antpittas** was tempted out into the middle of the trail (**see photo**).

With the weather holding well, a calm clear morning prevailing, we decided we should take full advantage and venture higher in the park. Wandering into some roadside high Andean scrub bought us our fifth and final antpitta of the trip, a bold **Tawny Antpitta** that unlike many of its other congeners will often venture into the open, much as this one did for us. Two other locals species were found within the scrub, with first a **Mouse-colored Thistletail**, and then the rare Ecuadorian endemic **Violet-throated Metaltail** (see photo) that came in and perched alongside us. Another check of a similar area of high Andean scrub and bushes produced first a **Many-striped Canastero** calling from the top of a bush, and an extremely confiding pair of **Andean Tit-Spinetails** that landed in the bush right next to us (see photo).



Things were going swimmingly and so we continued our journey up into the higher reaches of the park and checked an area of thick *polylepis* trees. These stunted trees



are highly distinctive in appearance, sporting flaky deep red bark and small bright green leaves. They are a very important habitat, and are in fact the highest growing trees on Earth that provide an essential environment for a number of high Andean birds. Due to the lack of other firewood

in such areas *polylepis* woods have often faced extensive clearance and therefore remain an important and threatened Andean zone. Pretty soon after checking a spot of these red-barked trees we found one of these, with several cobalt-blue male **Tit-**

Like **Dacnis** (see photo), and also picked up our first **Blue-mantled Thornbill** of the tour. Checking an Andean meadow alongside we found two species of cinclodes feeding side by side making for good comparison of these similar furnariids: **Bar-winged and Stout-billed Cinclodes**. On a small Andean lake alongside the woods we also found a pair of **Yellow-billed Pintail** dabbling in the shallows. Then a movement in the corner of my eye caused me to glance up to the *polylepis* again, only this time the bird creeping up the red flaky bark was not another *dacnis*, but another *polylepis* specialist, the local **Giant Conebill**.

We cloud gathering overhead, although still remaining dry, we sheltered from the cold in a local café and re-energized with a round of hot drinks. From the café Rich spotted a **Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant** feeding out on the paramo, and several **Variable**



Hawks were seen hovering overhead. After our refreshments we strolled into another patch of *polylepis* woodland by the café and found **Ecuadorian Hillstar** feeding on some burnt-orange *chuquiragua* flowers, and more importantly another **Giant Conebill**, this one outshining the first by feeding and posing at very close range (see photo). Another **Tawny Antpitta** was seen hopping around on the open paramo before we started our descent towards the park exit making two more stops along the way, for our a few **Andean Lapwings, Plain-colored Seedeaters**, a pair of **Carunculated Caracaras** strolling through the paramo, and a number of **Paramo (Plain-capped) Ground-Tyrants** feeding on an Andean bog. Finally, and with rain finally falling

overhead, we started our journey back to Guayaquil. We descended into thick mist and a few road works on the journey back before we came into the lowlands and peeled off many layers to deal with the new found humidity. Another **Horned Screamer**, a few **Wattled Jacanas** and a bunch more **Snail Kites** once again graced our return journey.

It may have been a short tour, with just 8 days birding but we still racked up many species and notably a number of the localized endemics that this area is rightly appealing for. Some of the many, many highlights included **Long-wattled Umbrellabirds** and endemic **El Oro Parakeets** at Buenaventura; a swathe of Tumbesian birds at Jorupe, including the stunning **White-tailed Jay**, and endangered **Slaty Becard**, a brace of rare **Foliage-gleaners (Rufous-necked and Henna-hooded)** and the fantastic **Watkins's Antpitta** to name a few there; a superb showy **Elegant Crescentchest** at Sozoranga; all the highland endemics we were seeking at Utuana including the glistening **Rainbow Starfrontlet**, the cute **Black-crested Tit-Tyrant**, and the difficult **Gray-headed Antbird**. At Tapichalaca it is often difficult to

look beyond the superb trio of tame **Jocotoco Antpittas**, although the pair of **Ocellated Tapaculos** gave them more than a run for their money, as did perched close views of **Golden-plumed Parakeets**, **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan**, **Golden-crowned Tanager**, and **Black-headed Hemispingus** among a horde of other great temperate birds on offer there. Lastly, we enjoyed a truly great day in the high Andes of El Cajas NP. We avoided the inclement weather that so often plagues this beautiful mountain setting, and enjoyed some memorable birding picking up the rare **Violet-throated Metaltail**, the near endemic **Ecuadorian Hillstar**, the tame and approachable **Tit-like Dacnis**, the nuthatch-like **Giant Conebill** (encountered twice during this great days birding), and two species of antpitta bringing our trip total to **five antpitta species in just eight days** birding!



BIRD LIST

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

This list is up to date with the major changes published by Cornell in December 2008, and further changes published in December 2009.

Species highlighted in **RED** are **CHOCÓ ENDEMIC**S

Species highlighted in **BLUE** are **TUMBESIAN LOWLAND ENDEMIC**S

Species highlighted in **GREEN** are **SOUTHWESTERN HIGHLANDS ENDEMIC**S

Species highlighted in **VIOLET** are **INTERANDEAN SLOPES AND VALLEYS ENDEMIC**S

Species highlighted in **GRAY** are **EAST SLOPE OF THE ANDES ENDEMIC**S

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

Please note: Recent taxonomic changes (published by Cornell in December 2008 & 2009) render some that were lumped on the Clements list part of a more widespread species, and so are not always considered as endemics, although are listed here for completeness as some authors still believe them to be separate species, and therefore still regarded as endemic.

TINAMOUS	TINAMIDAE
H Pale-browed Tinamou	<i>Crypturellus transfasciatus</i>
<i>This Tumbesian tinamou was heard regularly around Jorupe.</i>	
SCREAMERS	ANHIMIDAE
Horned Screamer	<i>Anhima cornuta</i>
<i>A single bird was seen as we passed through the marshes of Manglares-Charute on the first and last days of the tour.</i>	
DUCKS, GEESE, AND WATERFOWL	ANATIDAE
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>
<i>A few were seen flying around the marshes at Manglares Charute.</i>	
Yellow-billed Pintail	<i>Anas georgica</i>
<i>A pair were seen dabbling at the edge of a small lagoon in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Andean Teal	<i>Anas andium</i>
<i>Small numbers were seen in El Cajas National Park.</i>	
(Andean) Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis andina</i>
<i>Small groups of these highland ducks were seen in El Cajas NP. Some of the males were even seen displaying.</i>	
GUANS, CHACHALACAS, CURASSOWS	CRACIDAE
Rufous-headed Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis erythroptera</i>
<i>Two were seen on our first afternoon, hanging around in the trees by the Umbrellabird Lodge in Buenaventura reserve. Three were seen again there the following day.</i>	
Bearded Guan	<i>Penelope barbata</i>
<i>One was scoped in a treetop in Tapichalaca.</i>	
Andean Guan	<i>Penelope montagnii</i>
<i>One of these guans was seen in the temperate forest that fringes Laguna Llaviucu (El Cajas NP).</i>	

Sickle-winged Guan	<i>Chamaepetes goudotii</i>
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One was seen within Buenaventura reserve.

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Neotropic Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>
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A couple were seen flying over a river en-route to Macara.

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNS

ARDEIDAE

Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
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Recorded in a number of wetland areas south of Guayaquil.

Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>
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Commonly recorded in wetland areas south of Guayaquil.

Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
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A few scattered records throughout the tour.

Striated Heron	<i>Butorides striata</i>
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A few were seen around the marshes south of Guayaquil.

Black-crowned Night-Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
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One was seen near Manglares-Charute.

NEW WORLD VULTURES

CATHARTIDAE

Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
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Regularly seen in lowland areas.

Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
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Commonly recorded in low lying areas.

HAWKS, EAGLES AND KITES

ACCIPITRIDAE

Hook-billed Kite	<i>Chondrohierax uncinatus</i>
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One was seen perched in a patch of forest on the outskirts of Sozoranga.

Swallow-tailed Kite	<i>Elanoides forficatus</i>
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Five birds were seen circling gracefully above the reserve at Buenaventura.

Snail Kite	<i>Rostrhamus sociabilis</i>
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These kites lined the roads around the marshes south of Guayaquil.

Plumbeous Kite	<i>Ictinia plumbea</i>
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Two were seen gliding above Buenaventura reserve.

Semicollared Hawk	<i>Accipiter collaris</i>
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For the second tour in the row I bumped into this rare raptor in the south, though strangely in a completely different place than a few weeks previously! This time a young bird was seen and photographed between Tapichalaca and the town of Valladolid.

Sharp-shinned (Plain-breasted) Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus ventralis</i>
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One bird was seen in Buenaventura.

Gray-backed Hawk	<i>Leucopternis occidentalis</i>
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Some great views of both soaring and perched birds were had in Buenaventura.

Savanna Hawk	<i>Buteogallus meridionalis</i>
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A few were seen in open country south of Guayaquil

Harris's Hawk	<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>
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One overflew Sozoranga.

Roadside Hawk	<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>
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A couple were seen around Buenaventura.

Gray Hawk	<i>Buteo nitidus</i>
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A single adult was seen flying over Buenaventura.

Variable Hawk	<i>Buteo polyosoma</i>
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Four or more birds were seen hovering above El Cajas National Park.

FALCONS AND CARACARAS

FALCONIDAE

Carunculated Caracara	<i>Phalcooenus carunculatus</i>
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Two of these striking raptors were seen strolling through the paramo at El Cajas NP.

Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara cheriway</i>
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A few were seen in Buenaventura and another single was observed flying over Jorupe.

Laughing Falcon	<i>Herpetotheres cachinnans</i>
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One was seen perched in Jorupe reserve.

American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
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Two birds were seen near Valladolid.

RAILS, GALLINULES, AND COOTS

RALLIDAE

H Rufous-necked Wood-Rail	<i>Aramides axillaris</i>
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One was heard calling oh so close at Jorupe, but slipped away without being seen.

Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>
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One was seen in the Guayaquil marshes.

Common Moorhen (Gallinule)	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>
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One was seen in marshes north of Manglares-Charute.

Slate-colored (Andean) Coot	<i>Fulica ardesiaca</i>
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Small numbers were seen in El Cajas NP.

PLOVERS AND LAPWINGS

CHARADRIIDAE

Andean Lapwing	<i>Vanellus resplendens</i>
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Six birds were seen in a boggy pasture within El Cajas NP.

STILTS AND AVOCETS

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>
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Good numbers were seen around marshes in Guayas.

JACANAS

JACANIDAE

Wattled Jacana	<i>Jacana jacana</i>
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Numerous birds were seen in roadside marshes just south of Guayaquil.

GULLS, TERNS AND SKIMMERS

LARIDAE

Andean Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus serranus</i>
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Two sightings were made in El Cajas NP, a single bird flying around Laguna Llaviucu, and another ten or so birds in a roadside flock higher in the park.

PIGEONS AND DOVES

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>
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Commonly seen in towns throughout the tour.

Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas fasciata</i>
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Seen a number of times around Utuana, Sozoranga, and also near Valladolid.

	Pale-vented Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas cayennensis</i>
	<i>A few were seen on the journey between Guayaquil and Buenaventura.</i>	
H	Plumbeous Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas plumbea</i>
	<i>Heard calling occasionally at Buenaventura in El Oro province.</i>	
	Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>
	<i>Recorded around Loja in the highlands, also seen near El Empalme, and in the city of Cuenca.</i>	
	Ecuadorian Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina buckleyi</i>
	<i>A few of these endemic doves were seen in Cerro Blanco.</i>	
	Croaking Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina cruziana</i>
	<i>A couple of birds were seen in Catamayo.</i>	
	White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>
	<i>Recorded at Cerro Blanco and also around Jorupe.</i>	
	White-throated Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon frenata</i>
	<i>Excellent views of a single bird in Tapichalaca reserve, where a bird table has been successfully set up with grain in order to attract this normally shy forest species.</i>	
	PARROTS	PSITTACIDAE
	Golden-plumed Parakeet	<i>Leptosittaca branickii</i>
	<i>Several birds were seen perched within the Tapichalaca reserve.</i>	
	El Oro Parakeet	<i>Pyrrhura orcesi</i>
	<i>This endangered species was discovered as recently as 1980, and has a tiny world range, confined to southern Ecuador. We saw 8 or so birds around a nesting site in Buenaventura, which is the type locality for the species.</i>	
	Red-masked Parakeet	<i>Aratinga erythrogenys</i>
	<i>Two good looks at perched birds were had in Buenaventura, and others were seen in the deciduous woodland of Jorupe.</i>	
	Pacific Parrotlet	<i>Forpus coelestis</i>
	<i>Several of these tiny parrots were seen en-route to and from Guayaquil, although our best looks came within Jorupe where a pair were seen perched in a huge ceiba tree.</i>	
	Gray-cheeked Parakeet	<i>Brotogeris pyrrhoptera</i>
	<i>Good views of this endangered parakeet were enjoyed within Jorupe, where a small group were seen perched in one of the large ceiba trees that are dotted around the reserve.</i>	
	Bronze-winged Parrot	<i>Pionus chalcopterus</i>
	<i>Several groups were seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Scaly-naped Parrot (Amazon)	<i>Amazona mercenaria</i>
	<i>One small group flew over us at Tapichalaca.</i>	
	CUCKOOS	CUCULIDAE
H	Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Coccyua minuta</i>
	<i>Several were heard calling in Buenaventura.</i>	
H	Striped Cuckoo	<i>Tapera naevia</i>
	<i>Heard calling regularly within Jorupe.</i>	
	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>
	<i>Seen around Valladolid and other spots during various journeys on the tour.</i>	
	Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>
	<i>Commonly recorded in humid areas of the west, including around Jorupe.</i>	

OWLS

STRIGIDAE

Peruvian (Pacific) Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glucidium peruanum</i>
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Two sightings on the tour, a wonderful bird at Jorupe that we watched being attacked ceaselessly by a pair of agitated Rufous-browed Peppershrikes; and another was seen during our brief stop in Catamayo.

NIGHTJARS AND ALLIES

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Rufous-bellied Nighthawk	<i>Lurocalis rufiventris</i>
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One was seen hawking overhead at Tapichalaca at dusk, while we were watching a Swallow-tailed Nightjar.

Pauraque	<i>Nyctidromus albicollis</i>
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Ten or so birds were seen along the entrance track into Buenaventura one morning before dawn.

Swallow-tailed Nightjar	<i>Uropsalis segmentata</i>
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A female bird flew in and landed on the entrance track to Tapichalaca Lodge a couple of times on both of our nights there.

SWIFTS

APODIDAE

Chestnut-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne rutila</i>
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A few birds were seen gliding over a forest patch near Valladolid.

