



TROPICAL BIRDING TOURS

Custom and Set Departure Wildlife Tours Around the World

A **Tropical Birding** Custom Tour

COLOMBIA: Photo Tour

17th February – 5th March 2023

Guided by Pablo Cervantes Daza



Rainbow-bearded Thornbill from *Hotel Termales del Ruiz*

INTRODUCTION:

This photo tour focused on some key sites in the Andean Mountains of Central Colombia, flying in and out of Bogota, while also taking in sites around Jardin, Manizales, and Cali too. Two sites around Manizales yielded photos of an incredible **EIGHT different antpitta species**, which are normally shy forest birds, but visiting several feeding stations paid off handsomely, with **Bicolored, Chestnut-naped, Chestnut-crowned, Equatorial, Tawny, Slate-crowned, Brown-banded and Crescent-faced Antpittas** all photographed! The Manizales area was also memorable for getting excellent photos of two mountain-toucans at one feeder, with **Black-billed and Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucans** both photographed at El Color de mi Reves. Any trip into the Andes is usually heavy on hummingbirds and tanagers, and this photo tour was no different. **More than 30 hummingbird species** photographed, including **Buffy Helmetcrest, Mountain Avocetbill, Collared Inca, Long-tailed Sylph, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Shining Sunbeam, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Great Sapphirewing, Golden-breasted and Black-thighed Pufflegs, and White-booted Racket-tail. Over 25 Tanager species** were also photographed, including some strikingly beautiful species, such as **Multicolored, Flame-rumped, Crimson-backed, Blue-necked, Saffron-crowned, Golden, and Beryl-spangled Tanagers, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager and Buff-breasted, Lacrimose and Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers** in the highlands. Aside from the marquee groups, like toucans, tanagers, hummingbirds and antpittas, there were some other standout birds, such as **Red-ruffed Fruitcrow, Andean Motmot, and Chestnut Wood-Quail**. In El Jardin, we also visited arguably the best place in the World to photograph the spectacular **Andean Cock-of-the-rock** in good light during the afternoon, which was a major highlight of a tour jam-packed with photo highlights!



TOUR SUMMARY:**Day 1: 18th February 2023 – Fly Bogota to Medellin. Drive to Jardin.**

Our first photo day of the tour involved a morning flight into *Medellin*, followed by a drive northeast to the small Andean town of *Jardin*, which is at the heart of some excellent birding areas. In the afternoon, we visited a traditional display site (“lek”) of the incredible **Andean Cock-of-the-rock** on the edge of town, which kicked off our tour in some style. The males posed in good light at close range, unlike at many other lek sites!



Day 2: 19th February 2023 – Finca Bambusa.

We spent most of this day at a lower elevation site, in the Andean foothills, *Finca Bambusa*. The reason for choosing this site was it offered us a good range of *tanagers* to photograph, which included **Blue-necked, Bay-headed, Flame-rumped, Scrub, Guira, and Crimson-backed Tanagers** and **Summer Tanager**. While the variety of tanagers to photograph was the main focus, we also photographed **Colombian Chachalaca** and **Andean Motmot** there too. We also saw **Red-bellied Grackle** there. At the end of the day we returned to *El Jardin*.



Andean Motmot (above and top of next page)



Blue-necked Tanager



Bay-headed Tanager (TOP) and Crimson-backed Tanager





Scrub Tanager (TOP) and Summer Tanager





Flame-rumped Tanager (TOP) and Colombia Chachalaca



Day 3: 20th February 2023 – Mirador El Roble to Manizales.

One of the joys of birding and bird photography in the Andes is, a brief change in elevation brings a sudden change in the birds on offer. After yesterday's lower elevation tanager fest, we moved up into highland forest in the Andes, which resulted in a very different list of birds photographed. Today's highlights were **Green Jay** (of the distinctive South American form known as "Inca Jay"), **Acorn Woodpecker**, our first *antpitta* photographed on the tour (**Chestnut-naped Antpitta**), as well as hummingbirds like **Andean Emerald**, and **Slaty Brushfinch**. While bird photography was the undoubted focus of the tour, we were equally happy to photograph a wild cat that also came into the feeders, known now as **Northern Tigrina**, it was formerly under the name *Oncilla*, which has now been split into two geographically separated species (one in Central America and one in South America).



