

COLOMBIA

13 FEBRUARY – 8 MARCH 2010

TOUR REPORT

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Our 2010 Colombia tour to the most bird-rich country on earth left little doubt this welcoming country is worthy of its title. We notched up an impressive list of 669 species, which included seeing no fewer than 35 species of conservation concern. In addition to the critically endangered Yellow-eared Parrot, we saw a further 10 endangered species all of which were country endemics with very small ranges (Cauca Guan, Bogotá Rail, Santa Marta Parakeet, White-mantled Barbet, Brown-banded Antpitta, Chestnut-capped Piha, Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant, Apolinar's Marsh-Wren, Gold-ringed Tanager and Red-bellied Grackle). The group highlights included both widespread species and rare or little known birds only rediscovered in recent years. The runaway winner for bird of the trip was the Multicoloured Tanager; our sighting of a picturesque male up close will be a cherished birding memory for years to come. The large Northern Screamer was runner up, a hard-earned Ocellated Tapaculo was also popular, and the seldom-seen Masked Saltator was a Birdquest lifer that performed beautifully! Other highlights included a point-blank Noble Snipe, a trio of Scaled, Chestnut and Greyish Piculets, colourful Black-billed and Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucans, Moustached Puffbird, Lanceolated Monklet, the lovely White-tipped Quetzal, the weird Oilbird and Dwarf Cuckoo. Our 53 species of hummers included Purple-backed Thornbill, the lovely White-tailed Starfrontlet, Black-thighed Puffleg, Santa Marta Woodstar and the stunning Bearded Helmetcrest. More great sightings included a pair of Lanceolated Monklets, the desirable Flammulated Treehunter, the smart White-whiskered Spinetail, Chestnut-crowned and Santa Marta Antpittas, Orange-breasted and Golden-breasted Fruiteaters, a pair of Chestnut-crested Cotingas and a superb lek of Andean Cock-of-the-Rocks. We had a very obliging Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant, an also easy Apical Flycatcher, the superb Beautiful Jay, seldom-seen Black Solitaires, shy Tanager-Finches, punkish Crested Ant-Tanagers, a fantastic selection of other tanagers including Purplish-mantled, Black-and-gold and Gold-ringed Tanagers, Golden-collared Honeycreeper and Indigo Flowerpiercer and the smart-looking Golden-winged Sparrow. Our birding experience overall was very successful; however this year's El Niño conditions were clearly affecting the birds at some of the sites. Normally humid sites suffered drought-like conditions and arid sites near the coast were flooded with rain! The many birdy mountain roads and wide, forested jeep tracks were a real pleasure to bird, and we enjoyed several well-designed forest trails. We found the general feeling in the countryside was one of genuine friendliness, and we often crossed paths with weekenders on bicycles enjoying their own parks and reserves. Colombia's emphasis on education and investment in their growing economy has made it one of the cleanest and safest countries on the continent. Come and see for yourself!

We began the trip in Bogotá where after a good night's rest we found ourselves in the mountains above the city at around 3000m where one of our first birds was an Andean Guan. As the sun began to hit the mountain slopes, a patch of montane bamboo came alive with a small flock containing dapper-looking Plushcaps, the striking-looking Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Black-capped Hemispingus and Black-crested Warblers. The perky-looking Agile Tit-Tyrant showed well in low vegetation along the road and at flowering shrubs we had good looks at Tyrian Metaltail and Masked and Glossy Flowerpiercers. We very quickly got down to business with the skulkers and had great success calling in a territorial Ash-coloured Tapaculo and some of us managed a quick view of the local variety of Rufous Antpitta. A bit lower we were fortunate to watch a female Coppery-bellied Puffleg sitting on her nest and occasionally feeding and two Glowing Pufflegs even made a couple of brief appearances. Knowing that we would have a second opportunity at this site, we set off for some nearby gravel pits outside of the city. Almost immediately we scoped up a nearby trio of Merida Speckled Teals (a potential split from Andean Teal) whilst the endemic Bogota Rail paraded out in the open alongside Spot-flanked Gallinules. As lovely Brown-bellied Swallows foraged low over the fairly dry marshland it was obvious there was not much water for our snipe searching. After flushing both Noble and Wilson's Snipes and discussing whether to send the leader out into the muck, we were all extremely pleased when upon our return a Noble Snipe was spotted in the ditch next to the vehicle. A great stroke of luck as our views were nothing short of outstanding as the bird posed at incredibly close range. After lunch we then set off for a nearby lake surrounded by reed marsh where we fairly quickly found ourselves watching a family group of the endangered Apolinar's Marsh-Wren. Here we were also pleased to see the local *bogotensis* race of Least Bittern, as well as several Yellow-hooded Blackbirds. Our first Smooth-billed Anis of the trip made their appearance, and our first raptors of the trip were American Osprey and White-tailed Kite. Happy with our first day's results we made our way back to Bogotá to prepare for the next great day.