Short-tailed (Tumbes) Swift	<i>Chaetura brachyura ocybetes</i>
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A small group were seen just south of Guayaquil.

Gray-rumped Swift	<i>Chaetura cinereiventris</i>
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A few were seen in Buenaventura.

HUMMINGBIRDS

TROCHILIDAE

White-whiskered Hermit	<i>Phaethornis yaruqui</i>
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This Choco endemic was seen at the feeders within the Buenaventura reserve in the western foothills of the Andes.

Long-billed (Baron's) Hermit	<i>Phaethornis longirostris baroni</i>
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One dropped into the feeders at Buenaventura.

White-necked Jacobin	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>
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A common visitor to the amazing feeders at Buenaventura.

Brown Violetear	<i>Colibri delphinae</i>
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Regular at the Buenaventura feeders.

Sparkling Violetear	<i>Colibri coruscans</i>
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One was seen in our Cuenca resort garden, and another was seen in El Cajas NP.

Amethyst-throated Sunangel	<i>Heliangelus amethysticollis</i>
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Regularly seen coming to the Tapichalaca feeders.

Little (Flame-throated) Sunangel	<i>Heliangelus micraster</i>
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Also regularly visiting the Tapichalaca feeders.

Purple-throated Sunangel	<i>Heliangelus viola</i>
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Although outnumbered by the spectacular Rainbow Starfrontlet, a regular visitor in small numbers to the feeders within Utuana reserve.

Green Thorntail	<i>Discosura conversii</i>
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One of the commonest hummers visiting the superb Buenaventura feeders.

Speckled Hummingbird	<i>Adelomyia melanogenys</i>
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Common at the feeders in Tapichalaca reserve, with others seen at the Utuana feeders.

Long-tailed Sylph	<i>Agelaiocercus kingi</i>
<i>This stunning hummingbird was seen regularly coming to the feeders in the Tapichalaca reserve.</i>	
Violet-tailed Sylph	<i>Agelaiocercus coelestis</i>
<i>A male was seen within Buenaventura reserve.</i>	
Ecuadorian Hillstar	<i>Oreotrochilus chimborazo</i>
<i>A few females were seen visiting their favored chuquiragua flowers in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Blue-mantled Thornbill	<i>Chalcostigma stanleyi</i>
<i>Several birds were seen within El Cajas NP.</i>	
Tyrian Metaltail	<i>Metallura tyrianthina</i>
<i>One was seen along the road at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Violet-throated Metaltail	<i>Metallura baroni</i>
<i>This endangered Ecuadorian endemic has a tiny world range confined to the south of this Andean country, and was therefore a key target during our day within El Cajas NP. One bird was seen perched at close range in some roadside scrub.</i>	
Glowing Puffleg	<i>Eriocnemis vestita</i>
<i>Three sightings of this fantastic puffleg were made within the Tapichalaca reserve.</i>	
Sapphire-vented Puffleg	<i>Eriocnemis luciani</i>
<i>One was seen in an area of temperate cloud forest in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Collared Inca	<i>Coeligena torquata</i>
<i>A daily visitor to the feeders within the temperate forest reserve of Tapichalaca.</i>	
Rainbow Starfrontlet	<i>Coeligena iris</i>
<i>This sensational hummingbird was the most regular species coming to the feeders at Utuana, where we watched them for some time. Unsurprisingly, ONE OF THE BIRDS OF THE TRIP</i>	
Mountain Velvetbreast	<i>Lafresnaya lafresnayi</i>
<i>A female bird visited the feeders at Utuana several times, while we were transfixed by the spectacular Rainbow Starfrontlets there.</i>	
Chestnut-breasted Coronet	<i>Boissonneaua matthewsii</i>
<i>Commonly recorded at the Tapichalaca feeders.</i>	
Booted Racket-tail	<i>Ocreatus underwoodii</i>
<i>One male was seen visiting some flowers within the forest in Buenaventura.</i>	
Fawn-breasted Brilliant	<i>Heliodoxa rubinoides</i>
<i>Recorded on both the foothills of the western Andes at Buenaventura, and also in the temperate zone of the east Andes at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Green-crowned Brilliant	<i>Heliodoxa jacula</i>
<i>A regular visitor to the feeders in Buenaventura.</i>	
Long-billed Starthroat	<i>Helimaster longirostris</i>
<i>One came to the feeders in the reserve at Buenaventura, and another was seen in Cerro Blanco.</i>	
Purple-collared Woodstar	<i>Myrtis fanny</i>
<i>One was seen at Catamayo.</i>	
Green-crowned (Emerald-bellied) Woodnymph	<i>Thalurania fannyi hypochlora</i>
<i>This distinctive "form" of Green-crowned Woodnymph was seen in good numbers at the Buenaventura feeders.</i>	
Andean Emerald	<i>Amazilia franciae</i>
<i>A regular visitor to the Buenaventura feeders.</i>	
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia tzacatl</i>
<i>Recorded at Buenaventura.</i>	
Amazilia Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia amazilia</i>
<i>Recorded at Cerro Blanco and Jorupe.</i>	

Violet-bellied Hummingbird	<i>Damophila julie</i>
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One of the commonest and most stunning hummingbirds at the Buenaventura feeders.

TROGONS

TROGONIDAE

Ecuadorian Trogon	<i>Trogon mesurus</i>
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*A male was seen during our first morning at Cerro Blanco, and another male was seen in the reserve of Jorupe. This species has recently (December 2009) been split from Black-tailed Trogon, *T. melanurus*.*

Gartered (Northern Violaceous) Trogon	<i>Trogon caliaagatus</i>
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A male was seen right beside the lodge restaurant at Buenaventura.

H Collared Trogon	<i>Trogon collaris</i>
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One was heard within the reserve at Buenaventura.

H Masked Trogon	<i>Trogon personatus</i>
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Heard calling along a forest trail within Tapichalaca.

Golden-headed Quetzal	<i>Pharomachrus auriceps</i>
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A pair were seen along the road below Utuana.

MOTMOTS

MOMOTIDAE

Blue-crowned Motmot	<i>Momotus momota argenticinctus</i>
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Two birds were seen in Jorupe reserve.

Rufous Motmot	<i>Baryphthengus martii</i>
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One was seen in Buenaventura.

H Broad-billed Motmot	<i>Electron platyrhynchum</i>
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One was heard at Buenaventura.

KINGFISHERS

ALCEDINIDAE

Ringed Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle torquatus</i>
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Scattered sightings were made at various wetlands south of Guayaquil.

NEW WORLD BARBETS

CAPITONIDAE

Red-headed Barbet	<i>Eubucco bourcierii</i>
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A pair were seen below Valladolid.

TOUCANS

RAMPHASTIDAE

Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan	<i>Andigena hypoglauca</i>
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A superb bird was found sitting in the forest while we were watching the juvenile Jocotoco Antpitta at Tapichalaca.

Chestnut-mandibled Toucan	<i>Ramphastos swainsonii</i>
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Two singles were seen in Buenaventura reserve.

Choco Toucan	<i>Ramphastos brevis</i>
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One was seen at Buenaventura.

WOODPECKERS

PICIDAE

Ecuadorian Piculet	<i>Picumnus sclateri</i>
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Two of these superb little woodpeckers were seen in Jorupe.

Scarlet-backed Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis callonotus</i>
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Five or so birds were seen in the deciduous woods of Jorupe.

