

# CHILE

7/10 – 25/30 JANUARY 2009

## TOUR REPORT

**LEADER:** MARK PEARMAN

This was the first time in many years that Birdquest offered a tip-to tip Chile experience, and although the far south was an optional extension, everyone took it while the majority also visited the magical Juan Fernandez archipelago on a pre-tour extension. Once again we managed to see all of the Chilean endemics, all eight amazing Chilean tapaculos and such highly sought-after species as Diademed Sandpiper-Plover, Magellanic Plover, Austral Rail, Chilean Woodstar, White-bridled Finch and our first Black Rails. Our two main pelagic trips into the Humboldt current from central and northern Chile, four ferry crossings and another pelagic from the Juan Fernandez produced no fewer than nineteen species of tubenoses, which makes this tour an easy option for seeing many deep-sea pelagic species in half-day boat trips without enduring a Southern Ocean overhaul trip. We also had several surprises at sea including Blue-footed Booby, Swallow-tailed Gull, Sabine's Gull and Sooty Tern. In all we recorded 292 species, and enjoyed magnificent scenery from high altitude Puna lakes and snow-capped volcanoes, the Atacama desert through Patagonian forest to Patagonian and Fuegian steppe, and the magnificent Torres del Paine national park. Hotels, meals and wines were excellent throughout and the Chileans offered great hospitality. Clearly Chile is the perfect destination for newcomers to South America, yet it also fills some sorely needed gaps for the veteran Neotropical birder in addition to its attractive set of endemics and superb scenery.

Just as a big freeze hit Europe, seven Birdquesters taxied out of a secluded sector of Santiago's international airport on a charter flight to the remote island of Masatierra (re-named Robinson Crusoe by some bizarre quirk of Chilean diplomacy). One of the first Brits to set foot on the island was Alexander Selkirk who (inspiring Daniel Defoe) was marooned there and rescued almost four and a half years later in 1709 after living off goats that he caught by hand. Our two and a half hour flight was unremarkable until jagged peaks loomed from the ocean, and we enjoyed a fly-past of the magnificent native Fernandezian forest, although from my co-pilot seat it was hard to rouse most from their deep slumber.

Touch down on the barren moonscape end of the island and welcome to a chilled-out island covered in endemic flora with endemic birds, an endemic mammal and even an endemic lobster which we were about to eat! A couple of local men eventually appeared from a shack and shook hands with the pilot, although the brand new airport terminal was found to have locked toilets and no-one had

the key! American Kestrel (subspecies *fernandensis*) and Feral Pigeons were the only birds to be seen on a pleasant stroll down to the port which was heaving with the endemic Juan Fernandez Fur Seals. By no means just another pinniped, these beasts were distinctive enough; the males clad in frosty shawls and the females with notably pointed noses. The boat transfer provided views of a couple of Black-browed Albatross, several distant giant-petrels and many Pink-footed Shearwaters, while a Kermadec Petrel flew across the town once we had landed. As dusk drew closer continuous movements of Masatierra Petrels, involving untold thousands of birds, streamed past the headland as we supped on welcoming Pisco sours from our most comfortable coastal hotel.

After a hearty breakfast, and soon after our first Green-backed Firecrown, we were back on the water and headed directly out to sea. When the chum started to hit the water, seabirds were at first making low exploratory passes, before feeding within an arm's reach, and then fighting for every last morsel. It was a pelagic to remember, with several close-up Black-browed Albatrosses and a most obliging adult Buller's Albatross. Both a dark phase and a pale phase Kermadec Petrel showed up among the onslaught of over 150 Pink-footed Shearwaters while three or more White-bellied Storm-Petrels danced in the wake; the latter two both island breeders. Throughout most of the pelagic we were fortunate to enjoy point-blank views of some thirty or more Juan Fernandez Petrels, and as luck would have it five Sooty Terns also gave our vessel the once over with close fly-bys.

Back in San Juan Bautista, a superb lunch of Golden Crab awaited us, before our first trek onto the luxuriant volcanic slopes. The island folk took immense pride in their gardens which could even put some Scilly gardens to shame, with an outrageous mix of native and introduced flora. One of the islands most distinctive plants was undoubtedly the totally bizarre endemic Cabbage Tree *Dendroseris litoralis*, literally a trunk with a crown of cabbage-like leaf bunches and huge dangling orange flowers. They looked like they had been invented by kids at a playgroup and were a firm favourite with the hummingbirds. Green-backed Firecrowns may have slightly outnumbered their endemic cousin, although it was hard to believe that the Juan Fernandez Firecrown could even be considered a member of the same genus. In both the native woodland and *Eucalyptus* plantations we located two bright chestnut males and four green females, flashing their white tail webs. After driving up most of the lower slopes, we trekked into the national park where Austral Thrush was clearly the island's most common species. At higher altitude, after passing through a sector of giant *Gunnera*, and into the endemic purple-flowered Juan Bueno *Rhaphithamnus venustus* forest, the tiny Juan Fernandez Tit-Tyrant was found to be common and very obliging. Later we savoured more lobster and superb swordfish steaks.

The following morning saw us staking out more firecrowns for better views of the male's iridescent crown, before some of the group made an optional walk to Selkirk's lookout. It was a rather strenuous trek but one which paid off for various reasons with more close-ups of the tit-tyrants and firecrowns. The vista of both coasts and down slope views of the forest were outstanding, while among the various plaques at Selkirk's lookout, one laid by a direct descendant of Selkirk's brother, caught the eye reading "Till a' the seas gang dry and the rocks melt in the sun". We were also able to appreciate much more of the islands 200 endemic plant species, including some *Dicksonia* tree-ferns and a few Chonta Palms *Juania australis*. Tracing our steps back to Santiago, we picked up a Northern Giant-Petrel from six more distant giant-petrels, as well as two large spectacular (yellow-wing) flying fish performing flights of up to 60 metres. A refuelling stop at Rodelillo airstrip (SCRD) near Valparaiso produced various common species of central Chile including Chimango Caracara, Southern Lapwing, Eared Dove, Chilean and Blue-and-white Swallow, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Long-tailed Meadowlark and Black-chinned Siskin while Ed wandered off to check just what was inside an open hanger. A resident Chilean Mockingbird awaited us in the grounds of our Santiago hotel.

Soon after dawn, we entered the Lampa marshes where Mark had staked out Black Rail on a pre-tour recce. Although we had immediate vocal response of at least five singing birds, it was very tough work to say the least. Some managed brief flight views and C-G glimpsed an adult on the deck, while

others also saw a chick or two. Other interesting birds here included Cocoli Heron, an adult Harris's Hawk, Short-eared Owl, several smart Wren-like Rushbirds, a male Spectacled Tyrant, Grass Wren, Correndera Pipit, Common Diuca-Finch and Yellow-winged Blackbirds. Further on, a Plumbeous Rail showed well from the road together with three delightful Many-coloured Rush-Tyrants while Neotropic Cormorant, Black-crowned Night-Heron, Great and Snowy Egrets, Common Moorhen, Brown-hooded and Franklin's Gulls and Picui Ground-Dove made up the supporting cast.

After a longer delay than expected, the remainder of the group finally made it to Santiago having been diverted via Brazil. Before long we were on our way; trying our best to fit a full day's birding into the remaining time which we managed with great success. Our first lake stop provided an impressive selection of waterbirds including Black-necked Swans and a distant pair of Coscoroba Swans, Chiloe Wigeon, Yellow-billed Pintail, Red Shoveler, Lake Duck, White-tufted and many Great Grebes, as well as Red-gartered and White-winged Coots. Here too we encountered our first male Austral Negrito and an Aplomado Falcon gave an impressive fly-past along the shore.

While walking to the coast we quickly encountered a pair of Grassland Yellow-Finch, several noisy Austral Blackbirds, a flock of Shiny Cowbirds, a male Black-chinned Siskin and many Austral Thrushes; the common thrush of Chile. Being a Sunday in January (the Chilean summer holiday period), the beach was heaving with people even if there was a cold breeze and the sea was ice cold. Gulls were plentiful along the shore and in the estuary with Kelp, Brown-hooded, over 4000 Franklin's and seven smart Grey Gulls. American Oystercatchers were common along with a few Black-necked Stilts and White-rumped Sandpipers. Some 300 or more Black Skimmers were resting and occasionally hunting, while we also scoped a Common Tern, a South American Tern and a pair of Collared Plovers. The prize bird was an as yet unnamed species of doradito, previously thought to represent Warbling Doradito, which responded well giving point-blank views.

Further along the coast, we were beginning to get the flavour of the Humboldt upwelling with some of its magnificent specialties. Peruvian Boobies were plummeting from great height, while Red-legged Cormorants and Elegant Terns foraged around the harbour. Piers were dotted with stunning Inca Terns while South American Sea Lions basked on exposed rocks. Another lake stop held extensive rush-beds full of roosting Cattle Egrets, where five Plumbeous Rails put on a show, and we got to grips with Red-fronted Coots (our third coot species of the day), two Lesser Yellowlegs and eventually scoped six Black-headed Ducks which had been sleeping. A final coastal stop produced perched views of Peruvian Booby, over 1000 Peruvian Pelicans, a Whimbrel, 51 Surfbirds, Ruddy Turnstones and protracted close-ups of the endemic Chilean Seaside-Cinclodes. The coastal traffic was heavy as the light faded, when some 50,000 Franklin's Gulls could be seen going to roost. The flavour of Chile was already setting in, as we prepared our sea legs for the first pelagic.

An early departure into the Humboldt Current secured a quality selection of seabirds, and a Blackish Oystercatcher graced the rocks as we pulled out of harbour. With growing numbers of Sooty and Pink-footed Shearwaters, it was not long before the first Peruvian Diving-Petrels started to cross the bow as we passed the odd swimming Humboldt Penguin. Once we were 15 or so miles offshore, the continental shelf suddenly plummeted 3000 metres, making a great difference to the birding opportunities. In calm conditions, more than 30 Salvin's Albatross were in strong evidence, along with a few Black-browed Albatross and two superb "Northern" Royal Albatrosses. Chumming brought these tubenoses in for close-up inspection along with three White-chinned Petrels, six Westland Petrels (an unusual ratio for these waters), two Southern and three Northern Giant-Petrels, 50 or more Wilson's Storm-Petrels and two Chilean Skuas. Our first Guanay Cormorant flew past as we reached the harbour to round off an enviable selection.