Acorn Woodpecker (above and next page)



Acorn Woodpecker (TOP) and Slaty Brushfinch





Chestnut-naped Antpitta





Northern Tigrina (formerly "Oncilla") and "Inca Jay", a form of Green Jay



Day 4: 21st February 2023 – Rio Blanco.

One *Rio Blanco* has been long established as a great birding site. It has a busy set of hummingbird feeders, plus fruit feeders for tanagers, and on top of that has a series of forest feeding stations, mainly for antpittas. We used multiframe techniques to capture images of hummingbirds, like **Bronzy and Collared Incas, Tyrian Metaltail, Speckled Hummingbird** and the spectacular **Long-tailed Sylph**. The fruit feeders attracted tanagers like **Blue-winged and Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanagers**, which were both photographed, and we got no less FOUR species of antpittas for our photo list (**Brown-banded, Chestnut-crowned, Slate-crowned and Bicolored**). Although we were to photograph the last species much better at another site. This was another day that featured a nice mammal to photograph too, this time a **Tayra**, and a male **Green-and-black Fruiteater** visiting a feeder produced memorable images too. All-in-all, one of the most successful days of the tour!



Chestnut-crowned Antpitta

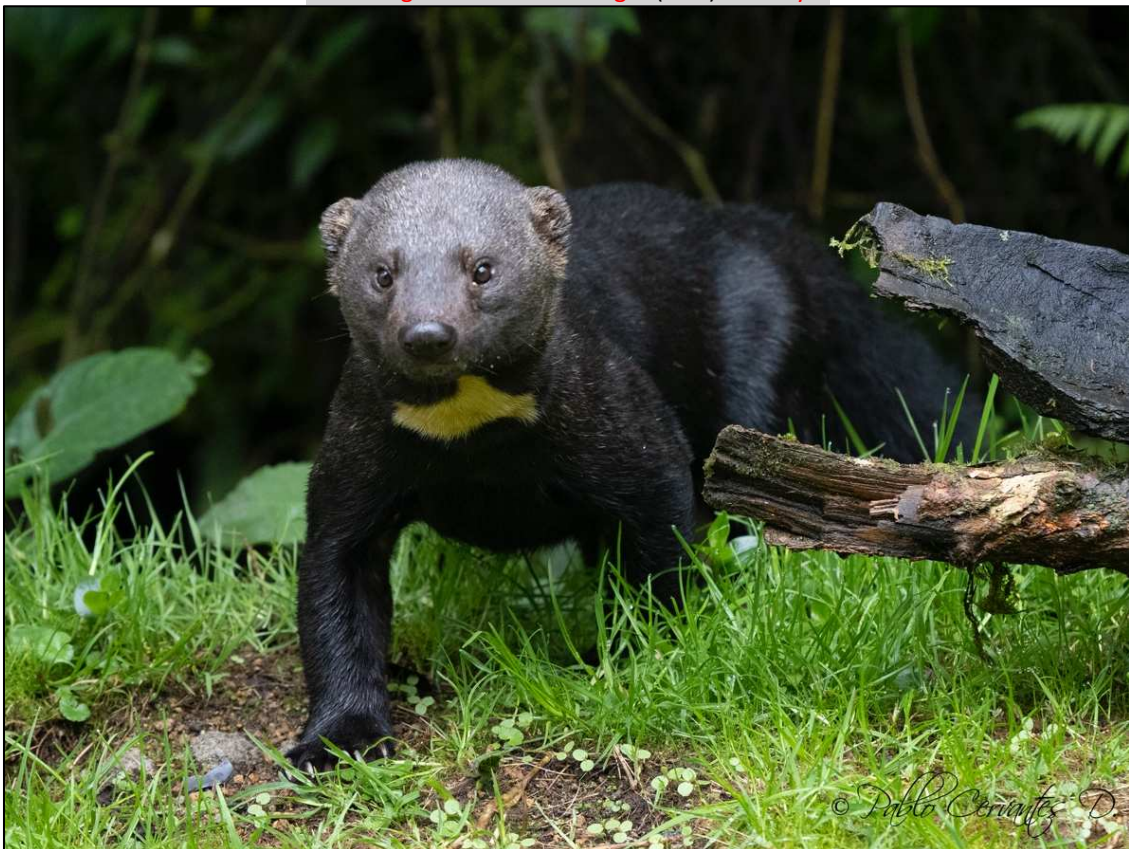


Chestnut-crowned Antpitta (TOP) and Green-and-black Fruiteater





Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager (TOP) and Tayra





Slate-crowned Antpitta (TOP) and Brown-banded Antpitta



Day 5-6: 22nd- 23rd February 2023 – Termales del Riuz and Los Nevados Natural Park.

On these days we moved up to the highest places of the tour. We stayed in one of the best hotels, with private thermal hot springs on the grounds, and set within a magnificent mountain setting with towering cliffs overlooking it. This area brought us a nice haul of both highland hummingbirds and tanagers, many of which only featured on these days. At and around the hotel feeders we photographed beautiful tanagers like **Scarlet-bellied, Hooded and Lacrimose Mountain-Tanagers**, and **White-naped Brushfinch**, and hummingbirds such as the exquisite **Rainbow-bearded Thornbill**. We also used multiflash on hummingbird species like **Shining Sunbeam, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, and Great Sapphirewing**, the second largest hummingbird in the world. **Glossy Flowerpiercer** also posed for us nicely there too. Venturing higher still into the paramo grasslands above the treeline, we photographed one of the rarest hummingbird species on the tour, the **Buffy Helmetcrest**, as well as another antpitta, this time the widespread **Tawny Antpitta**.

**Buffy Helmetcrest**



Buffy Helmetcrest (TOP) and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill





Buffy Helmetcrest (TOP) and Rainbow-bearded Thornbill





Hooded Mountain-Tanager (TOP) and White-naped Brushfinch





Glossy Flowerpiercer (TOP) and Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan



Day 7: 24th February 2023 – Hacienda El Bosque.

On this day we moved down in altitude, but only just, as we moved in to temperate forest a little below the treeline. The move to an area of lower elevation, highland forest brought some rich rewards, as we spent the day and night at *Hacienda El Bosque*, with its excellent feeders and restaurant on site. The two birds which rocketed this site to fame were **Crescent-faced Antpitta** and **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan**, and both of them performed well for us (which is lucky as the antpitta has the habit of disappearing for weeks on end!) Other forest feeders attracted **Andean Guan** and **White-throated Quail-Dove** too. There are also good hummingbird feeders on site, where we enjoyed species like **Sparkling Violet-ear**, **Black-thighed Puffleg**, **Buff-winged Starfrontlet**, **Mountain Velvetbreast**, **Shining Sunbeam** and **White-bellied Woodstar**. Away from the feeders we also managed to photograph the scarce **Purple-backed Thornbill** and **Pearled Treerunner** too, a very handsome, underrated member of the ovenbird family. We visited two separate antpitta feeding stations, and one of these held another species for our burgeoning antpitta list, **Equatorial Antpitta**. The site certainly lived up to the hype!



Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan



Two More Antpittas: **Crescent-faced (TOP)** and **Equatorial Antpittas**





Black-thighed Puffleg (TOP) and Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan





Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan

Day 8: 25th February 2023 – El Color de mi Reves.

We remained in the highlands for another day, although this time taking a rough road up to *El Color de mi Reves*, a glamping site, which has become a big draw for bird photographers too. The dirt road required a 4WD to negotiate it, but the ride was worthwhile, as we photographed yet more toucans, hummingbirds and antpittas! The biggest bird attraction there was arguably the two species of mountain-toucan coming to a single forest feeder. We had yet more time with photogenic **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucans**, although this time we had the added bonus of **Black-billed Mountain-Toucans**, which we could photograph at the same feeders! We also got a significant upgrade to our **Bicolored Antpitta** photos. We had got this bird earlier at *Rio Blanco*, but the photographs were much better at this site. Many of the hummingbirds on site were by now familiar, although we added the rarely seen **Mountain Avocetbill** at this spot. A feeder attracted more **Andean Guans** for us and provided our best shots yet of **White-throated Quail-Dove**, with some wonderful head shots obtained. This was to be our last of . Our time in the highlands had come to an end, it had been a dizzy blur of antpittas, hummingbirds and tanagers, and had been more successful than we could have hoped for.