Red-rumped Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis kirkii</i>
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One was seen briefly at Buenaventura.

Golden-olive Woodpecker	<i>Colaptes rubiginosus</i>
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Two birds were seen in Jorupe.

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker	<i>Colaptes rivolii</i>
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One of these strikingly beautiful woodpeckers was seen in a mixed flock within the reserve at Utuana.

Guayaquil Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus guayaquilensis</i>
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A single bird, a female, was found in Buenaventura reserve.

OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS

FURNARIIDAE

Stout-billed Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes excelsior</i>
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This range-restricted species was seen in the paramo of El Cajas NP, feeding right alongside Bar-winged Cinclodes.

Bar-winged Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>
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Regularly recorded in the paramo at El Cajas NP.

Pale-legged (Pacific) Hornero	<i>Furnarius leucopus cinnamomeus</i>
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A common bird within the lowlands of the west, recorded at many places on the tour.

Andean Tit-Spintail	<i>Leptasthenura andicola</i>
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Two sightings were made within El Cajas NP, including one very approachable pair that allowed themselves to be photographed too.

Mouse-colored Thistletail	<i>Schizoeaca griseomurina</i>
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Two singles were seen in the paramo of El Cajas NP.

Azara's Spintail	<i>Synallaxis azarae</i>
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Seen within the reserve at Utuana, with another being seen briefly in Buenaventura too.

Rufous Spintail	<i>Synallaxis unirufa</i>
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Two singles were seen in Tapichalaca.

Blackish-headed Spintail	<i>Synallaxis tithys</i>
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A pair were seen in Jorupe. This is an endangered species with a tiny world range in southern Ecuador and northern Peru.

H White-browed Spintail	<i>Hellmayrea gularis</i>
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One was heard along the Jocotoco Trail at Tapichalaca.

Line-cheeked Spintail	<i>Cranioleuca antisiensis</i>
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Several vocal individuals were seen in the southwestern highlands near Utuana.

Many-striped Canastero	<i>Asthenes flammulata</i>
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One bird was seen singing from the top of a low shrub in El Cajas NP.

Pearled Treerunner	<i>Margarornis squamiger</i>
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Two were seen in Tapichalaca, and another single in El Cajas NP.

Streaked Tuftedcheek	<i>Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii</i>
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Two were seen in a mixed flock in Tapichalaca.

Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner	<i>Anabacerthia variegaticeps</i>
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Two singles were found in Buenaventura.

Lineated Foliage-gleaner	<i>Syndactyla subalaris</i>
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One passed by in a mixed flock in Buenaventura reserve.

Rufous-necked Foliage-gleaner	<i>Syndactyla ruficollis</i>
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This vulnerable, restricted range species is confined to southwestern Ecuador and northwestern Peru. A pair were seen well close to the lodge at Jorupe, that showed signs that they might be nesting in the area.

	Henna-hooded Foliage-gleaner	<i>Hylocryptus erythrocephalus</i>
	<i>Several birds were seen in Jorupe, the first few birds proving tricky to see well. However, we persevered and finally got some great looks at one particular bird along the wide track that runs through the reserve.</i>	
	Plain Xenops	<i>Xenops minutus</i>
	<i>One was seen in the western foothills at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Streaked Xenops	<i>Xenops rutilans</i>
	<i>One was seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Plain-brown Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i>
	<i>This plain woodcreeper was found within Buenaventura.</i>	
	Olivaceous Woodcreeper	<i>Sittasomus griseicapillus aequatorialis</i>
	<i>This western form was seen in the reserve at Jorupe.</i>	
	Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Glyphorhynchus spirurus</i>
	<i>Two were seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
H	Spotted Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythropygius</i>
	<i>Several were seen within mixed feeding flocks in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Streak-headed Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes souleyetii</i>
	<i>Seen a number of times within Jorupe.</i>	
	Red-billed Scythebill	<i>Campylorhamphus trochilirostris</i>
	<i>Good views of a bird were had in Jorupe, where a bird had recently been found nesting right in front of the restaurant.</i>	
	TYPICAL ANTBRDS	THAMNOPHILIDAE
	Chapman's Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus zarumae</i>
	<i>A female was seen at Sozoranga one afternoon, and another female was seen in the reserve at Utuana.</i>	
	Collared Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus bernardi</i>
	<i>A pair were seen within the deciduous woods of Jorupe.</i>	
	Western Slaty-Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus atrinucha</i>
	<i>Two males were seen in the western foothills, at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Russet Antshrike	<i>Thamnistes anabatinus</i>
	<i>A single was found in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Plain Antwren	<i>Dysithamnus mentalis</i>
	<i>A male was seen in Jorupe reserve.</i>	
	Slaty Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i>
	<i>Two singles were found in Buenaventura reserve.</i>	
	Long-tailed Antbird	<i>Drymophila caudata</i>
	<i>One was seen in a stand of bamboo within Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Chestnut-backed Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza exsul</i>
	<i>One was seen briefly on the west slope of the Andes, in Buenaventura reserve.</i>	
H	Esmeraldas Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza nigricauda</i>
	<i>A bird was calling down slope from us at Buenaventura, but could not be tempted in any closer unfortunately.</i>	
	Gray-headed Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza griseiceps</i>
	<i>This rare antbird is classified as vulnerable and has a tiny and fragmented range in southwest Ecuador and northwest Peru. A male was seen well in a roadside bamboo patch below the reserve at Utuana.</i>	

ANTHRUSHES

FORMICARIIDAE

Barred Anthrush

Chamaeza mollissima

A bird came strutting in to our tape at Tapichalaca, and then gave us several great looks including a moment when it stood in one spot and called back at us in full view.

ANTPITTAS

GRALLARIIDAE

H **Undulated Antpitta**

Grallaria squamigera

One was heard calling within El Cajas NP.

H **Scaled Antpitta**

Grallaria guatemalensis

One was heard at Sozoranga.

H **Chestnut-crowned Antpitta**

Grallaria ruficapilla

One of these handsome antpittas was heard calling close in Utuana, but sadly could not be tempted into the open.

Watkins's Antpitta

Grallaria watkinsi

Since my last tour just a few weeks previously this bird was less evident at Jorupe, with far fewer birds calling. We did finally track one down though along the trails near Urracas Lodge. A little off trail work was necessary to find it, but finally we observed one calling from high in a tangle.

Jocotoco Antpitta

Grallaria ridgelyi

This is one of the most famous birds in Ecuador, only discovered to science in 1997 at Tapichalaca. Subsequent surveys have revealed it to be rare and local, and is so listed as endangered. Strangely considering all of this and the fact it is ordinarily a shy species, it has become one of the easiest antpittas to see in Ecuador as the local rangers have habituated an adult and one of their juveniles. During our visit we went to the feeding area twice, on both occasions getting absurdly close and prolonged looks at the juvenile that quite literally followed us along the trail at one point as we walked away! The adults were less reliable in our time there, as they were currently nesting and therefore not as regular in their appearances as usual. On the first day we only saw the juvenile, and on the second visit we saw the juvenile and both adults at very close range.

H **Chestnut-naped Antpitta**

Grallaria nuchalis

A few birds were heard calling at Tapichalaca but none could be lured into view.

Rufous Antpitta

Grallaria rufula

A late afternoon walk produced one for the guide only at Tapichalaca, although we all got cracking looks at a pair that were stood in the middle of the open path in El Cajas NP.