Having only seen Humboldt Penguins briefly at sea, our first afternoon stop was at a colony where we scoped at least 45 birds, many in full nesting activity at their burrows. Leisurely views of Blackish Oystercatcher were also obtained, before we headed inland to the colonial enclave of Olmue; home

of the “huaso”, the Chilean equivalent of a gaucho. Walking an old mine road, it was a welcome surprise when almost immediately a Chilean Hawk quartered past at very close range and was to be the only one of the tour. White-crested Elaenia, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Dusky-tailed Canastero and Plain-mantled Tit-Spintail were the next birds to fall as we ascended through thick scrub. That thick scrub, with pockets of dense woodland, was also home to five extremely skulking endemics, but we would have to take them one at a time. Suddenly, and very luckily about half of the group were treated to close-up views of two different Chilean Tinamous among the many heard. Even though we would see the species again, it was an early result. Grey-hooded Sierra-Finches were singing and showed well further on as we were treated to various views of four different Giant Hummingbirds, an outstanding species a little larger than a Eurasian Starling. An endemic Dusky Tapaculo sparked up its monotonous song, and was very responsive, everyone eventually getting fine views. And finally we homed in on one of Chile’s scarcer endemics, pulling in a Crag Chilia from its rocky escarpment for repeated studies.

At dawn, in La Campana National Park, we were on the case of one of Chile’s toughest endemics, the White-throated Tapaculo. Although we soon had five different individuals staked out vocally, they were certainly not going to give themselves up easily. It took all sorts of tactics and manoeuvres before most had obtained a good view of one or more birds. Here too, we observed our first of many Thorn-tailed Rayaditos, Striped Woodpecker, Chilean Flicker, Chilean Pigeon, and two White-throated Treerunners; almost nuthatch-like with an extraordinary chisel-shaped bill. Returning to the mine road, some managed more views of White-throated Tapaculo, before we headed back towards Santiago to visit the Lampa marshes, picking up a Harris’s Hawk en route. Setting out along one of the dykes in the hope of finding Stripe-backed Bittern, we decided to turn round after two miles or so when Tommy caught up with us to announce that he had seen the bird fly off. As luck would have it we found a different individual when almost back at the road, and finally everyone got to see the bird. A hovering White-tailed Kite and a Bar-winged Cinclodes were also new trip birds, before we retired to Santiago to enjoy the local cuisine and wines.

It was time for our first venture into the Andes above Santiago, and most of the group had just one bird on their mind, the almost mythical Diademed Sandpiper-Plover. As we reached the 2000 m. mark, it was clearly going to be a very birdy day when we secured several views of the chunky endemic Moustached Turca, as flocks of introduced California Quail scuttled along the roadside and four Black-winged Ground-Dove foraged in a nearby field. Ground-tyrants were in strong evidence with Spot-billed, Cinereous, White-browed and the localized Black-fronted all allowing close-ups. Both Grey-hooded Sierra-Finches and Greater Yellow-Finches proved to be common, and we also connected with a pair of Plumbeous Sierra-Finch and various Rufous-banded Miners. After crossing several ice cold rivers, we began our search for the DSP and had barely entered the bog, when some odd bellowing could be heard. It was Terry on top of a mound, gesturing that he had located the bird, after which everyone leisurely enjoyed this superb and obliging wader while the photographers were in their element. The combination of the delicate drooping bill, white diadem, rufous nape, bright orange legs and of course its rarity make this such a special bird. Here too we obtained various scope studies of Grey-breasted Seedsnipe, before ascending to the head of the valley where we found several Yellow-rumped Siskins while an Andean Condor sailed overhead. With stunning views of the valley below, there were still plenty of new birds up for grabs and before long we were able to compare Cordilleran and Sharp-billed Canasteros almost side by side, a pair of White-sided Hillstar, a male Rufous-tailed Plantcutter and obtained point-blank views of a roosting male Band-winged Nightjar. Among the many other new birds found this day were Crested Duck, Variable Hawk, South American Snipe, Grey-flanked Cinclodes, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant and Fire-eyed Diucon. On the way down we were treated to walk-away scope studies of the scarce Great Shrike-Tyrant to round off a memorable day.

The Patagonian forest beckoned with its numerous specialties, and in particular our main target was one of South America’s most restricted range tapaculos, the giant Chestnut-throated Huet-huet. A

stake-out en route provided outstanding views of Chilean Tinamou for those that had missed it previously, and a couple of Dark-bellied Cinclodes. As throughout most of the *Nothofagus* belt, Thorn-tailed Rayadito and White-crested Elaenia were the commonest birds. Green-backed Firecrowns were common, and it was not long before we found a pair of Tufted Tit-Tyrants, several Austral Parakeets and three Patagonian Tyrants which can sometimes be tricky species to locate. The explosive rattle of Chucao Tapaculos rang through the forest and eventually everyone had good views of this delightful orange tapaculo. But we had to work extremely hard for the huet-huet even though we located a total of six birds, of which three were seen. At dusk, we began searching for Rufous-legged Owl, and were eventually rewarded with great close-ups of one bird. A visit to the Maule valley produced the expected local race of Burrowing Parrot, a threatened species in Chile, several Upland Geese and Black-faced Ibis and we were also rewarded with fantastic views of Spectacled Duck. At first some of the group saw three in flight, and then further down the valley we connected with a pair of these splendid ducks for scope studies. Luckily for Stephen, another Chestnut-throated Huet-huet put in an appearance, before we had to make tracks to Santiago and catch a flight to Iquique.

Leaving port soon after dawn, we began our second pelagic in a large boat under the trusty hands of captain Allan. The ocean was almost flat calm and it was going to be an unusual pelagic in several ways. Strangely, hardly any birds responded to our chumming efforts, although we had a lot of chum. However, we were rewarded with some great birds and several surprises during six and a half hours at sea reaching a distance of 27 km offshore. Many Sooty and Pink-footed Shearwaters accompanied us almost throughout the pelagic, and we had numerous encounters with both Wilson's and Elliot's Storm-Petrels. Seven or more smart Buller's Shearwaters were a welcome addition to the tour list, and would be unlikely in spring when the tour usually runs. Humboldt Penguins were a regular sight with around 45 seen, and at least 50 Peruvian Diving-Petrels was a surprisingly high number. Other tubenoses included small numbers of Salvin's Albatross, Northern Giant-Petrel and White-chinned Petrel. A juvenile Blue-footed Booby was a surprise and is a very poorly known species in Chile, but the bird of the pelagic for many was a raft of seven stunning Swallow-tailed Gulls which we cruised up to several times for great views. Skuas were prominent especially en route back to port with several Chilean, many Arctic and a Long-tailed seen and photographed. Guanay and Red-legged Cormorants were common and many Inca Terns also accompanied us back to port which was heaving with birds and some 600 sea lions. Here we focussed our attention of the hoards of Franklin's Gulls, several Belcher's and many beautiful Grey Gulls, while Elegant Terns and Black Skimmers graced the harbour. Back at the hotel, two Pacific Doves were waiting for us, before we made an afternoon visit to the Reserva Nacional Pampa de Tamarugo where our target bird, the Tamarugo Conebill fell quickly. A late flight to Arica didn't prevent half of the group quaffing some Pisco Sours on arrival at the hotel.

At dawn we out exploring several of the oasis valleys of the Atacama desert; the driest place on Earth. Andean Swifts were common overhead, and we soon connected with Peruvian Meadowlark, Cinereous Conebill, Vermillion Flycatcher and a smart male and female Peruvian Sheartail. One of our first important targets was the delightful Pied-crested Tit-Tyrant although we did have to work fairly hard to see two birds well, as they were extremely active and always on the move. Moving on to another valley, our first Croaking Ground-Dove obliged, as did a White-crested Elaenia of a local race. Our main target was the endangered Chilean Woodstar, and fortunately Ilona found us a female in record time which we were able to watch for a long time. Back in Arica, we were provided with a different driver, which was just as well since the driving display in the morning had been rather worrying. A pier in town produced 17 Brown Pelicans among 30 or more Peruvian Pelicans representing only a relatively recent find in Chile.

It was time to check out the Lluta river mouth, a must for all birders who visit the region. The coast was teeming with birds, including over a thousand Grey Gulls and hundreds of Franklin's with a few Belcher's thrown in, and a flock of 17 Semipalmated Plovers. Other waders in the estuary included

five Killdeer, two Snowy Plovers, a Spotted Sandpiper, a rather sick-looking Sanderling and both Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs. An immature Little Blue Heron, a young Peregrine, a Moorhen and surprisingly two Andean Coots provided the supporting cast among many other species seen previously on the tour. Heading inland we began our journey through the desert to the high Andes. Stopping to look at some ancient stone images, we quickly spotted a close nesting pair of Peruvian Thick-knees which were not put off by our presence, relying on and believing in their camouflage. Further up the valley we connected with a trio of finches including Band-tailed and Chestnut-throated Seedeaters and the local Slender-billed Finch. Entering one of the most barren sectors of desert, we struck out in lines in an endeavour to find Greyish Miner and after half an hour or more, finally found our quarry with nice scope views of two different birds. Next to fall were Streaked Tit-Spinetail followed by several Dark-winged Canasteros, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Chiguanco Thrush, Mourning and Ash-breasted Sierra-Finches as we came out of the desert into some Andean shrub-steppe. At Putre walking slowly and letting ourselves acclimatize, several nesting Andean Hillstars were found under the eaves of the hotel where we also enjoyed close-ups of Greenish Yellow-Finch and Bare-faced Ground-Dove.

Black-hooded Sierra-Finches were in strong evidence as we wandered through the cobbled streets of Putre on a crisp morning. A nearby gully provided most of the morning's birds and was extremely productive. Furnarids were plentiful with several Canyon Canasteros, many Plain-breasted Earthcreepers, a Straight-billed Earthcreeper, Bar-winged and White-winged Cinclodes and eventually the scarce Whiter-throated Earthcreeper. As the sun hit the valley it became alive with hummingbirds including 25 or more Andean Hillstars, at least two Giant Hummingbirds, an Oasis Hummingbird and a Sparkling Violetear; very scarce in Chile. Much of the activity in the shrub zone involved the comings and goings of Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrants, many Blue-and-yellow Tanagers, Black-throated Flowerpiercers, a pair of Golden-billed Saltators, Chiguanco Thrushes, Hooded Siskins and many sierra-finches. A flock of around 18 Mountain Parakeets was a pleasant surprise and four Andean Swallows also foraged along the valley. Back in town, Stephen got us onto a Spot-winged pigeon; a recent addition to the Chile list, and Simon got us onto three very obliging Ornate Tinamous just above town.

After a morning's acclimatization, it was time to make our first visit into Lauca National Park, on this occasion to an altitude of 4,440 metres. Andean Geese were plentiful, and of the many waterbirds of offer, we encountered all three species of flamingo including 34 Andeans and a single Puna, fifteen or so Crested Duck, eleven Puna Ibis, Andean Avocet, Andean Lapwing, Silvery Grebes, 25 or more Giant Coots and several Andean Gulls. The cushion plant bogs acted like a magnet to Spot-billed, Puna and stately White-fronted Ground-Tyrants, Bar-winged and White-winged Cinclodes, the localized White-throated Sierra-Finch and chunky White-winged Diuca-Finches. Rocky outcrops held Andean Flickers, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant and Mountain Viscachas (a giant chinchilla), while several Puna Miners were scrutinized on the Vicuña-covered steppe and we also caught up with a small foraging flock of Black Siskins. En route back to Putre eight Guanaco were grazing on the slopes, and a little lower down we lucked into a stag and three buck Taruca; a threatened species.