Early the next day we travelled west of Bogotá to the Laguna Pedro Palo, a lovely lake set amidst a green mosaic of forest, pastureland and light woodlands. Here we wasted little time in convincing a most cooperative White-throated Crake to come out of hiding and walk along the muddy lakeshore. The surrounding willows soon came alive with warbling Brown-capped Vireos, and both Sooty-headed Tyrannulets and Ash-browed Spinetails showing incredibly well. The endemic Turquoise Dacnis made a first brief appearance that we would later follow-up with better views, and a nice assortment of busy Olivaceous Piculets, sweet-singing Tropical Parulas, and colourful Blue-necked, Bay-headed and Scrub Tanagers showed well. We saw our first Squirrel Cuckoo, a Pale-breasted Spinetail in the wet grass and the often-abundant Rusty-margined Flycatchers showed along with other widespread flycatchers such as Mountain and Yellow-bellied Elaenias. In the surrounding woodland we had good views of a dazzling Long-tailed Sylph, Montane Foliage-gleaner and Grey-breasted Wood-wren but a Greater Ani in the mountains at such a high elevation was rather surprising. We continued our walk along the road where a session at some remnant fruiting trees packed with birds began with seeing Fawn-breasted Tanager on a fence post and Andean Toucanets overhead when we spotted a male Turquoise Dacnis. A pair of this endemic dacnis showed well several times amidst a colourful mix of Red-headed Barbets, Blue-naped Chlorophonias and Beryl-spangled, Golden and Flame-faced Tanagers. Here we also had a Montane Woodcreeper hitching up the trunks and boreal migrants included lovely Canada, Black-and-white and Blackburnian Warblers. After this frugivore bonanza we continued, with a White-rumped Hawk overhead and energetic Three-striped Warblers scouring the understorey. Roadside thickets also held a Whiskered Wren that showed to some as did a trio of Moustached Brush-Finches. We ended the morning in fine style at our stake-out for the somewhat localized Moustached Puffbird with a singing pair showing beautifully. After a tasty lunch featuring some typical country fare we descended to some nearby coffee country where we had a birdy afternoon in the surrounding woodlands. The afternoon began with brilliant views of vociferous Colombian Wrens, a fancy male of the near-endemic Bar-crested Antshrike

and our first Spectacled Parrotlets. A vocal Scrub Greenlet joined in and was duly seen whilst White-collared, Chestnut-collared and Grey-rumped Swifts wheeled through the sky overhead. A Pale-breasted Thrush on the road was rather smart taking us all by surprise. The brilliant orange flowering crowns of several *Erythrina* trees were attracting Black-throated Mango and White-vented Plumeleteer along with nectar-feeding Orange-crowned Orioles. Further along more activity brought us several Yellow-olive Flycatchers, Rufous-naped Greenlets, Grey-headed and Guira Tanagers and a smart Chestnut-capped Warbler. As the afternoon waned, we were surprised when the scope revealed a Dwarf Cuckoo perched in a dead tree out in the middle of a pasture as it is rarely recorded in this particular area. We finished this great day with a very convincing Buff-rumped Warbler showing off so close its song was deafening!

The next morning we returned to Cerro de Guadalupe with a few targets topping our to-do list for the day. We got off to a great start with our first of these targets with three endemic Rufous-browed Conebills showing brilliantly along the road alongside Black-capped, Superciliated and Black-eared Hemispinguses. We next did our best to see a Silvery-throated Spinetail to no avail but we did much better with a very obliging Mattoral Tapaculo coming out for great views. We did well with a group of Tawny-rumped Tyrannulets, the Golden-bellied Pufflegs gave another great showing, and a tame family group of Pale-naped Brush-Finches pecking in the dirt was great fun. Our session here ended with the very pretty white-faced form of Golden-fronted Redstart, before we packed it in to the Bogotá airport for the short hop to Cali.