Tawny Antpitta

Grallaria quitensis

Our fifth and final antpitta of the tour was one of these bold antpittas that wandered out onto the open paramo at El Cajas NP. Later the same day another individual was seen standing completely in the open within another area of the park.

Slate-crowned Antpitta

Grallaricula nana

One of these tiny antpittas was seen en-route to our first Jocotoco Antpitta "show" at Tapichalaca.

TAPACULOS

RHINOCRYPTIDAE

H **Ash-colored Tapaculo**

Myornis senilis

A calling bird was heard at Tapichalaca.

H **Blackish (Unicolored) Tapaculo**

Scytalopus (unicolor) latrans

Heard at El Cajas.

Chusquea Tapaculo

Scytalopus parkeri

Two different birds were seen very well at Tapichalaca, including one coming into the compost heap just behind the lodge.

Ocellated Tapaculo	<i>Acropternis orthonyx</i>
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One of the BEST BIRDS OF THE TRIP. We tried a spot that I had come across one a few weeks previously and were greeted with an excitable pair that came crashing in and both called back at us, giving us truly incredible looks at this polka-dotted Andean bird. Eventually one of these amazing tapaculos abandoned its normal behavior and dropped into the open path beside me, much to my amazement. The best views I have ever experienced of this classic Andean bird.

CRESCENTCHESTS

MELANOPAREIIDAE

Elegant Crescentchest	<i>Melanopareia elegans</i>
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On this short tour we just had one shot at this dapper passerine, during an afternoon visit to Sozoranga. Luckily the bird did not disappoint and emerged into a bush where we could scope the bird calling back at us.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

TYRANNIDAE

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>
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Recorded in Jorupe, and also during our journey south from Guayaquil on the first afternoon.

White-banded Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus stictopterus</i>
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Singles were seen in the temperate zone at Tapichalaca and El Cajas NP.

White-throated Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus leucophrys</i>
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One bird was seen in a polylepis patch in El Cajas, that also played host to both Tit-like Dacnis and Giant Conebill.

Black-crested Tit-Tyrant	<i>Anairetes nigrocristatus</i>
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This adorable, striking little flycatcher was seen twice within the Jocotoco Foundation reserve of Utuana.

Tufted Tit-Tyrant	<i>Anairetes parulus</i>
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Two were seen in the paramo at El Cajas NP.

Mouse-colored (Tumbesian) Tyrannulet	<i>Phaeomyias murina tumbezana</i>
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One was seen at Sozoranga.

Pacific Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis subplacens</i>
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Just one was seen in Jorupe.

Greenish Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis viridicata</i>
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One was seen at Cerro Blanco during our first morning.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia	<i>Elaenia flavogaster</i>
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One was seen near Valladolid, down slope from Tapichalaca.

White-crested Elaenia	<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
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Seen once along the road near Utuana.

Mottle-backed Elaenia	<i>Elaenia gigas</i>
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One was seen just south of the Andean town of Valladolid.

Sierran Elaenia	<i>Elaenia pallatangae</i>
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A few were seen near Valladolid, downslope from Tapichalaca.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher	<i>Leptopogon superciliaris</i>
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One was seen in a mixed flock in the western foothills at Buenaventura.

Sooty-headed Tyrannulet	<i>Phyllomyias griseiceps</i>
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One was heard along a track at Buenaventura.

Black-capped Tyrannulet	<i>Phyllomyias nigrocapillus</i>
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Two were seen in the temperate zone at Tapichalaca.

Golden-faced (Loja) Tyrannulet	<i>Zimmerius chrysops flavidifrons</i>
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This southwestern "form" (confined to SW Ecuador) of Golden-faced Tyrannulet was seen at Sozoranga.

	Ornate Flycatcher	<i>Myiotriccus ornatus</i>
	<i>Several sightings were made in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant	<i>Pseudotriccus ruficeps</i>
	<i>One was seen well in a thick stand of chusquea bamboo at Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant	<i>Euscarthmus meloryphus</i>
	<i>Two were seen near Catamayo.</i>	
	Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant	<i>Lophotriccus pileatus</i>
	<i>One of these tiny distinctive flycatchers was found at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Black-throated Tody-Tyrant	<i>Hemitriccus granadensis</i>
	<i>Two were seen at Tapichalaca.</i>	
H	Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Poecilotriccus ruficeps</i>
	<i>Just a few birds were heard at Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Common Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Todirostrum cinereum</i>
	<i>Several were seen near the Andean town of Valladolid.</i>	
	Brownish Twistwing	<i>Cnipodectes subbrunneus</i>
	<i>One of these distinctive and vocal flycatchers was seen well at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Yellow-olive Flycatcher (Flatbill) (west)	<i>Tolmomyias sulphurescens aequatorialis</i>
	<i>This western form was seen a few times in the Jocotoco Foundation reserve of Jorupe.</i>	
	White-throated Spadebill	<i>Platyrinchus mystaceus</i>
	<i>One was seen in the forest understorey at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Cinnamon Flycatcher	<i>Pyrrhomyias cinnamomeus</i>
	<i>A couple of these bright flycatchers were seen in the Tapichalaca area.</i>	
	Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher	<i>Myiobius sulphureipygius</i>
	<i>Two singles were seen in the western foothills at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Orange-banded Flycatcher	<i>Myiophobus lintoni</i>
	<i>This distinctive flycatcher has a tiny range, and is local within this area of southern Ecuador and extreme northern Peru. A vocal bird was found at dawn at Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Olive-chested Flycatcher	<i>Myiophobus cryptoxanthus</i>
	<i>A single bird was found south of the Andean town of Valladolid.</i>	
	Bran-colored Flycatcher	<i>Myiophobus fasciatus</i>
	<i>One was seen down slope from the Andean town of Valladolid.</i>	
	Gray-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Lathrotriccus griseipectus</i>
	<i>This flycatcher is classified as vulnerable, and is declining within its small range in southern Ecuador and northern Peru. The population is estimated at fewer than one thousand birds. The bird was incredibly easy on this tour as a nest had recently been found right by the restaurant in the new Urracas Lodge within Jorupe reserve, that may be the very first nest recorded for the species. The pair were seen right around the lodge as a result, with good views obtained in the low scrub there.</i>	
	Smoke-colored Pewee	<i>Contopus fumigatus</i>
	<i>One was seen near the Andean town of Sozoranga.</i>	
	Eastern Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus virens</i>
	<i>One of these boreal migrants was seen just south of Valladolid.</i>	
	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>
	<i>Two were seen along a river at Buenaventura.</i>	
GO	Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>
	<i>One female was seen in the dry country near Catamayo.</i>	
	Plain-capped (Páramo) Ground-Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola alpinus</i>
	<i>Three were seen in the open paramo at El Cajas NP.</i>	
	Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant	<i>Agriornis montanus</i>
	<i>One of these white-tailed high Andean flycatchers was seen from a café while lunching in El Cajas NP.</i>	