**Black-billed Mountain-Toucan**



Black-billed Mountain-Toucan





Bicolored Antpitta (TOP) and White-throated Quail-Dove



Day 9: 26th February 2023 – Hotel Tinamu.

After a long stretch in the highlands, we dropped into the sweaty lowlands, and checked out *Tinamu Lodge*. The feeders at this place can be wild with activity, and it can seem that they can barely keep up with the number of bananas needed to feed the local birds. Sadly, though, on this occasion, we hit a low spell, with less activity than we had hoped. However, we still managed to photograph **Golden-collared Manakin**, along with common tanager species like **Blue-gray and Palm Tanagers**, and we also managed to spot a perched **Brown-throated Parakeet** on the way there, which compensated to some extent!



Day 10: 27th February 2023 – La Rivera.

After yesterday's low activity at *Tinamu*, we decided to take a long day trip out to a new emerging site, *La Rivera*. This allowed us to photograph some birds on the way, such as wetland birds like **Blue-winged Teal**, **Bare-faced Ibis**, and **Little Cuckoo** and a roosting **Common Potoo**. While at *La Rivera*, we took advantage of the amazing feeders at La Rivera, where their star attraction, **Red-ruffed Fruitcrow** made the long journey very worthwhile. On this day we also managed to photograph **Great Antshrike**, **Spectacled Parrotlet**, **Crimson-rumped Toucanet**, more **Green Jays**, and **Beryl-spangled Tanager** for a very successful, rapidly adjusted itinerary.



Red-ruffed Fruitcrow



Red-ruffed Fruitcrow (TOP) and Crimson-rumped Toucanet





Common Potoo



Days 11-12: 28th February- 1st March 2023 – Araucana Lodge.

On these days we moved into *Araucana Lodge* in the Andean foothills, just 30km north of Cali. This superb farm turned birding lodge caters superbly for birders and bird photographers, with good photography on the grounds and at sites as day trips from there. At the lodge itself we focused mainly on the hummingbirds. The lodge has a bird list of over 20 species of hummingbirds, and around 10 of them are regularly present. While we had already photographed plenty of hummingbirds, some of these were new here, as most of our hummingbird photography had largely been at higher elevations, with a different crop of species. Some of the species we photographed here were **Crowned Woodnymph**, **Steely-vented Hummingbird**, **Andean Emerald**, **Black-throated Mango**, **Green Hermit**, **Brown Violetear** and the always welcome **Purple-throated Woodstar**. We also got close ups with more **Colombian Chachalacas**, a noisy endemic bird that was familiar to us from several sites throughout.



Photo Above: **Steely-vented Hummingbird**

Photos Next Page: **Black-throated Mango (TOP)** and **Andean Emerald**



Days 13-15: 2nd – 3rd March - La Florida, Dona Dora and San Felipe (trips from Araucana).

For the final days of the tour, we made trips out from *Araucana Lodge* to some of the surrounding birding areas. For sure, the most successful of these was our visit to *La Florida*, which we had ear-marked at the start of the trip as a key site for the tour. Chief among our targets there was the incredibly colorful **Multicolored Tanager**, a stunning Colombian endemic. We managed to get plenty of fantastic shots of this amazing bird at a place where the particular attention has been made to the perches and landscapes in which to photograph this sensational bird. On these days we also visited a feeding station for the **Chestnut Wood-Quail**, a species (like all of the antpittas), which is generally very difficult to get photos of away from these specially created feeding stations. Colorful and spectacular birds littered these days, and also included **Red-headed Barbet**, **Lineated Woodpecker**, **Saffron-crowned Tanager**, **Golden Tanager** and **Green Honeycreeper**. We also had more time with both **Flame-rumped Tanagers**, **Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers**, **Crimson-rumped Toucanets** and **Andean Motmots** too, which was perfectly welcome too! Right at the end we visited *San Felipe*, with the specific purpose of photographing a last shy forest species, **Little Tinamou**, which provided a great end to the tour. *We finished the tour having photographed more than 100 species, with many spectacular tanagers, toucans, and hummingbirds among them, as well as difficult to photograph species like a tinamou, a wood-quail, and many species of antpittas also featuring along with memorable encounters with Red-ruffed Fruitcrow. All of which can be considered a very successful sojourn of the Central Colombian Andes!*