Some of the tougher birds of Lauca were still high on our wanted list and we had a full day in which to find them. We had to drive many, many miles across barren puna desert until Simon got us onto our first group of Lesser Rheas. At Lago Chungara we scoped some 400 Puna Teal, 250 Andean Ruddy-Duck and a Cinnamon Teal among thousands of Silvery Grebes and hundreds of Giant and Andean Coots with the awesome backdrop of the twin snow-covered Pomerape and Parinacota volcanoes peaking at over 6300 metres. On our third attempt looking for the enigmatic White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant, we struck gold with prolonged scope studies of a pair. A walk across the tundra finally produced the expected Puna Plover, but it was our failure to find Puna Tinamou which was nagging after covering so much terrain. We decided to return to Putre for a quick siesta and to recharge our batteries. Back on the tinamou trail, we finally scored with fantastic close ups of a Puna Tinamou, and also enjoyed the antics of an obliging pair of Torrent Ducks on the way back to the hotel.

An early visit to a very extensive *Polylepis* woodland, produced the target Giant Conebill in record time where three different birds provided many good views. Here too we eventually connected with D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant and just as we were about to leave, with some already back on the bus, as if from nowhere a party of local and poorly known Thick-billed Siskins gave roadside views. Back in the Lluta valley, we quickly homed in on several Blue-black Grassquits, the local race of Bran-coloured Flycatcher, an adult Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle and three Burrowing Owls. Switching our attention to the Azapa Valley for the remote chance of finding a male Chilean Woodstar, we checked various gardens finding all three hummingbird species including a male Chilean Woodstars to round off a memorable stay in far northern Chile. A late flight saw us back in Santiago, and a morning flight took us to Puerto Montt, heart of the picturesque Chilean lake district.

Welcomed at the airport by our tiny and competent driver Patricio, we were swiftly on our way to the time-warped island of Chiloe; a sparsely populated farming and fishing community with painted wooden houses and characterful harbours covering an area a little larger than Crete. The ferry crossing in both directions produced 100 or so Imperial Shags, more looks at the handsome Red-legged Cormorant, 20 or so Magellanic Penguins, Black-browed Albatross, Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters, and a surprise Sabine's Gull. Once ashore, we bumped into two different flocks of 12 and 4 Slender-billed Parakeets although failed to manage perched views of this unusual Chilean endemic. Many of the islands birds were familiar and we enjoyed an extensive picnic spread while scoping two Hudsonian Godwits, and some 43 steamer-ducks of what turns out to be an undescribed species. The drive to Puyehue National Park, for those still awake, was memorable for some 500 Black-faced Ibis dotted about the fields. Once in the park, we began exploring some of the trails and endeavoured to find some of the harder targets. In dense bamboo, everyone eventually obtained several or many views of the enigmatic Ochre-flanked Tapaculo, and at least half of the group enjoyed the antics of a Black-throated Huet-huet. Another outstanding forest endemic was the energetic Des Murs' Wiretail with just six filamentous tail feathers, which took some patience for everyone to see. The following morning after more looks at the huet-huet and wiretail, we finally caught up with Magellanic Tapaculo which we had only heard up until now, to complete the set of eight Chilean tapaculos. An Austral Pygmy-Owl performed well in the hotel grounds before we headed back to Puerto Montt.

After a two hour flight to Punta Arenas, we were met by yet another driver called Patricio, and eventually headed off to the Seno Otway Magellanic Penguin colony. En route we saw our first Lesser Rheas of the southern form, currently lumped with the Puna subspecies. The penguin colony wasn't particularly large but the trail circuit allowed close ups of the birds at their burrows. Here too we connected with four Ashy-headed Geese; the only ones of the tour, and C-G got us onto a flock of 17 Two-banded Plovers. Back in Punta Arenas the Tres Puentes reserve was teeming with birds. Of seven species of duck, several Flying Steamer-Ducks and a lone Silver Teal were new for the tour, as were six Wilson's Phalarope. South of town we located six Flightless Steamer-Ducks, some 30 or more Magellanic Oystercatchers and two smart Dolphin Gulls.

Driving north across the windswept steppe, we had a refuelling stop at Puerto Natales where the shore was teeming with Imperial Shags, Black-necked Swans, Coscorobas and several species of duck, mainly Red Shovelers. The long drive also produced our first of many Short-billed Miners, a specialty of southernmost Patagonia, and our first of many Argentine Grey Foxes. Finally we arrived at Chile's most famous national park, Torres del Paine, or "towers of the blue sky" as Paine translates from *Mapadungun*. Few places on Earth could be so awe-inspiring, the towers themselves are a series of 2600 metres pinnacles, and the vastness of the park with herds of guanaco, glaciers, forests, deep blue lakes and waterfalls is an overwhelming sight. A group of 29 Andean Condors with Southern Crested and Chimango Caracaras were lunching at a sheep carcass, and soon after our first Austral Canasteros obliged well. Next on the agenda was one of South America's least known rallids, the Austral Rail. It was only known from three records since 1900 with the last in 1959, until it was

rediscovered in 1998 in Argentina and subsequently in Chile where it is still only known from two sites. We had immediate vocal response of at least two birds which was a good sign, and before long had one bird coming repeatedly into a rush tunnel where everyone managed to get scope views, an amazing result! It was a long drive to our hotel, and there was certainly no shortage of magnificent views at every corner, some 350 Guanaco, our first Scale-throated Earthcreeper and four Cinereous Harriers. The views from the hotel rooms were superb through giant windows, and we celebrated the rail and the pleasure of being in the park with our usual intake of Pisco Sours, highly quaffable Chilean wine and Patagonian lamb.

Soon after leaving the hotel, Ilona got us onto three Spectacled Ducks; not a new tour bird but a great bird to see again. Birding sites were far apart, and heading to the east of the park and some 40 Lesser Rheas later, we gained some height in the main Andean range, flushing several Least Seedsnipe along the road. It took us some time to find a couple of Patagonian Mockingbirds; rare in Chile but common in Argentina and bagged all the same. High in the mountains we stopped for lunch and almost on cue, had superb views of our main target a very smart male Yellow-bridled Finch, feeding alongside a female Greater Yellow-Finch. Five condors flew past while we munched on some interesting sandwiches. Back-tracking and after a team flushing of a Least Seedsnipe which we had seen land, some higher flat steppe produced an Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant and at least 12 Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrants which were all curiously juveniles.

Much of our next day was spent on the northern shores and steppes of the Magellan Straits, before crossing to Tierra del Fuego aka the Land of Fire, so named because of the fires of the (now extinct) Indians which could be seen by passing ships. We drove directly to a site for the threatened Ruddy-headed Goose; now reduced to only 300 pairs in mainland South America, and there were three birds waiting for us. Unfortunately though, just as we started to scope the birds, the driver unwittingly slammed a door flushing the birds off for good. The steppe was endless and although Torres del Paine was obviously a wilderness experience, it was of course a magnet for tourists. Today there was no one to be seen on the steppe, hardly a vehicle, just a few abandoned farms and of course the sheep; arguably there are more sheep in Patagonia than Chilean people. Simon and Pat appointed themselves the rhea counters for the day and came out with an impressive total of 327. Before long we were on the back roads, straight dirt roads covering hundreds of miles as we homed in on our targets. We were hoping for a few Tawny-throated Dotterels, but by mid summer it seemed that they were already grouping prior to migration, so at least 75 of these superb dotterels was many more than Mark had seen before in a day. We also connected with eight smart Rufous-chested Dotterels; more of a glorified plover, and enjoyed repeated views of the chunky Chocolate-vented Tyrant. Both Common and Short-billed Miners were foraging on the road and we had ample opportunity to compare them, when we screeched to a halt as a flash of bright yellow wings caught the eye. A brisk dash over the steppe and we were scoping a pair of glorious White-bridled Finches, a major rare bird in Patagonia.

The highlight of the ferry crossing was some 25 Commerson's Dolphins; a small superb and neatly pied blunt-nosed dolphin restricted to southern Patagonia which were having great fun bow-riding the ferry. Once on Tierra del Fuego, we headed west and picked up an adult Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant (the most stunning of the genus) and had outstanding views of a perched Magellanic Horned Owl alongside the bus before reaching Porvenir; home of mostly Croatian settlers attracted to a gold rush in 1883 at a nearby mountain. The following morning saw us hot on the trail of another enigmatic wader. The Magellanic Plover is such an oddball that it has been allocated its own family. Conditions at the first site we tried did not look suitable and we quickly moved onto the next, fanning out and scoping the flats periodically and systematically. Ilona called the first birds and we eventually enjoyed extended studies of five of these superb dove-like waders at close range. It was yet another highlight of the tour for many. We also had to catch up with Ruddy-headed Goose (again) and after a long drive and scanning through 600 or so Upland Geese we eventually managed sustained views of a single Ruddy-headed. The ferry crossing back to Punta Arenas was a two hour crossing, and at first

we were treated to ten or so bow-riding Peale's Dolphins. Of at least 15 diving-petrels, two or more were close enough to allow specific identification as Magellanic Diving-Petrel although all were likely to be that species. Some 200 Magellanic Penguins, 60 Black-browed Albatross, 20 Southern Giant-Petrels, 80 White-chinned Petrels, 2 Sooty Shearwaters, over 1000 Imperial Shags accompanied the crossing. Nearing Punta Arenas, a frenzy of 3000 Kelp Gulls, 200 Brown-hooded and 40 Dolphin Gulls, 300 South American Terns and as many as 100 Chilean Skuas had obviously found a major food source. Back in Punta Arenas we celebrated our final dinner at a local restaurant, before an early morning flight to Santiago.

With so many internal flights, pelagic trips, boat transfers and ferry crossings, different vehicles and drivers it would have been a miracle not to have some sort of technical hitch. Several obstacles seemed to occur especially towards the end of the tour, but all were dealt as quickly and efficiently as possible. This was the most comprehensive Birdquest Chile tour to date as can be seen from our impressive species list below. Finally, I wish to thank all of you for making it a most memorable tour.

## SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated with (NL) and those which were heard only are indicated with (H).

Species names follow Jaramillo *et al.* (2003) *Birds of Chile*, although the sequence of families and species, and the taxonomy follows SACC: A classification of the bird species of South America, South American Classification Committee <http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCBaseline.html>

Controversial or disputed taxonomies are indicated by square parenthesis.