Smoky Bush-Tyrant	<i>Myiotheretes fumigatus</i>
<i>One was seen in the reserve at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Masked Water-Tyrant	<i>Fluvicola nengeta</i>
<i>Two birds were seen around a marsh south of Guayaquil during our final journey back to the city.</i>	
Crowned Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca frontalis</i>
<i>One was seen in Tapichalaca, and another in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Jelski's Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca jelskii</i>
<i>Four birds were seen in and around Utuana reserve.</i>	
H Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca diadema</i>
<i>One was heard in Tapichalaca.</i>	
Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca rufipectoralis</i>
<i>A pair of these striking chat-tyrants were found at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca fumicolor</i>
<i>Two were seen in paramo at El Cajas NP.</i>	
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>
<i>Recorded at Buenaventura and near Utuana.</i>	
Sooty-crowned Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus phaeocephalus</i>
<i>One was seen at Cerro Blanco and Jorupe.</i>	
Boat-billed Flycatcher	<i>Megarynchus pitangua</i>
<i>Seen in the reserve at Jorupe, and also Buenaventura.</i>	
Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>
<i>Recorded near the Andean town of Valladolid.</i>	
H Baird's Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes bairdii</i>
<i>Heard calling in the dark close to the town of Macara. Strangely absent during our day in Jorupe.</i>	
Streaked Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes maculatus</i>
<i>Seen a number of times within Jorupe reserve.</i>	
Piratic Flycatcher	<i>Legatus leucophaeus</i>
<i>One was seen near the town of Valladolid.</i>	
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>
<i>Regularly recorded throughout the tour.</i>	
COTINGAS	COTINGIDAE
Red-crested Cotinga	<i>Ampelion rubrocristatus</i>
<i>A single bird was seen standing sentry in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Green-and-black Fruiteater	<i>Pipreola riefferii</i>
<i>A male was seen while a juvenile Jocotoco Antpitta hopped around our feet, and a Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan was perched in a treetop alongside.</i>	
Barred Fruiteater	<i>Pipreola arcuata</i>
<i>A female was scoped feeding on fruits along a trail at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Long-wattled Umbrellabird	<i>Cephalopterus penduliger</i>
<i>We headed down into the forest just after dawn at Buenaventura, and waited by a lek area for the species. Soon after the low mooing call of a male was heard and we soon lock onto a large dark shape in the trees overhead. A little later another male umbrellabird, this time with its incredible wattle extended to its full 30cm length, was seen perched on a dead snag in the open.</i>	
MANAKINS	PIPRIDAE
Club-winged Manakin	<i>Machaeropterus deliciosus</i>
<i>Two males were seen displaying in Buenaventura.</i>	

H	White-bearded Manakin	<i>Manacus manacus</i>
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Several were heard in the reserve at Buenaventura.

TITYRAS AND ALLIES

TITYRIDAE

Slaty Becard	<i>Pachyramphus spodiurus</i>
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A pair were seen visiting their nest in a huge ceiba tree near the lodge at Jorupe. The same tree also held a pair of One-colored Becards, and a Black-and-white Becard.

Black-and-white Becard	<i>Pachyramphus albogriseus</i>
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A female was seen in Jorupe.

One-colored Becard	<i>Pachyramphus homochrous</i>
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A female was seen in Cerro Blanco, and three birds were also seen at Jorupe.

VIREOS

VIREONIDAE

Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>
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Encountered in Cerro Blanco and near Valladolid.

Lesser Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus decurtatus</i>
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Three birds were seen in a mixed flock at Buenaventura.

Rufous-browed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis gujanensis</i>
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Four birds were seen in Jorupe, including a pair that were ceaselessly dive bombing a Pacific (Peruvian) Pygmy-Owl there.

CROWS, JAYS AND MAGPIES

CORVIDAE

White-tailed Jay	<i>Cyanocorax mystacalis</i>
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Our day in Jorupe began with a troop of these stunning jays at the entrance to the reserve. Another group of three birds was also encountered along the trails near the Urracas Lodge there.

Turquoise Jay	<i>Cyanolyca turcosa</i>
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Heard at Tapichalaca, and later another was seen briefly in El Cajas NP..

SWALLOWS

HIRUNDINIDAE

Blue-and-white Swallow	<i>Pygochelidon cyanoleuca</i>
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Seen at many sites on the tour, from the lowlands right up into temperate areas of the highlands.

Brown-bellied Swallow	<i>Orochelidon murina</i>
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A few were seen hawking insects over Laguna Llaviucu in El Cajas NP.

Gray-breasted Martin	<i>Progne chalybea</i>
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Regularly recorded in lowland areas throughout.

Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>
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A few were seen just south of Guayaquil on our return journey to the city.

Chestnut-collared Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon rufocollaris</i>
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This local species was seen nesting in a highland town near Jorupe, that got us some great looks at a few birds perched on their mud nests.

WRENS

TROGLODYTIDAE

Fasciated Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus fasciatus</i>
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Recorded at three humid sites on the tour, Cerro Blanco, Jorupe, and El Empalme.

Rufous Wren	<i>Cinnycerthia unirufa</i>
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A few birds were seen in the temperate forest in Tapichalaca.

H	Plain-tailed Wren	<i>Thryothorus euophrys</i>
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Their loud calls were heard regularly around Tapichalaca.

H	Whiskered Wren <i>Heard a few times in Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Thryothorus mystacalis</i>
	Bay Wren <i>One birds was seen in the reserve at Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Thryothorus nigricapillus</i>
	Speckle-breasted Wren <i>A pair were seen in Jorupe.</i>	<i>Thryothorus sclateri</i>
	House Wren <i>Seen at Cerro Blanco on our first morning.</i>	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
	Sedge (Grass) Wren <i>Two birds were seen singing from a stand of sedges in El Cajas NP.</i>	<i>Cistothorus platensis aequatorialis</i>
H	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren <i>Heard calling from dense cover within Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>
H	Song Wren <i>Frustratingly only heard in Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Cyphorhinus phaeocephalus</i>

GNATCATCHERS

POLIOPTILIDAE

Tropical Gnatcatcher <i>Recorded at Cerro Blanco, Jorupe, and at Catamayo.</i>	<i>Polioptila plumbea</i>
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THRUSHES AND ALLIES

TURDIDAE

Andean Solitaire <i>One was seen well at Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Myadestes ralloides</i>
Plumbeous-backed Thrush <i>A number of these handsome thrushes were nesting during our visit to Jorupe reserve, including a number that were nesting under the eaves of the lodge cabins there.</i>	<i>Turdus reevei</i>
Ecuadorian Thrush <i>A few birds were seen on our first morning in the humid woods of Cerro Blanco.</i>	<i>Turdus nudigenis</i>
Marañon Thrush <i>Six birds were seen just south of the town of Valladolid.</i>	<i>Turdus maranonicus</i>
Great Thrush <i>Commonly encountered in the highlands of the Andes.</i>	<i>Turdus fuscater</i>
Chiguanco Thrush <i>One was seen in our hotel garden in Cuenca.</i>	<i>Turdus chiguanco</i>
Glossy-black Thrush <i>One was seen in Tapichalaca.</i>	<i>Turdus serranus</i>

MOCKINGBIRDS AND THRASHERS

MIMIDAE

Long-tailed Mockingbird <i>Recorded a number of times on the journey south of Guayaquil to El Oro province, with others seen in Jorupe.</i>	<i>Mimus longicaudatus</i>
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NEW WORLD WARBLERS

PARULIDAE

Tropical Parula <i>Seen in the reserve at Buenaventura, and also near the town of Valladolid.</i>	<i>Parula pitiayumi</i>
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat <i>A pair were seen at Buenaventura.</i>	<i>Geothlypis semiflava</i>
Slate-throated Redstart <i>Recorded around Buenaventura and also near Valladolid.</i>	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>