Photo Above: **Lineated Woodpecker**

Photos Next Page: Male **Red-headed Barbet** (TOP) and **Multicolored Tanager**





Lineated Woodpecker (TOP) and Saffron-crowned Tanager





Multicolored Tanager (TOP) and Saffron-crowned Tanager





Female Red-headed Barbet (TOP) and Chestnut Wood-Quail





Multicolored Tanager (TOP) and Chestnut Wood-Quail





Spectacled Parrotlet

CHECKLIST OF ANIMALS PHOTOGRAPHED:**BIRDS****TINAMOUS: TINAMIDAE**Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui***DUCKS, GEESE, AND SWANS: ANATIDAE**Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors***GUANS, CHACHALACAS, CURASSOWS: CRACIDAE**Colombian Chachalaca *Ortalis columbiana*Andean Guan *Penelope montagnii***NEW WORLD QUAIL: ODONTOPHORIDAE**Chestnut Wood-Quail *Odontophorus hyperythrus***PIGEONS AND DOVES: COLUMBIDAE**Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis*White-throated Quail-Dove *Zenaidura macroura***CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE**Little Cuckoo *Coccyzus minutus*Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana***POTOOS: NYCTIBIIDAE**Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*

HUMMINGBIRDS: TROCHILIDAE

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga Mellivora*
White-whiskered Hermit *Phaethornis yaruqui*
Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*
Tawny-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis syrmatophorus*
Sparkling Violetear *Colibri coruscans*
Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae*
Lesser (Green) Violetear *Colibri thalassinus*
Black-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis*
Speckled Hummingbird *Adelomyia melanogenys*
Long-tailed Sylph *Agelaiocercus kingii*
Mountain Avocetbill *Opisthoprora euryptera*
Purple-backed Thornbill *Ramphomicron microrhynchum*
Rainbow-bearded Thornbill *Chalcostigma herrani*
Buffy Helmetcrest *Oxygogon stuebelii*
Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina*
Glowing Puffleg *Eriocnemis vestita*
Black-thighed Puffleg *Eriocnemis derbyi*
Golden-breasted Puffleg *Eriocnemis Mosquera*
Shining Sunbeam *Aglaeactis cupripennis*
Bronzy Inca *Coeligena coeligena*
Collared Inca *Coeligena torquate*
Buff-winged Starfrontlet *Coeligena lutetiae*
Mountain Velvetbreast *Lafresnaya lafresnayi*
Sword-billed Hummingbird *Ensifera ensifera*
Great Sapphirewing *Pterophanes cyanopterus*
Buff-tailed Coronet *Boissonneaua flavescens*
White-booted Racket-tail *Ocreatus underwoodii*
Fawn-breasted Brilliant *Heliodoxa rubinoides*
White-bellied Woodstar *Chaetocercus mulsant*
Purple-throated Woodstar *Philodice mitchellii*
Crowned (Green-crowned) Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica*
Steely-vented Hummingbird *Saucerottia saucerottei*
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl*
Andean Emerald *Uranomitra franciae*

CORMORANTS AND SHAGS: PHALACROCORACIDAE

Neotropic Cormorant *Nannopterum brasilianum*

HERONS, EGRETS, AND BITTERNs: ARDEIDAE

Great Egret *Ardea alba*
Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*
Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

IBISES AND SPOONBILLS: THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*
Bare-faced Ibis *Phimosus infuscatus*