### RHEIDAE

Lesser Rhea *Rhea pennata*: Two groups (each with a male attending young) involving 23 or more birds at Lauca National Park were referable to subspecies *tarapacensis*. Also seen abundantly in southern Patagonia (nominate *pennata*), with a maximum day count of 327 along the northern border of the Magellan Straits (thanks to Simon and Pat). Note that the species was recently resurrected in the genus *Rhea*.

### TINAMIDAE

Ornate Tinamou *Nothoprocta ornata*: This can be a tricky bird to see in Chile, although we were fortunate to breeze into two (thanks to Simon) and then another above Putre, and a pair the following day, thus saving us the agony of the infamous dawn brass monkeys march.

Chilean Tinamou *Nothoprocta perdicaria*: Protracted views of one foraging near Talca, after brief views of two on the outskirts of La Campana National Park where others were heard. Often a very difficult endemic to see well.

Puna Tinamou *Tinamotis pentlandii*: Just as one bird comes easy, another comes tough, and this year it took a great endeavour to just see one of these outrageous tinamous; half bird-half bush! In fact we nearly ran it over as it finally appeared beside the front right wheel of our bus. Named after Joseph Barclay Pentland, a 19th century Irish explorer and diplomat in Bolivia.

### ANATIDAE

Black-necked Swan *Cygnus melancoryphus*: Around fifty or more on two lakes in central Chile, 400 or more on northern Chiloe, and more than 80 on two dates in the far south. Note that the species name has been modified from *melancoryphus* to *melancorypha*.

Coscoroba Swan *Coscoroba coscoroba*: A pair on a lake near Leyda in central Chile, and then seen commonly in the south with around 80 one morning in Tierra del Fuego.

Andean Goose *Chloephaga melanoptera*: 100 or more daily at Lauca National Park.

Upland Goose *Chloephaga picta*: Four in the Maule Valley, and then seen in numbers of between 40 and 600 at nine areas visited in the far south.

Ashy-headed Goose *Chloephaga poliocephala*: Four scoped at the Seno Otway penguin colony.

Ruddy-headed Goose *Chloephaga rubidiceps*: Three birds seen east of Punta Arenas, flew off rather quickly when our driver unfortunately slammed the bus door. Then, after an extended journey in Tierra del Fuego, we finally found one bird among a large flock of Upland Geese.

Torrent Duck *Merganetta armata*: A superb pair not far out of Putre put on a great show; here referable to subspecies *leucogenys* of the "turneri" form now treated as a colour morph.

Flying Steamer-Duck *Tachyeres patachonicus*: Four females at Tres Puentes reservoir, nine on a lake out of Porvenir, and twenty or more on around the north-western coast of Tierra de Fuego.

Flightless Steamer-Duck (Fuegian S-D) *Tachyeres pteneres*: Six on the shore south of Punta Arenas, and two and four north of town on different dates.

[Unnamed steamer-duck species *Tachyeres spp.*: Some forty-three birds scoped on Chiloe Island. Birds in and around Chiloe Island were previously considered to represent the Flightless Steamer-Duck, but were recently shown to differ notably by bill colour and plumage, in addition to being widely allopatric; the two forms are separated by several thousand kms.! Chilean ornithologists are working on the taxonomy of this overlooked form.]

Crested Duck *Lophonetta specularioides*: Two at El Yeso, common at Lauca National Park (of the orange-eyed race *alticola*), and abundant in the far south. Formerly placed in the genus *Anas* but recent authors unanimously resurrect the monotypic genus *Lophonetta* for this unusual duck.

Spectacled Duck *Specularus specularis*: At first, three were seen in flight along the Maule river by C-G. *et al.* in an anxious moment which saw running Birdquesters (some scoring and others dipping) before we all caught up with great scope views of a pair at the nearby Lago Colbún less than an hour later. Finally, Ilona found another three in Torres del Paine National Park. An outstanding and rather scarce duck, endemic to Patagonia. Even Stephen reckoned that a pair for your garden pond might not be available on the UK market.

Chiloe Wigeon (Southern W) *Anas sibilatrix*: Regular encounters throughout the lowlands.

Speckled Teal *Anas flavirostris*: Common at Lauca National Park where referable to the altiplano race *oxyptera*, while the nominate race was seen daily from Chiloe southwards. Two species may be involved and they actually overlap with no sign of interbreeding in north-west Argentina. Note that birds from the Andes of Venezuela, Colombia and Ecuador are now split off as a separate species, the Andean Teal *A. andium*.

Yellow-billed Pintail *Anas georgica*: Regular encounters throughout.

Silver Teal *Anas versicolor*: One at the Tres Puentes reservoir, Punta Arenas thanks to Ilona; a very scarce species in Chile.

Puna Teal *Anas puna*: 400 or more on Lago Chungara, Lauca National Park, and a singleton near Parinacota.

Cinnamon Teal *Anas cyanoptera*: Single males were seen at Lauca (subspecies *orinomus*) and south of Punta Arenas (nominate race).

Red Shoveler *Anas platalea*: Common in the central lowlands, around Punta Arenas and on Tierra del Fuego. A female at the Lluta estuary was completely out of range.

Black-headed Duck *Heteronetta atricapilla*: A total of six scoped at Laguna El Peral. The World's only brood parasitic duck, laying its eggs in the nests of other duck, coots and rails etc.

Andean [Ruddy] Duck *Oxyura [jamaicensis] ferruginea*: 250 or more at Lauca National Park, and two sightings of three in and near Torres del Paine National Park.

Lake Duck (Argentine Ruddy-Duck) *Oxyura vittata*: Thirty on a lake near Leyda and a similar number at laguna El Peral.

#### ODONTOPHORIDAE

California Quail *Callipepla californica*: Covies of 25 in the El Yeso valley and another eight near Vilches.

#### PODICIPEDIDAE

White-tufted Grebe *Rollandia rolland*: Small numbers throughout much of the tour, with around 50 at Laguna El Peral.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*: One at Puyehue National Park was our only record.

Great Grebe *Podiceps major*: Around 40 on a lake near Leyda, one at San Antonio and three at Arica represent the nominate race, whereas two in the Maule Valley and four singletons in the far south refer to the large dark Patagonian race *navasi*. Sometimes now placed in the genus *Podiceps*.

Silvery Grebe *Podiceps occipitalis*: Common at Lauca with over 1000 on Lago Chungara; here representing the subspecies *juninensis*. Eight at Punta Arenas and one at Torres del Paine referred to the nominate *occipitalis*. Two species are likely to be involved.

## PHOENICOPTERIDAE

Chilean Flamingo *Phoenicopterus chilensis*: Around 200 seen daily at Lauca National Park and regular encounters in the far south including a flock of 230 between Torres del Paine and Punta Arenas. Unlikely as it may seem, flamingos have recently been shown to be the closest relatives to grebes.

Andean Flamingo *Phoenicoparrus andinus*: Counts of 34 and 35 on consecutive days in Lauca National Park.

Puna Flamingo (James' F) *Phoenicoparrus jamesi*: An adult at Lauca National Park seen on both days. Named after Berkeley James, a British businessman.

## SPHENISCIDAE

Humboldt Penguin *Spheniscus humboldti*: Six on our Quintero pelagic, around 45 nesting at Cachagua and some 45 off Iquique. A Humboldt current endemic.

Magellanic Penguin *Spheniscus magellanicus*: Around 20 from the Chiloe ferry, 120 at the Seno Otway colony, ten or more crossing to Tierra del Fuego and over 200 seen from the ferry back to Punta Arenas.

## DIOMEDEIDAE

[Northern] Royal Albatross *Diomedea [epomophora] sanfordi*: At least two adults provided thrilling views on our first pelagic. Distinguished from the so-called "Southern Royal Albatross" by its unmarked, uniform black upperwings. In one recent DNA study, the results revealed just a 0.0009% nucleotide gap between the Northern and Southern Royal Albatrosses which represents the smallest genetic divergence among potential albatross splits.

Black-browed Albatross *Thalassarche melanophris*: Small numbers around Masatierra, Juan Fernández, six or more off Quintero, one from the Chiloe ferry, three from shore south of Punta Arenas and around 60 during the Porvenir-Punta Arenas ferry crossing. The smaller species of albatross, also known as mollymawks, have been separated into the genus *Thalassarche*, leaving the great albatrosses (Royal and Wandering) in the genus *Diomedea* and the sooty albatrosses in the genus *Phoebetria*.

Buller's Albatross *Thalassarche bulleri*: A superb adult came in to chum at very close range off Masatierra.

Salvin's Albatross *Thalassarche salvini*: Around 30 seen on the central Chilean pelagic and three on the northern pelagic. Three species are now accepted in the *cauta* complex based upon various studies.

## PROCELLARIIDAE

Southern Giant-Petrel (Antarctic G-P, Common G-P) *Macronectes giganteus*: Two on the Quintero pelagic, three from shore south of Punta Arenas, one on the northern Tierra del Fuego ferry crossing and at least 20 from the Porvenir-Punta Arenas ferry. Eleven of the giant-petrels we saw around Masatierra, Juan Fernández, were not identified to species.

Northern Giant-Petrel (Hall's G-P) *Macronectes halli*: One en route between San Juan Bautista and the airstrip, Masatierra, three on the Quintero pelagic and one on the Iquique pelagic.

Masatierra Petrel (De Filippi's P) *Pterodroma defilippiana*: Thousands (possibly many thousand) streamed past the headland late afternoon on our first day on Masatierra, although there were none the following afternoon.

Kermadec Petrel *Pterodroma neglecta*: Amazingly we saw our first, a pale morph, from San Juan Bautista's plaza as it flew over town. Our Juan Fernandez pelagic also produced both a pale and dark morph bird.

Juan Fernandez Petrel *Pterodroma externa*: Close-up views of 30 or more almost throughout our pelagic trip off Robinson Crusoe was a unique experience.

White-chinned Petrel *Procellaria aequinoctialis*: Three off Quintero and two or more off Iquique.

Westland Petrel (W Black P) *Procellaria westlandica*: Six or more off Quintero.

- Buller's Shearwater *Puffinus bulleri*: At least seven on the Iquique pelagic mostly from about five miles out, where the species only occurs in summer.
- Sooty Shearwater *Puffinus griseus*: 30+ off Quintero and a similar number off Iquique while the only large numbers were encountered on the Chiloe ferry crossings with over 1000, and another two were seen in the Magellan Straits. These numbers vary greatly depending on the time of year. Recent DNA work indicates that Sooty, Great and Pink-footed Shearwaters may warrant resurrection in the former genus *Ardenna*.
- Pink-footed Shearwater *Puffinus creatopus*: 50 and 150+ recorded at the Juan Fernández on successive days, where the species breeds. Also 70 or more recorded off Quintero, around 25 off Iquique and 30 or more from the Chiloe ferry.