Spectacled Redstart	<i>Myioborus melanocephalus</i>
<i>This highland warbler was seen in Tapichalaca, and also in the cloudforest in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Gray-and-gold Warbler	<i>Basileuterus fraseri</i>
<i>At least four birds were seen in Jorupe reserve.</i>	
Citrine Warbler	<i>Basileuterus luteoviridis</i>
<i>A few birds were found within mixed feeding flocks in the Tapichalaca area.</i>	
Black-crested Warbler	<i>Basileuterus nigrocristatus</i>
<i>First seen around Utuana, and others were also seen in Tapichalaca, and El Cajas NP.</i>	
Russet-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus coronatus</i>
<i>Some great views were obtained in the temperate zone in Tapichalaca and El Cajas NP.</i>	
Three-banded Warbler	<i>Basileuterus trifasciatus</i>
<i>Three birds were seen near the Andean town of Sozoranga.</i>	
Three-striped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus tristriatus</i>
<i>A small flock was encountered in Buenaventura.</i>	
BANANAQUIT	COEREBIDAE
Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>
<i>A bird was seen in Buenaventura, and another was seen south of Valladolid.</i>	
TANAGERS AND ALLIES	THRAUPIDAE
H Black-and-white Tanager	<i>Conothraupis speculigera</i>
<i>One was heard calling from some dense scrub at Jorupe.</i>	
Black-capped Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus atropileus</i>
<i>Two groups of these striking tanagers were seen in Tapichalaca.</i>	
Superciliaried Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus superciliaris</i>
<i>Two were seen in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Black-eared (Piura) Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus melanotis piurae</i>
<i>This strikingly different "form" of Black-eared Hemispingus used to be considered a separate species, confined to just southern Ecuador and NW Peru. Two pairs were seen along the road below Utuana.</i>	
Black-headed Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus verticalis</i>
<i>A pair of these handsome tanagers was seen in a mixed feeding flock on the way into Tapichalaca reserve. The same flock also held several Golden-crowned Tanagers.</i>	
Gray-hooded Bush Tanager	<i>Cnemoscopus rubrirostris</i>
<i>A number of these tail-pumping tanagers were seen in various flocks around Tapichalaca.</i>	
Rufous-chested Tanager	<i>Thlypopsis ornata</i>
<i>This bright orange tanager was seen a number of times in the Utuana area, and another four birds were found in a mixed flock as we arrived at El Cajas NP.</i>	
Cinereous Conebill	<i>Conirostrum cinereum</i>
<i>One was seen in an area of polylepis woodland in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Blue-backed Conebill	<i>Conirostrum sitticolor</i>
<i>Several birds were found within mixed flocks in and around Tapichalaca reserve.</i>	
Capped Conebill	<i>Conirostrum albifrons</i>
<i>A few birds were seen on both of our days in Tapichalaca.</i>	
Giant Conebill	<i>Oreomanes fraseri</i>
<i>A pair was found in a patch of polylepis that held a number of tame Tit-like Dacnis too in El Cajas NP, and then amazingly another single bird was found in another area of polylepis there an hour or so later. The latter bird was very approachable and allowed some us great views, as it posed in these distinctive red-barked trees.</i>	

Tit-like Dacnis	<i>Xenodacnis parina</i>
<i>Another classic high Andean species, only found locally in southern Ecuador, and also Peru. El Cajas is an excellent site for the species that are often tame and approachable there. We had stellar views of both males and females in the park, at extremely close quarters.</i>	
Common Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus ophthalmicus</i>
<i>One bird was seen passing through with a mixed feeding flock at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus flavigularis</i>
<i>Seen in the foothills of the west at Buenaventura.</i>	
Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus canigularis</i>
<i>A few were seen on both of our days within the reserve at Buenaventura.</i>	
Guira Tanager	<i>Hemithraupis guira</i>
<i>One was seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
H Ochre-breasted Tanager	<i>Chlorothraupis stolzmanni</i>
<i>Heard calling in a mixed tanager flock at Buenaventura, although unfortunately never showed to us.</i>	
White-shouldered Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus luctuosus</i>
<i>Seen first in Buenaventura, and later again near Valladolid.</i>	
White-lined Tanager	<i>Tachyphonus rufus</i>
<i>Just one was recorded on the east side of the Andes near Valladolid.</i>	
Silver-beaked Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus carbo</i>
<i>Several were seen south of the town of Valladolid.</i>	
Flame-rumped (Lemon-rumped) Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus flammigerus icteronotus</i>
<i>Commonly recorded in the lowlands and foothills of the west.</i>	
Blue-gray Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>
<i>Recorded at a number of low lying areas throughout the tour.</i>	
Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>
<i>Seen around Buenaventura and Valladolid.</i>	
Blue-capped Tanager	<i>Thraupis cyanocephala</i>
<i>One was seen at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Hooded Mountain-Tanager	<i>Buthraupis montana</i>
<i>Two birds were seen in mixed flocks at Tapichalaca.</i>	
Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager	<i>Anisognathus lacrymosus</i>
<i>This "teary" tanager was seen in a number of flocks in the temperate forest in the Tapichalaca reserve.</i>	
Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager	<i>Anisognathus igniventris</i>
<i>A pair of these striking Andean birds were seen as we left Tapichalaca, and another was seen in El Cajas NP.</i>	
Golden-crowned Tanager	<i>Iridosornis rufivertex</i>
<i>Two flocks of these stunning highland tanagers were seen in Tapichalaca.</i>	
Fawn-breasted Tanager	<i>Pipraeidea melanonota</i>
<i>One was seen in the western foothills of the Andes in Buenaventura, and another in the southwestern highlands near Utuana.</i>	
Golden Tanager	<i>Tangara arthus</i>
<i>Several birds were seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
Silver-throated Tanager	<i>Tangara icterocephala</i>
<i>Singles were seen on both days in Buenaventura reserve.</i>	
Golden-eared Tanager	<i>Tangara chrysotis</i>
<i>Two of these striking eastern tanagers were found in a small forest patch just south of Valladolid.</i>	
Flame-faced Tanager	<i>Tangara parzudakii</i>
<i>One of these dazzling tanagers was seen between Tapichalaca and Valladolid.</i>	