MOTMOTS: MOMOTIDAE

Andean (Highland) Motmot *Momotus aequatorialis*

BARBETS: CAPITONIDAE

Red-headed Barbet *Eubucco bourcierii*

TOUCANS: RAMPHASTIDAE

Crimson-rumped Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus haematopygus*

Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan *Andigena hypoglauca*

Black-billed Mountain-Toucan *Andigena nigrirostris*

WOODPECKERS: PICIDAE

Acorn Woodpecker *Melanerpes formicivorus*

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*

NEW WORLD & AFRICAN PARROTS: PSITTACIDAE

Bronze-winged Parrot *Pionus chalcopterus*

Spectacled Parrotlet *Forpus conspicillatus*

Brown-throated Parakeet *Eupsittula pertinax*

TYPICAL ANTBIRDS: THAMNOPHILIDAE

Great Antshrike *Taraba major*

ANTPITTAS: GRALLARIIDAE

Chestnut-crowned Antpitta *Grallaria ruficapilla*

Chestnut-naped Antpitta *Grallaria nuchalis*

Bicolored Antpitta *Grallaria rufocinerea*

Equatorial Antpitta *Grallaria saturate*

Tawny Antpitta *Grallaria quitensis*

Brown-banded Antpitta *Grallaria milleri*

Slate-crowned Antpitta *Grallaricula nana*

Crescent-faced Antpitta *Grallaricula lineifrons*

OVENBIRDS & WOODCREEPERS: FURNARIIDAE

Pearled Treerunner *Margarornis squamiger*

MANAKINS: PIPRIDAE

Golden-collared Manakin *Manacus vitellinus*

COTINGAS: COTINGIDAE

Green-and-black Fruiteater *Pipreola riefferii*

Andean Cock-of-the-rock *Rupicola peruvianus*

Red-ruffed Fruitcrow *Pyroderus scutatus*

TITYRAS AND ALLIES: TITYRIDAE

White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus*

CROWS, JAYS, AND MAGPIES: CORVIDAE

Black-chested Jay *Cyanocorax affinis*

Green Jay *Cyanocorax yncas*

THRUSHES AND ALLIES: TURDIDAE

Clay-colored Thrush (Robin) *Turdus grayi*

Black-billed Thrush *Turdus ignobilis*

Great Thrush *Turdus fuscater*

SISKINS AND ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE

Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia lanirostris*

NEW WORLD SPARROWS: PASSERELLIDAE

White-naped Brushfinch *Atlapetes albinucha*

Tricolored Brushfinch *Atlapetes tricolor*

Slaty Brushfinch *Atlapetes schistaceus*

TROUPIALS AND ALLIES: ICTERIDAE

Yellow-backed Oriole *Icterus chrysater*

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: PARULIDAE

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*

Blackburnian Warbler *Setophaga fusca*

Canada Warbler *Cardellina canadensis*

CARDINALS AND ALLIES: CARDINALIDAE

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*

TANAGERS AND ALLIES: THRAUPIDAE

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus*

Flame-rumped Tanager *Ramphocelus flammigerus*

Crimson-backed Tanager *Ramphocelus dimidiatus*

Hooded Mountain Tanager *Buthraupis montana*

Lacrimose Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus lacrymosus*

Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus igniventris*

Blue-winged Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus somptuosus*

Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager *Dubusia taeniata*

Multicolored Tanager *Chlorochrysa nitidissima*

Blue-gray Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*

Scrub Tanager *Stilpnia vitriolina*

Blue-necked Tanager *Stilpnia cyanicollis*

Beryl-spangled Tanager *Tangara nigroviridis*

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*

Saffron-crowned Tanager *Tangara xanthocephala*

Golden Tanager *Tangara arthus*

Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala*

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*

Guira Tanager *Hemithraupis guira*

Glossy Flowerpiercer *Diglossa lafresnayii*

Masked Flowerpiercer *Diglossa cyanea*

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis*

Black-winged Saltator *Saltator atripennis*

Streaked Saltator *Saltator striatipectus*

MAMMALS

Northern Tigrina (Oncilla) *Leopardus tigrinus*

Tayra *Eira barbara*