#### HYDROBATIDAE

- White-bellied Storm-Petrel *Fregetta grallaria*: Repeated close-ups of three or more birds during our pelagic off Masatierra in the Juan Fernández.
- Wilson's Storm-Petrel *Oceanites oceanicus*: 50 or more off Quintero, 12 or more off Iquique and five (NL) identified from the Porvenir-Punta Arenas pelagic.
- Elliot's Storm-Petrel (White-vented S-P) *Oceanites gracilis*: 15 or more recorded on the Iquique pelagic. Additionally photographic evidence from Pat shows that at least one was present on our Quintero pelagic.

#### PELECANOIDIDAE

- Peruvian Diving-Petrel *Pelecanoides garnotii*: Around 15 off Quintero and 50 or so off Iquique was a high number for this threatened species and Humboldt current endemic.
- Magellanic Diving-Petrel *Pelecanoides magellani*: Nine diving-petrels from the Chiloe ferry, four from shore south of Punta Arenas, a single on the Bahia Azul ferry and around 15 on the ferry back to Punta Arenas were mostly identified as *Pelecanoides* sp., among which single Magellanic Diving-Petrels were identified near Chiloe (NL), Bahia Azul (NL) and en route to Porvenir.

#### PELECANIDAE

- Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*: 17 birds were identified on a pier in Arica among some 30 Peruvian Pelicans; a recent addition to the Chile list and either previously overlooked or expanding southwards.
- Peruvian Pelican *Pelecanus thagus*: Ubiquitous at all coast sites visited as far south as Chiloe island, with some seen far offshore during pelagics; another Humboldt current endemic.

#### SULIDAE

- Blue-footed Booby *Sula nebouxii*: A juvenile, confirmed by photographic evidence, off Iquique was a new bird for the tour.
- Peruvian Booby *Sula variegata*: Common on central and northern coasts, and one seen from the Chiloe ferry; a Humboldt current endemic.

#### PHALACROCORACIDAE

- Neotropic Cormorant (Olivaceous C) *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*: Common and widespread. As noted since the 2004 tour, the species appears to have become established in the altiplano with four observed up to 4650 metres in Lauca National Park.
- Red-legged Cormorant *Phalacrocorax gaimardi*: Around 20 at San Antonio, 40 out of Iquique and three from the Chiloe ferry. A superb Patagonian endemic.
- Rock Cormorant (R Shag) *Phalacrocorax magellanicus*: Four scoped from shore on Chiloe island, over 1000 seen south of Punta Arenas and commonly seen in the Magellan straits and Tierra del Fuego.
- Guanay Cormorant (G Shag) *Phalacrocorax bougainvillii*: One seen off Quintero, around 150 off Iquique and in the harbour, and one at Arica.

Imperial Cormorant (I Shag) *Phalacrocorax atriceps*: Around 100 from the Chiloe ferry and then seen commonly in the far south.

#### ARDEIDAE

Stripe-backed Bittern *Ixobrychus involucris*: Various views, mostly in flight, of a bird at Lampa marshes. The same or another bird was seen by Tommy.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: Regular encounters, mostly at coastal sites south to Puerto Montt.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: 300 at Laguna El Peral and two at Lampa. This species only colonised the New World from Africa in the 1960s.

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi*: Single birds seen at Lampa, Leyda, Santa Domingo and between Punta Arenas and Torres del Paine.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*: Scattered records through much of the tour.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*: Slightly more widespread and numerous than the previous species.

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*: An immature at the Lluta estuary.

#### THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Puna Ibis *Plegadis ridgwayi*: Eleven and five on two visits to Lauca National Park.

Black-faced Ibis *Theristicus melanopis*: Ubiquitous in the lake district and extreme south with a few also seen in the Maule Valley, their presence often revealed by far-carrying trumpeting calls, and referable to the nominate race.

#### CATHARTIDAE

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*: Seen mostly in small numbers, although abundant around Arica. Unusually absent from the far south.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*: Small numbers in central Chile and over 100 in the lake district.

Andean Condor *Vultur gryphus*: Single birds at El Yeso and Lauca, then 29 at a carcass close to Torres del Paine where another two were seen, and finally five more in the Sierra Baguales. Impressive as ever.

#### ACCIPITRIDAE

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*: One at Lampa was our only record.

Cinereous Harrier *Circus cinereus*: A total of twelve seen at Torres del Paine, Pali Aike and in Tierra del Fuego.

Chilean Hawk *Accipiter chilensis*: A close fly-by near La Campana National Park.

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*: One near La Campana, an adult in the Lluta valley, four in Torres de Paine and another on the drive back to Punta Arenas.

Harris's Hawk (Bay-winged H) *Parabuteo unicinctus*: An adult at Lampa on our first visit, and two seen near La Campana National Park.

Variable Hawk (Red-backed H) *Buteo polyosoma*: Nine sightings of singles and pairs in central and northern Chile, and a male on Tierra del Fuego.

#### FALCONIDAE

Southern Caracara (S Crested-Caracara) *Caracara plancus*: Small numbers in the lake district, and then seen daily in numbers in the far south. Previously placed in the genus *Polyborus* but, due to a mangled specimen, this species has been switched to the genus *Caracara*.

Chimango Caracara *Milvago chimango*: Common and widespread in central and southern Chile, mostly referable to the widespread pale brown nominate race, but some very dark brown birds of the subspecies *temucoensis* were also seen in the more densely forested areas of the lake district.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*: Numerous sightings throughout were mostly referable to the widespread subspecies *cinnamominus*, although those in the far north refer to *peruvianus*.

Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis*: Ten different sightings may be a record for this tour; one at Leyda, three records in the far north (of the Andean race *pichincha*) and then seen daily in the far south.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus*: One seen by C-G on the Iquique pelagic, a juvenile at the Lluta river mouth and an adult at Lauca National Park.

#### RALLIDAE

Austral Rail *Rallus antarcticus*: Only recently re-discovered in Argentina, and subsequently in Chile at Torres del Paine National Park. We were very lucky with everyone obtaining scope views of a bird coming repeatedly into a rush tunnel, where one or more others were also heard.

Black Rail (B Crake) *Laterallus jamaicensis*: Almost an enigma until the voice of this, the *salinasi* form was recently recorded remarkably close to Santiago. Several members of the group obtained brief views of three adults (twice in flight) and of three chicks, while another two adults could be heard singing. Judging from the voice, *salinasi* may represent a distinct species from N. American birds.

Plumbeous Rail *Pardirallus sanguinolentus*: Single birds at Lampa on different dates and five entertaining birds at Laguna El Peral refer to subspecies *landbecki*, while two heard in the Lluta valley refer to subspecies *simonsi*.

Common Moorhen (C Gallinule) *Gallinula chloropus*: Singles at Lampa and Laguna El Peral, one and then two at the Lluta river mouth. Another at the Tres Puentes reservoir, Punta Arenas was completely out of range.

Red-gartered Coot *Fulica armillata*: The commonest coot in central and southern Chile. Readily identified by the dark red band dividing the yellow bill and frontal shield.

Red-fronted Coot *Fulica rufifrons*: Six at Laguna El Peral and one at Lampa, characterised by its dark red mitre-shaped frontal shield.

Giant Coot *Fulica gigantea*: Around 25 and then 400 or more at Lauca National Park; an impressive species with its tricoloured bill and elevated orbital rims.

Andean Coot (Slate-coloured C) *Fulica ardesiaca*: Two at the Lluta river mouth were clearly out of range, although this is not the first time we have recorded it there. 100 or more were observed in their typical habitat in Lauca National Park.

White-winged Coot *Fulica leucoptera*: 20 at Leyda, 100 or more at Laguna El Peral, four at Tres Puentes and two at Pali Aike; readily identified by its rounded yellow or orange frontal shield.

#### CHARADRIIDAE

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*: Common and ubiquitous in central Chile and the lake district (nominate *chilensis*) and in the far south (subspecies *fretensis*). It has been suggested that these could be distinct from the subspecies *cayennensis* and *lampronotus* of the rest of South America although they intergrade in Argentina.

Andean Lapwing *Vanellus resplendens*: Two lone birds at Lauca National Park.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*: A flock of 17 near on the shore at the Lluta river mouth.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*: Five at the Lluta estuary on two dates; a regular site for this boreal migrant.

Snowy Plover (Kentish P) *Charadrius alexandrinus*: Two at the Lluta estuary.

Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris*: Two at the Maipo river mouth; a scarce species in Chile.

Puna Plover *Charadrius alticola*: We finally connected with a single bird after a walk at over 4000 metres altitude in Lauca National Park.

Two-banded Plover *Charadrius falklandicus*: 17 at the Seno Otway penguin colony found by C-G, and three out of Porvenir.

Rufous-chested Dotterel (R-c Plover) *Charadrius modestus*: Eight near Pali Aike and two near Porvenir.

Diademed Sandpiper-Plover *Phegornis mitchellii*: Outstanding walk-away views of this magical wader at El Yeso; not surprisingly voted bird of the tour. Seen on every Birdquest Chile tour, yet only known only from a handful of sites in the southern Andes.

Tawny-throated Dotterel *Oreopholus ruficollis*: Amazing numbers with 75 or more seen along the Pali Aike road.

#### HAEMATOPODIDAE

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus*: Regular encounters to as far south as Chiloe.

Blackish Oystercatcher *Haematopus ater*: Single birds at Quintero, Chalcagua and Caulín, and a pair at Arica.

Magellanic Oystercatcher *Haematopus leucopodus*: 30 or more south of Punta Arena and two to the north of town, while a total of ten were observed near Porvenir.

#### RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt (White-backed Stilt) *Himantopus melanurus*: Ten on a lake near Leyda and three in the Maipo estuary.

Andean Avocet *Recurvirostra andina*: One and then nine on different visits to Lauca National Park; a Puna specialty and the largest species of avocet.

#### BURHINIDAE

Peruvian Thick-knee *Burhinus superciliaris*: Superb looks at a nesting pair and another six in the Lluta Valley on different dates.

#### PLUVIANELLIDAE

Magellanic Plover *Pluvianellus socialis*: After a fair walk, Ilona got us onto a first bird and we eventually got close views of at least five of these grey and white beauties with bright pink legs, out of Porvenir. We even observed some chest-pumping displays. Afforded its own family on account of various anomalous features e.g. the only shorebird with a crop and its habit of regurgitating food to the young; probably not even a wader!

#### SCOLOPACIDAE

South American Snipe (Magellanic S) *Gallinago paraguaiiae*: One at El Yeso, three on Chiloe and four lone birds in the far south; all referable to subspecies *magellanica* a likely split.

Hudsonian Godwit *Limosa haemastica*: Two scoped on Chiloe.

Whimbrel (Hudsonian W) *Numenius phaeopus*: Encountered mostly alone or in small numbers, although 200 or more were seen on Chiloe. These are wintering birds from Alaska and northern Canada, referable to subspecies *hudsonicus*.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*: One and then two at the Lluta river mouth on different dates. Note that the species name has been changed from *macularia* to *macularius*.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*: Five records involving nine birds from Arica to the Magellan Straits.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*: Eight records involving 17 birds throughout the country.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: Six or more at Concón.