	Rufous-throated Tanager	<i>Tangara rufigula</i>
	<i>Two birds were seen on each of our days in Buenaventura reserve.</i>	
	Bay-headed Tanager	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>
	<i>A few birds were seen on both of our days within Buenaventura.</i>	
	Blue-necked Tanager	<i>Tangara cyanicollis</i>
	<i>A few were seen near Valladolid.</i>	
GO	Beryl-spangled Tanager	<i>Tangara nigroviridis</i>
	<i>Just the one bird was seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Blue-and-black Tanager	<i>Tangara vassorii</i>
	<i>One was seen in a mixed flock with Crimson-mantled Woodpecker and others in Utuana reserve, and another was seen in El Cajas NP.</i>	
	Silvery (Silver-backed) Tanager	<i>Tangara viridicollis</i>
	<i>Three birds were seen near Utuana, and another pair was seen south of Valladolid.</i>	
	Green Honeycreeper	<i>Chlorophanes spiza</i>
	<i>A regular visitor to the feeders at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Swallow Tanager	<i>Tersina viridis</i>
	<i>A male was seen at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Streaked Saltator	<i>Saltator striatipectus</i>
	<i>The unstreaked flavidicollis race of Streaked Saltator was seen in the west at Cerro Blanco, and Jorupe, and the streaked peruvianus race was seen near Valladolid in the east.</i>	
	Black-cowled Saltator	<i>Saltator nigriceps</i>
	<i>Terry found one of these hulking saltators during our afternoon visit to Sozoranga.</i>	
	Buff-throated Saltator	<i>Saltator maximus</i>
	<i>A few were seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Black-winged Saltator	<i>Saltator atripennis</i>
	<i>Just one was seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
	BUNTINGS, SPARROWS AND ALLIES	EMBERIZIDAE
	Plumbeous Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus unicolor</i>
	<i>A few of these lead colored finches were seen in the paramo in El Cajas NP.</i>	
	Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus plebejus</i>
	<i>One was seen on the journey to El Empalme.</i>	
	Band-tailed Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus alaudinus</i>
	<i>Rich saw a male near El Empalme.</i>	
	Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>
	<i>Two were seen at Catamayo, in a small dead bush that also held Chestnut-throated, Drab, and Parrot-billed Seed eaters.</i>	
	Variable Seedeater	<i>Sporophila corvina</i>
	<i>Seen during our first morning in Cerro Blanco.</i>	
	Yellow-bellied Seedeater	<i>Sporophila nigricollis</i>
	<i>One was seen at Buenaventura and another south of Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Parrot-billed Seedeater	<i>Sporophila peruviana</i>
	<i>A pair of these distinctive seedeater were seen with a group of other seed eaters (that included a single Drab Seedeater) during a brief stop at Catamayo.</i>	
	Drab Seedeater	<i>Sporophila simplex</i>
	<i>One was seen sharing a small dead bush with a pair of Parrot-billed Seed eaters at Catamayo.</i>	
	Chestnut-throated Seedeater	<i>Sporophila telasco</i>
	<i>Two birds were seen in a mixed finch flock at Catamayo.</i>	

	Thick-billed (Lesser) Seed-Finch	<i>Oryzoborus (angolensis) funereus</i>
	<i>One was seen in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Plain-colored Seedeater	<i>Catamenia inornata</i>
	<i>Two were found in our final hour in the paramo at El Cajas NP.</i>	
	Slaty Finch	<i>Haplospiza rustica</i>
	<i>A few were seen in Tapichalaca, where the seeding bamboo attracted many of these finches that were regularly heard buzzing from the depths of the bamboo.</i>	
	Glossy Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa lafresnayii</i>
	<i>One was seen at Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Black Flowerpiercer	
	<i>A few birds were seen in the temperate forest at El Cajas NP.</i>	
GO	White-sided Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa albilatera</i>
	<i>Just the one was seen in Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Bluish Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa caerulescens</i>
	<i>Two birds were seen in Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Masked Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa cyaneus</i>
	<i>Recorded at Utuana, Tapichalaca, and also in El Cajas NP.</i>	
	Grassland Yellow-Finch	<i>Sicalis luteola</i>
	<i>A small flock of these finches was found near Cuenca.</i>	
	Saffron Finch	<i>Sicalis flaveola</i>
	<i>A number of birds were seen in humid areas of the west, most coming on the journey south from Guayas into El Oro province.</i>	
	Pale-naped Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes pallidinucha</i>
	<i>One was seen just before we entered the reserve at Tapichalaca.</i>	
	Tricolored Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes tricolor</i>
	<i>A pair were found in the western Andes, at Buenaventura.</i>	
	Yellow-breasted (Rufous-naped) Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes latinuchus</i>
	<i>A few different groups were seen in Tapichalaca. The race seen was the nominate latinuchus form, that has a large white wing speculum.</i>	
	White-headed Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes albiceps</i>
	<i>Despite a rather debilitating car repair en-route to El Empalme that slowed our journey there and severely limited us to just ten minutes on site, we managed to find a pair of these very striking brush-finches during our short visit thankfully!</i>	
	Bay-crowned Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes seebohmi</i>
	<i>This often tricky brush-finch turned up at the eleventh hour, near the Rainbow Starfrontlet packed feeders at Utuana, where a pair were seen well, in an area that also held a superb pair of Black-crested Tit-Tyrants too.</i>	
	Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch	<i>Arremon brunneinucha</i>
	<i>A pair were seen visiting the compost heap behind Casa Simpson (Tapichalaca).</i>	
	Crimson-breasted Finch	<i>Rhodospingus cruentus</i>
	<i>A fantastic male was found on our first morning in the deciduous woodland of Cerro Blanco.</i>	
GO	Orange-billed Sparrow	<i>Arremon aurantirostris</i>
	<i>One was seen by the leader only in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Black-capped Sparrow	<i>Arremon abeillei</i>
	<i>Three of these sharp-dressed sparrows were found within the Jorupe reserve.</i>	
	Stripe-headed Brush-Finch	<i>Arremon torquatus</i>
	<i>One was seen in an area of cloudforest in El Cajas NP.</i>	

H	Black-striped Sparrow	<i>Arremonops conirostris</i>
	<i>Heard calling in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Tumbes Sparrow	<i>Aimophila stolzmanni</i>
	<i>A ten minute visit to El Empalme (a much reduced visit bought about by some unscheduled car trouble en-route), produced one of these local sparrows and a pair of White-headed Brush-Finches too.</i>	
	Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
	<i>Recorded at a number of highland sites in the Andes.</i>	
	CARDINALS AND ALLIES	CARDINALIDAE
	(Highland) Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava lutea</i>
	<i>A pair were seen near the highland town of Sozoranga.</i>	
	Golden-bellied (Southern Yellow) Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus chrysogaster</i>
	<i>Recorded at Cerro Blanco, en-route to Macara, and also in Jorupe.</i>	
	TROUPIALS AND ALLIES	ICTERIDAE
	Peruvian Meadowlark	<i>Sturnella bellicosa</i>
	<i>Two birds were seen at Catamayo, and a few other birds were seen on the journey north back to Guayaquil.</i>	
	Scrub Blackbird	<i>Dives warszewiczi</i>
	<i>Commonly recorded in humid lowland areas in the west.</i>	
	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>
	<i>A couple of birds were seen around the marshes south of Guayaquil on our journeys to and from the city.</i>	
	Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>
	<i>A few scattered sightings were made in the western lowlands.</i>	
	White-edged Oriole	<i>Icterus graceannae</i>
	<i>A pair were seen in Jorupe.</i>	
	Yellow-tailed Oriole	<i>Icterus mesomelas</i>
	<i>Also recorded within the reserve at Jorupe, along with the similar White-edged Oriole.</i>	
	Yellow-rumped Cacique	<i>Cacicus cela</i>
	<i>Seen both within Cerro Blanco and also in Jorupe.</i>	
	Russet-backed Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius angustifrons</i>
	<i>Two birds were seen perched near the feeders within Utuana reserve.</i>	
	SISKINS, CROSSBILLS AND ALLIES	FRINGILLIDAE
	Thick-billed Euphonia	<i>Euphonia lanirostris</i>
	<i>Seen in Cerro Blanco and also in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Orange-bellied Euphonia	<i>Euphonia xanthogaster</i>
	<i>A few birds were seen on both days in Buenaventura.</i>	
	Yellow-bellied Siskin	<i>Carduelis xanthogastra</i>
	<i>A small group were seen in one of the higher areas of the Buenaventura reserve.</i>	
	Hooded Siskin	<i>Spinus magellanica</i>
	<i>A small group were perched on wires in our hotel garden in Cuenca.</i>	
GO	Saffron Siskin	<i>Spinus semiradzki</i>
	<i>A pair were seen all too briefly in Buenaventura.</i>	