Surfbird *Aphriza virgata*: 51 scoped at Concón and around 35 at Arica.

Sanderling *Calidris alba*: One at the Lluta river mouth.

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*: Four at the Maipo estuary, and then commonly seen in the far south.

Baird's Sandpiper *Calidris bairdii*: Numerous encounters.

Wilson's Phalarope *Phalaropus tricolor*: Six at the Tres Puentes reserve and ten en route to Torres del Paine.

[Phalarope species *Phalaropus* sp.: One on the Iquique pelagic could have been either Red-necked or Red (Grey) Phalarope, but we were just not close enough.]

## THINOCORIDAE

Grey-breasted Seedsnipe *Thinocorus orbignyianus*: Eleven or more with several close-ups at El Yeso, and then three at Lauca. Detailed studies have shown that seedsnipes are probably the closest living relatives of the enigmatic Plains-Wanderer *Pedionomus torquatus* of Australia.

Least Seedsnipe *Thinocorus rumicivorus*: Four in the Sierra Baguales and 15 seen around Porvenir.

## STERCORARIIDAE

Chilean Skua *Catharacta chilensis*: Two on the central Chile pelagic and three or more on the northern pelagic, one seen by Ed at the Lluta river mouth, another by C-G from the Chiloe ferry, two and three on different dates out of Punta Arenas, eight crossing to Tierra del Fuego, and more than 100 on the return ferry.

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus*: One (NL) seen from Concón, and at least eight on the Iquique pelagic.

Long-tailed Jaeger (L-t Skua) *Stercorarius longicaudus*: At least one on the Iquique pelagic, which was re-confirmed by Simon's photograph.

## LARIDAE

Dolphin Gull *Leucophaeus scoresbii*: Small numbers of this wonderful gull around Punta Arenas and at least 200 near Porvenir.

Band-tailed Gull (Belcher's G) *Larus belcheri*: 15 or more at Iquique and at least 30 and 40 on two dates at the Lluta river mouth.

Grey Gull *Larus modestus*: A superb enigmatic gull with soft grey plumage and a white head in its breeding plumage, observed in large numbers at all coastal sites visited in central and northern Chile, with a maximum of 4000+ off Iquique.

Kelp Gull *Larus dominicanus*: Common at all coastal sites.

Brown-hooded Gull *Larus maculipennis*: Numerous encounters of the white winged form now recognised as a separate race, *glaucodes*. This and the following species are sometimes now placed in the resurrected genus *Chroicocephalus*.

Andean Gull *Larus serranus*: Four and 15 or more on two visits to Lauca National Park.

Franklin's Gull *Larus pipixcan*: Common to abundant in central and northern Chile, with 50,000 going to roost near Concón.

Sabine's Gull *Xema sabini*: An adult observed on the ferry crossing to Chiloe Island.

Swallow-tailed Gull *Creagrus furcatus*: Excellent views of seven on the sea about 25 miles off Iquique. The flock comprised two hooded breeding adults, five non-breeding adults and two first year birds.

Sooty Tern *Onychoprion fuscatus*: Two pairs and a fifth bird inspected our boat while chumming off Masatierra, where the species is considered a vagrant.

Inca Tern *Larosterna inca*: Common in central and northern Chile with a maximum of over 100 at Iquique. Superb!

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: A non-breeding adult scoped at the Maipo river mouth.

South American Tern *Sterna hirundinacea*: One at the Maipo river mouth, 200 or more from the Chiloe ferry crossings, and then seen abundantly in the far south.

Elegant Tern *Thalasseus elegans*: Small numbers in central Chile, around 150 off Iquique, 300 and 40 at the Lluta river mouth on different dates, and four (NL) from the Chiloe ferry. Recent genetic studies show that this species and several other large crested terns (including Royal and Sandwich Tern) should be returned to the genus *Thalasseus*.

## RHYNCHOPIDAE

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*: 300 or more at the Maipo river mouth and a similar number near Concón, then seven seen at Iquique, three and one at the Lluta river mouth on different dates, and around 120 at Caulín on Chiloe Island. All were referable to the migratory race *cinerascens* with grey wing-linings, which may possibly be a distinct species from other South American forms which are resident and have white wing-linings.

## COLUMBIDAE

Picui Ground-Dove *Columbina picui*: Two at Lampa, three at Rocas de Santa Domingo and two near Olmue.

Croaking Ground-Dove *Columbina cruziana*: One at Chaca and four seen on different dates in the Lluta valley.

Bare-faced Ground-Dove *Metriopelia ceciliae*: Common around Putre with over 60 seen one day.

Black-winged Ground-Dove *Metriopelia melanoptera*: Four in a field in the El Yeso valley was our only record.

Feral Pigeon (Rock Dove, R Pigeon) *Columba livia*: The less said the better.

Spot-winged Pigeon *Patagioenas maculosa*: One found by Stephen in a *Eucalyptus* in Putre; first discovered in Putre (and Chile !) in 2001 and referable to the altiplano race *albipennis*.

Chilean Pigeon *Patagioenas araucana*: Small numbers of this smart pigeon at La Campana, Vilches, the Maule valley, and Puyehue National Park. Now fully recovered after a decline due to Newcastle's disease (avian pneumonic encephalitis) and avian pox in the mid 1950s when the species came close to extinction.

Pacific Dove (West Peruvian D) *Zenaida meloda*: A pair were first seen at the entrance to our Iquique hotel, then commonly in all oasis strips around Arica. Recently considered a distinct species from White-winged Dove *Z. asiatica* of southern USA, Central America and the Greater Antilles from which it differs by voice and plumage.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata*: Widespread and ubiquitous.

## PSITTACIDAE

Burrowing Parrot *Cyanoliseus patagonus*: 30 or more, with several scope views out of Talca. An endemic Chilean subspecies (*byroni*) which was once thought to be close to extinction.

Austral Parakeet *Enicognathus ferrugineus*: Observed in flocks of 5-15 at Vilches, the Maule valley, Puyehue and Torres del Paine.

Slender-billed Parakeet *Enicognathus leptorhynchus*: Flocks of twelve and four on Chiloe Island. A poorly known Chilean endemic often persecuted due to its damage of orchards and crops.

Mountain Parakeet *Psilopsiagon aurifrons*: Two seen by Angie at El Yeso where most of us only heard the birds, then 18 seen at Putre.

## STRIGIDAE

Magellanic Horned Owl *Bubo [virginianus] magellanicus*: Outstanding close-ups of one on a fence post in northern Tierra del Fuego. C-G, Tommy and Ilona saw another further along the road.

Rufous-legged Owl *Strix rufipes*: This Patagonian forest endemic can be a tricky species to see well, but for our sixth tour in a row, one of our regular stake-outs came up trumps. Patience and positioning were key in our securing superb close-up floodlight views, while another two birds were heard. Note that the Chaco Owl *Strix chacoensis* of dry chaco woodlands in south-east Bolivia, western Paraguay and western Argentina has been split from Rufous-legged Owl and differs by plumage, voice and habitat niche.

Austral Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium nanum*: First seen by C-G and a few others outside his room at Olmue, was not responsive thereafter, although one located in the grounds of our Puyehue hotel performed nicely for everyone interested.

Peruvian Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium peruanum*: (H) Only heard at Putre despite much effort.

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia*: Three picked up by C-G in the Lluta valley, referable to subspecies *nanodes*.  
Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*: One perched at Lampa, and another seen en route from Punta Arenas to Torres del Paine.

#### CAPRIMULGIDAE

Band-winged Nightjar *Caprimulgus longirostris*: Superb studies of a male high in the El Yeso valley during the day was a lucky find.

#### APODIDAE

Andean Swift *Aeronautes andecolus*: Common in all desert valleys around Arica with one recorded at over 3600 m. near Putre; all referable to subspecies *parvulus*.

#### TROCHILIDAE

Sparkling Violetear *Colibri coruscans*: One located in a *Eucalyptus* stand at Putre; a scarce species in Chile where first recorded in 1985.

Green-backed Firecrown *Sephanoides sephaniodes*: Up to 15 encounters daily on Masatierra, around eight seen at Vilches, six on Chiloe Island and six daily at Puyehue National Park.

Juan Fernandez Firecrown *Sephanoides fernandensis*: Two males and four females one day, and then two males and another female the following day on Masatierra, including some scope views in between their intensive territorial activity. An outstanding and seldom seen hummingbird!

Andean Hillstar *Oreotrochilus estella*: Five females nesting under the eaves of our hotel in Putre, around 25 or more males and females seen around the town and two more at the *Polylepis* forest; all referable to the nominate race.

White-sided Hillstar *Oreotrochilus leucopleurus*: A pair at El Yeso was our only sighting of this local species which can be tricky.

Giant Hummingbird *Patagona gigas*: For the uninitiated seeing a Giant Hummingbird for the first time can come as quite a shock by its thrush-like size. We recorded a total of ten birds (of the nominate race) in and around La Campana National Park over two days, and two or more at Putre; referable to subspecies *peruviana*.

Chilean Woodstar *Eulidia yarrellii*: I'm not sure if the day of reckoning is coming closer with this species, since many report it to be ever scarcer, and it has recently been awarded IUCN Endangered status, while I suspect that the population figure of 1200 individuals is highly exaggerated. We first found a female at a regular stake-out south of Arica, thanks to Ilona's sharp eye. With some time to spare after our Lauca experience, we also eventually located a pair in the Azapa valley obtaining eyeball scope views of this gem. A recent re-examination of Peruvian records shows that none are genuine, meaning that this hummingbird has one of the smallest ranges in the family.

Oasis Hummingbird *Rhodopsis vesper*: Single birds at Putre and in the Azapa valley.

Peruvian Sheartail *Thaumastura cora*: A pair of these delightful hummingbirds first found well south of Arica, and then four more allowed various scope views in the Azapa Valley. Not recorded in Chile until 1971 and may be competing with Chilean Woodstar.

#### PICIDAE

Striped Woodpecker *Veniliornis lignarius*: A male at La Campana, two at Vilches and another in the Maule valley. Note that until recently the species was placed in the genus *Picoides*.

Chilean Flicker *Colaptes pitius*: Regular encounters of this Patagonian endemic in small numbers in central and southern Chile.

Andean Flicker *Colaptes rupicola*: At least nine recorded on two visits to Lauca National Park; this large flicker has a notably long bill which is used for digging.

## FURNARIIDAE

- Common Miner *Geositta cunicularia*: Four along the maze of internal dirt roads at Pali Aike, referable to the nominate race.
- Short-billed Miner *Geositta antarctica*: One en route to Torres del Paine, then six seen near Pali Aike and up to five daily on Tierra del Fuego.
- Greyish Miner *Geositta maritima*: A group effort found us two birds after half an hour's walk in one of the driest places on the planet; indeed this is the only species of bird which occurs in the exact place that we looked.
- Puna Miner *Geositta punensis*: Six or more on our first visit to Lauca and then 20 or more on a second visit; a Puna endemic.
- Rufus-banded Miner *Geositta rufipennis*: Six seen high in the El Yeso valley were referable to the local race *fasciolata* which certainly promises to be a distinct species from more wide-ranging taxa in both Chile and Argentina.
- Straight-billed Earthcreeper *Ochetorhynchus ruficaudus*: One out of Putre and another in Lauca National Park, referable to the subspecies *montanus*. Until recently placed in the genus *Upucerthia*, now reserved for the true earthcreepers (see below) with long decurved bills.
- Crag Chilia *Ochetorhynchus melanura*: Extremely satisfying views of this interesting, and often difficult to see, rock-loving furnariid in the Cordillera de la Costa, endemic to central Chile. Until recently it was placed in the monotypic genus *Chilia*., although genetic studies link it with the Rock and Straight-billed Earthcreepers.
- Scale-throated Earthcreeper *Upucerthia dumetaria*: Three in Torres del Paine National Park were referable to the migratory nominate race.
- White-throated Earthcreeper *Upucerthia albigula*: After some effort, we eventually obtained good views of one bird at Putre.
- Plain-breasted Earthcreeper *Upucerthia jelskii*: Five or more around Putre; Konstanty Jelski was a Polish zoologist and former curator of the Lima museum.
- Bar-winged Cinclodes *Cinclodes fuscus*: An early austral migrant at Lampa and up to eight seen daily in the far south were referable to the nominate race. In contrast, two at Putre, and 10 and 15 or more daily at Lauca National Park refer to the rather different *albiventer* form.
- Grey-flanked Cinclodes (Oustalet's C) *Cinclodes oustaleti*: Eight or more at El Yeso were referable to the nominate race.
- Dark-bellied Cinclodes *Cinclodes patagonicus*: Small numbers of this large cinclodes were encountered in Patagonian forest and shores in the lake district with as many as twelve on northern Chiloe Island and seven at Senom Otway.
- Chilean Seaside Cinclodes *Cinclodes nigrofumosus*: Four of these large endemic, coastal rock-loving cinclodes were enjoyed in central Chile.
- White-winged Cinclodes *Cinclodes atacamensis*: One out of Putre and five during two visits to Lauca National Park.
- Wren-like Rushbird *Phleocryptes melanops*: Six or more on two different visits to the Lampa marshes and one near the mouth of the Maipo river.
- Thorn-tailed Rayadito *Aphrastura spinicauda*: Clearly one of the commonest endemic birds of the Patagonian forest with over 25 seen one afternoon at Vilches for example, but more importantly what an impressive species with its stunning plumage and curious behaviour.
- Plain-mantled Tit-Spintail *Leptasthenura aegithaloides*: A total of seven observed around La Campana, El Yeso and Vilches were referable to the nominate race, whereas three in Lauca National Park refer to the subspecies *berlepschi* which may merit species status.
- Streaked Tit-Spintail *Leptasthenura striata*: Two and three around Putre and four more at the *Polylepis* forest.
- Des Murs' Wiretail *Sylviorthorhynchus desmursii*: What a delightful and at the same time outrageous bird ! We had repeated views of a pair and one the following day in Puyehue National Park. One of the few passerines with just six tail feathers, although just two of these are usually visible.

- Canyon Canastero *Asthenes pudibunda*: Three studied at Putre, apparently referable to the subspecies *grisior*. A species which was long overlooked in Chile until the late 1990's.
- Cordilleran Canastero *Asthenes modesta*: Four at El Yeso, one near Putre, and two and others heard in Lauca National Park.
- Austral Canastero *Asthenes anthoides*: Four in Torres del Paine National Park, one on the Pali Aike road, and one and two heard out of Porvenir. Fears that the species was seriously threatened towards the end of the last century, now prove unfounded.
- Sharp-billed Canastero (Lesser C) *Asthenes pyrrholeuca*: Two high in the Yeso valley (nominate race) and one in Torres del Paine National Park (subspecies *pallida*).
- Dusky-tailed Canastero *Asthenes humicola*: Six seen in and around La Campana National Park. Usually considered endemic to Chile, although there is a historical specimen from Argentina.
- Dark-winged Canastero *Asthenes [dorbignyi] arequipae*: Eleven seen around Putre and another three at the *Polylepis* forest.
- White-throated Treerunner *Pygarrhichas albogularis*: Two at La Campana and two at Vilches where others were heard. An unusual furnariid endemic to Patagonian forests, but known to be an ancestor of barbtails and treerunners which radiated into subtropical forest.

#### RHYNOCRYPTIDAE

- Chestnut-throated Huet-huet *Pterotochos castaneus*: Despite its size of around 25 cm., what a tough bird to see, and we certainly had to work for this skulker. We managed to see three birds of three vocalizing pairs, with views ranging from good to brief. Luckily for Stephen we also had views of another in the Maule valley the next day. This Patagonian endemic is restricted to a small area in southern-central Chile and two forest patches in adjacent Argentina.
- Black-throated Huet-huet *Pterotochos tarnii*: We lucked into our first bird at Puyehue while searching for Ochre-flanked Tapaculo and most obtained good views, while another three were seen the following day. Usually easier to see than its rarer cousin, and much more widespread in southern Chile and Argentina.
- Moustached Turca *Pterotochos megapodius*: Yet another giant tapaculo, and endemic to central Chile. Brief views of one at La Campana where the species was common by voice, then three were seen at El Yeso with some scope views. The name *megapodius* means "large footed" and like other members of the genus it scrapes the ground with its claws to expose large insect prey items.
- White-throated Tapaculo *Scelorchilus albicollis*: This skulker gave us a merry dance and it took several hours on different days around La Campana before most everyone obtained views of up to three birds. Another large tapaculo endemic to central Chile, and typically one of the hardest to see.
- Chucao Tapaculo *Scelorchilus rubecula*: This amazing orange tapaculo with its distinctive explosive voice was obviously common in its habitat. We struggled at first, but eventually everyone had many views of this gorgeous skulker with two seen and four heard at Vilches, a couple heard on Chiloe, and four seen, sixteen heard at Puyehue.
- Ochre-flanked Tapaculo *Eugralla paradoxa*: Two gave many views at Puyehue deep inside the bamboo. Quite an unusual tapaculo in a monotypic genus due to its broad-based conical bill with a small frontal shield, and yet another Patagonian forest endemic.
- Magellanic Tapaculo *Scytalopus magellanicus*: One was eventually seen at Puyehue where the species was common by voice. A widespread Patagonian endemic.
- Dusky Tapaculo *Scytalopus fuscus*: Bagged at the first opportunity near La Campana while searching for Crag Chilia, while three were also heard in the Maule valley. Endemic to central Chile.

## TYRANNIDAE

- White-crested Elaenia *Elaenia albiceps*: One of the commonest birds in central Chile and the Patagonian forest (subspecies *chilensis*), while eight or more seen in the Lluta valley (subspecies *modesta*) differing by voice and plumage seem like a strong candidate for an armchair tick.
- Pied-crested Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes reguloides*: Two of these striking tit-tyrants seen south of Arica, with others heard.
- Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes flavirostris*: Four at Putre refer to the subspecies *arequipae*.
- Tufted Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes parulus*: Regular encounters in central Chile, one at Puyehue and another near Pali Aike.
- Juan Fernandez Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes fernandezianus*: Once we reached the higher wind-weathered forest of the Masatierra volcano, these little guys were very obliging and we managed to see 15 over two days. A little known and delightful island endemic.
- [Unnamed doradito species *Pseudocolopteryx* sp.: One near the Maipo river mouth performed extremely well. Until recently, this form was mistaken for the somewhat smaller and very similar Warbling Doradito *P. flaviventris* which differs chiefly by voice and range.]
- Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant *Tachuris rubrigastra*: Three at the Maipo estuary and three performing well at Laguna El Peral. Always a pleasure to see this stunning bird.
- Bran-coloured Flycatcher *Myiophobus fasciatus*: A very obliging pair in the Lluta Valley where referable to subspecies *rufescens*, otherwise known from coastal Peru. A banker future split.
- Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*: At least ten seen in oasis strips around Arica and in the Lluta valley, referable to the subspecies *cocachacrae* which translates to *of the coca fields*.
- Austral Negrito *Lessonia rufa*: Small numbers in central Chile and abundant in the far south with 120 and 150 or more seen on two days.
- Andean Negrito (White-winged N) *Lessonia oreas*: Around 20 seen during two visits to Lauca National Park.
- Spectacled Tyrant *Hymenops perspicillatus*: A male at Lampa and three at the Maipo river. Note that the species name has been modified from *perspicillata* to *perspicillatus*.
- Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola maculirostris*: Single birds at El Yeso and Putre and two at Lauca.
- Puna Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola juninensis*: Eleven or more seen on two visits to Lauca National Park.
- Cinereous Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola cinerea*: Two at El Yeso was our only sighting.
- White-fronted Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola albifrons*: Twelve or more of these extremely large ground-tyrants were studied at Lauca.
- Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola flavinucha*: Only one sighting of a bird at Sierra Baguales readily identified by its creamy skullcap.
- White-browed Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola albilora*: Ten or more at El Yeso.
- Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola capistrata*: Twelve or more at Sierra Baguales were all juveniles, although we caught up with a smart adult soon after landing on northern Tierra del Fuego.
- Black-fronted Ground-Tyrant *Muscisaxicola frontalis*: Two of these striking ground-tyrants at El Yeso; a rather local ground-tyrant of Chile and Argentina.
- Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant *Agriornis montanus*: Two near Putre, including a juvenile with a pale lower mandible, and then four seen over two dates at Lauca; referable to subspecies *intermedia*. Note that the species name has been modified from *montana* to *montanus*.
- White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant *Agriornis albicauda*: Wow ! This is a really tough bird to see anywhere and we had great luck on our second search for the species inside Lauca National Park. Note that the species name was recently changed from *andicola* to *albicauda*.
- Great Shrike-Tyrant *Agriornis lividus*: We lucked into three at El Yeso with great close-ups and then scope views. Can be a tough species to find.

- Fire-eyed Diucon *Xolmis pyrope*: Small numbers at El Yeso, the Maule valley, on Chiloe and at Puyehue.
- Chocolate-vented Tyrant *Neoxolmis rufiventris*: Five of these superb tyrants near Pali Aike. In winter this species migrates north mainly to central Argentina but has reached Brazil on one occasion.
- D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca oenanthoides*: Two and two more heard at the *Polylepis* woodland gave us a tough time but eventually showed well.
- White-browed Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca leucophrys*: Four around Putre.
- Patagonian Tyrant *Colorhamphus parvirostris*: Three of these easily overlooked Patagonian endemics at Vilches.

#### COTINGIDAE

- Rufous-tailed Plantcutter *Phytotoma rara*: A male at El Yeso and a male at Puyehue. The three species of plantcutter have sometimes been placed in their own family (Phytotomidae) but recent anatomical evidence places them firmly among the cotingas, being most closely related to the genus *Ampelion* (eg Red-crested and Chestnut-crested Cotingas).

#### HIRUNDINIDAE

- Chilean Swallow *Tachycineta meyeri*: The abundant white rumped swallow of central and southern Chile.
- Andean Swallow *Orochelidon andecola*: Four near Putre and twenty or more on one visit to Lauca. Note the new genus; has been in *Haplochelidon* *Petrochelidon* and *Hirundo*.
- Blue-and-white Swallow *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*: Numerous encounters throughout the tour, all apparently referable to the subspecies *patagonica*. Until recently placed in the genus *Notiochelidon*.
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: Eight or more in the Lluta valley on two dates, and a juvenile at Lauca.

#### TROGLODYTIDAE

- House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*: Small numbers daily in central Chile, the lake district and far south (subspecies *chilensis*) and four in oasis strips around Arica (subspecies *tecellatus*). The splitting of the South American forms under the name *musculus* "Southern House Wren" has gained little general acceptance by taxonomists and recent authors; Jaramillo *et al.* being one notable exception.
- Grass Wren (Sedge W) *Cistothorus platensis*: Two at Lampa, two at the Seno Otway penguin colony and two at Torres del Paine.

#### TURDIDAE

- Austral Thrush *Turdus falcklandii*: The common to abundant thrush of central and southern Chile, all referable to the continental race *magellanicus*. Also thriving on Masatierra with the expansion of blackberry.
- Chiguanco Thrush *Turdus chiguanco*: Three at Putre over two dates were referable to the nominate race. Note that another race, *anthracinus* occurring locally in central-southern Chile (but not seen on this tour) and commonly in western Argentina and Bolivia is a possible future split for which the name Coal-black Thrush has been suggested.

#### MIMIDAE

- Chilean Mockingbird *Mimus thenca*: Common at most sites visited in central Chile. Recently discovered in Neuquén province, Argentina.
- Patagonian Mockingbird *Mimus patagonicus*: Two eventually found at Sierra Baguales.

## MOTACILLIDAE

Correndera Pipit *Anthus correndera*: Two seen at Lampa on both visits, two at Seno Otway, three at Pali Aike and three out of Porvenir.

## THRAUPIDAE

Blue-and-yellow Tanager *Thraupis bonariensis*: Eight at Putre, referable to the subspecies *darwinii*.

Cinereous Conebill *Conirostrum cinereum*: Many encounters in the oasis strips around Arica and up at Putre, here the subspecies *littorale*.

Tamarugo Conebill *Conirostrum tamarugense*: At least three found in tamarugo trees *Prosopis tamarugo*, almost immediately on arrival at the Pampa de Tamarugal reserve. Can be a difficult species to find elsewhere.

Giant Conebill *Oreomanes fraseri*: Nice looks at three of these smart conebills at the *Polylepis* forest where the species was discovered new for Chile in 1991. Through much of its range, the species is suffering from locals cutting down the *Polylepis* trees for firewood. As C-G rightly noticed, the size of this *Polylepis* woodland is amazing, although there was evidence of fresh cutting.

Black-throated Flowerpiercer *Diglossa brunneiventris*: Five or more at Putre with several close-ups, here the nominate race. Formerly placed in the family Emberizidae, but now generally accepted to belong in Thraupidae.

## CARDINALIDAE

Golden-billed Saltator *Saltator aurantiirostris*: A pair at Putre of the subspecies *albociliaris*. Recent genetic studies suggest that most saltators may actually belong in Thraupidae.

## EMBERIZIDAE

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*: Ubiquitous and seen almost on a daily basis, becoming more common in the far south with more than 150 seen one day; there the migratory race *australis* which lacks the black coronal stripes. Most interesting, is the vocally distinct *antofagastae* which we saw in the tamarugo woodlands of the north.

Black-hooded Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus atriceps*: Common around Putre and in Lauca with more than 15 seen one day.

Grey-hooded Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus gayi*: Small numbers at La Campana and daily in the far south, with more than 15 at El Yeso.

Patagonian Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus patagonicus*: Four seen and others heard at Puyehue; a Patagonian forest endemic.

Mourning Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus fruticeti*: Commonly seen with 30 or more per day in the far northern Andes, and five or more in the Sierra Baguales; all referable to the nominate race.

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus unicolor*: A pair at El Yeso, and four seen on each visit to Lauca.

White-throated Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus erythronotus*: Six seen during our two days visiting Lauca. This species could almost be considered a Lauca endemic in that it is very poorly known in other parts of its range in western Bolivia and south-west Peru.

Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus plebejus*: Common in the far northern Andes with more than 20 seen one day.

White-winged Diuca-Finch *Diuca speculifera*: Three one afternoon and five the following day at Lauca. A large, high altitude specialist of cushion-plant bogs.

Common Diuca-Finch *Diuca diuca*: Small numbers seen in central Chile south to the Maule valley, referable to the nominate race.

White-bridled Finch (Black-throated F/ Canary-winged F) *Melanodera melanodera*: One of the toughest birds to find in Patagonia, and we drove many miles of dirt roads before eventually obtaining great views of pair, here the subspecies *princetoniana*. A rather different looking race (the nominate) inhabits the Falklands where it is common and the male lacks yellow wings.

- Yellow-bridled Finch *Melanodera xanthogramma*: A smart male at Sierra Baguales, referable to subspecies *barrosi*. A scarce species, or rather difficult to locate, but not in the same league as White-bridled Finch.
- Slender-billed Finch *Xenospingus concolor*: Three in the Lluta valley, eventually with close-up looks, and then one found in a garden in San Miguel de Azapa. Rather an unusual finch placed in a monotypic genus.
- Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch *Sicalis uropygialis* (NL): A pair photographed by Tommy and Ilona at Lauca, while everyone else was searching for Puna Plover.
- Greater Yellow-Finch *Sicalis auriventris*: More than 50 at El Yeso, and a female at Sierra Baguales where a population was only discovered in recent years. A rather poorly known yellow-finch restricted to Chile and Argentina.
- Greenish Yellow-Finch *Sicalis olivascens*: A total of eleven seen in and around Putre were referable to subspecies *chloris*.
- Grassland Yellow-Finch *Sicalis luteola*: Two as we walked towards Rocas del Santa Domingo, and three near Puyehue; all referable to subspecies *luteiventris* which has been considered a distinct species "Misto Yellow-Finch" although nothing has ever been published on the subject.
- Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*: Three in the Lluta valley.
- Chestnut-throated Seedeater *Sporophila telasco*: Common in oasis valleys around Arica..
- Band-tailed Seedeater *Catamenia analis*: Four near Putre representing the nominate race.

#### ICTERIDAE

- Austral Blackbird *Curaeus curaesus*: Numerous encounters in central and southern Chile, a Patagonian endemic.
- Yellow-winged Blackbird *Agelaius thilius*: Only found at Lampa (30 or more) and Laguna El Peral where at least 20 were observed.
- Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*: A flock of 11 at Rocas de Santo Domingo and one in the Yeso valley.
- Peruvian Meadowlark *Sturnella bellicose*: One south of Arica and three in the Lluta valley, referable to subspecies *albipes*.
- Long-tailed Meadowlark *Sturnella loyca*: Numerous encounters except in the far north, all referable to the nominate race.

#### FRINGILLIDAE

- Thick-billed Siskin *Carduelis crassirostris*: We were actually giving up on this one and getting on the bus, when at the last moment a flock of four landed right beside the road and even posed for photographs. A seldom seen siskin, largely restricted to *Polylepis* woodland.
- Hooded Siskin *Carduelis magellanica*: Three males near Putre and around 15 there the following morning, here the subspecies *urubambensis*.
- Black Siskin *Carduelis atrata*: A group of five and a pair between Putre and Lauca on different
- Yellow-rumped Siskin *Carduelis uropygialis*: Ten or more high up at El Yeso; a poorly known and local siskin of the southern Andes.
- Black-chinned Siskin *Carduelis barbata*: Regular encounters from central Chile southwards with a maximum of 15 at Vilches; yet another Patagonian endemic.

#### PASSERIDAE

- House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*: Widespread and common except in the high Andes.

#### MAMMALS

- European Rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*: Seen daily on Masatierra, one at La Campana and another in the Maule valley.

European Hare (Brown H) *Lepus europaeus*: One on Masatierra, one at La Campana, two at Puyehue and then commonly seen in the far south.

Bolivian Pericote (Puna Mouse) *Auliscomys boliviensis*: One on the pier at Lago Chungara, Lauca and another at a picnic stop overlooking the Parincota lakes.

Coypu (Nutria) *Myocastor coypus*: One at Laguna El Peral.

Southern Viscacha (Mountain V) *Lagidium viscacia*: Five and two on different visits to Lauca; a giant whiskered chinchilla seemingly undisturbed by park visitors.

Argentine Grey Fox *Dusicyon griseus*: Thirteen seen at six localities in the extreme south.

South American Sealion *Otaria byronia*: Around 30 in San Antonio harbour, 600 at Iquique and 50 or more from the Chiloe ferry.

Juan Fernandez Fur Seal *Arctocephalus philippii*: Hundreds (over 400 one day) on the rocky coasts of Robinson Crusoe Island, this fur seal was thought to be extinct up until 1965, after what undoubtedly must have been a major food source for mariners. The species also survives in small numbers on two uninhabited islands, San Felix and San Ambrosia to the north of the Juan Fernandez.

Peale's Dolphin *Lagenorhynchus australis*: Ten or more out of Porvenir with three bow-riding for some time.

Commerson's Dolphin *Cephalorhynchus commersoni*: Superb views of 25 or more on our crossing to Tierra del Fuego with several bow-riding. Surely the mammal of the tour!

Guanaco *Lama guanicoe*: Eight near Putre and four at the *Polylepis* woodland in the north. Between 40 and 350 recorded daily in the far south with the largest numbers in Torres del Paine National Park. .

Vicuña (Vicugna) *Vicugna vicugna*: Abundant in Lauca National Park with over 500 seen one day.

#### OTHER INTERESTING FAUNA

Mountain Lizard *Liolaemus monticola*: Several seen at La Campana and El Yeso.

Yellow-wing Flyingfish *Cypselurus poecilopterus*: Two large examples seen at close range along the north shore of Robinson Crusoe from our boat ride back to the airstrip. Provisionally identified as this species on account of its striking yellow wings.

[Flyingfish species. One on the Iquique pelagic remains unidentified. There are 52 species Worldwide in 9 genera. ]

Ocean Sunfish *Mola mola*: Great views of a gentle giant (2 metres or more long) basking on the surface during our Iquique pelagic.