Immediately after arrival in the tropical feeling city of Cali, we set off for the hills where we enjoyed our picnic lunch together with the engrossing spectacle of a busy set of hummingbird feeders. We were now on the east slope of the western Andes. If you look at a map of Colombia, much of the country appears to be rich Amazonian and llanos lowlands. Although the Colombian Andes occupy a relatively small area, they fork into three separate chains rich in rare and endemic birds. Separated by the endemic rich Cauca and the vast Magdalena valleys, each of the chains differ in their bird fauna on their east and west slopes. Ornithologists are still working out the biogeographic puzzle of where exactly each bird species occurs and how they got there! We contemplated all of this whilst juggling sandwiches and bins from feeder to feeder visited by Steely-vented Hummingbirds and Andean Emeralds in the majority, but with some fine White-necked Jacobins, glittering Green-crowned Woodnymphs, pink-gorgeted Fawn-breasted Brilliants, chunky Black-throated Mangos and ear-flaring Brown Violet-ears. The hoped for male Blue-headed Sapphire appeared in time and a Purple-throated Woodstar was regular. That afternoon we visited a quiet forest track where a male Uniform Antshrike sat out for us, Green and Tawny-bellied Hermits inspected their traplines and several lovely Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers moved through the subcanopy. We saw a couple of Sickie-winged Guans noisily making wing-displays before heading back to Cali where a couple of us had a Colombian Chachalaca in our hotel garden.

We began the next day at a patch of pasture and second growth where in the gathering light we began with a nice selection of birds that included Barred Becard, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Beryl-spangled Tanager, and Grey Seedeater. Our first Andean Motmot was spotted on a bare patch of ground and we called in our second *Cranioleuca* of the trip for fine close-ups of Red-faced Spinetail directly overhead. Our walk along the road continued in the birdy second growth with one of our first prizes a cooperative Streak-capped Treehunter that perched in view quite well, followed by our first Black-capped Tanagers and a brief Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant. A bonus Wedge-billed Hummingbird made a surprise appearance at close-quarter gathering spider webs and our first of several Greenish Pufflegs showed very well. Also memorable were our brilliant views of Ashy-headed Tyrannulets, and we finally closed the book on Lineated Foliage-gleaner. In a very memorable moment, we raised our bins to look at an interesting-looking tanager that had just flown low across the road in front of us. We were eye-to-eye with a male Multicoloured Tanager and these crippling views clinched his spot as the unbeatable bird-of-

the-trip! A close second for bird of the morning was a family group of Chestnut-breasted Wrens that came in for some remarkable views as they gave us an amazing chorus. Additional highlights from this morning included an obliging Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, a male Collared Trogon, fluttery Bronzy Incas, and understory denizens such as Spotted Barbtail, Slaty Antwren, Russet-crowned Warbler and Oleaginous Hemispingus. We also saw Booted Racket-tails at flowers, a noisy Flammulated Attila, sweet-sounding Andean Solitaires, colourful Golden-rumped and Orange-bellied Euphonias, and the always welcome Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager.

In the afternoon we drove north up the arid Cauca valley, pulling into Laguna de Sonso for lunch after a brief stop for a wonderful Pearl Kite en route. One of the great spectacles here is seeing Spectacled Parrotlets nesting in the station buildings with day-roosting Common Potoo and Common Nighthawk in the trees overhead. After some yummy sandwiches and a Dwarf Cuckoo, we birded the woodland where we had good views of a female Jet Antbird, the dainty Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Yellow-rumped Cacique and Blue-headed Parrot. A pair of Apical Flycatchers providing excellent views gladly deterred our walk to the practically dry Laguna. The strangest record was a vocalising pair of Slaty Spinetails, which also gave us our third Dwarf Cuckoo. The El Niño drought had reduced the lake to a small pond on which we had a nice selection of waterbirds that included Cocoi Herons, Great Egret, Solitary, Least and Pectoral Sandpipers as well as Lesser Yellowlegs and Glossy Ibis. Back at the station a Spot-breasted Woodpecker made a handsome sight in the scope before we made our way back to the main road where despite the hot and windy conditions we made some wonderful sightings in the flowering *Erythrina* visited by some Orange-crowned Euphonias, Guira Tanagers and a fine male Ruby Topaz. Along the river-edge we saw Red-capped Cardinal and Purple Gallinule, called in a Lineated Woodpecker, and enjoyed a pair of Aplomado Falcons in flight. Our perseverance with Greyish Piculet eventually paid off when, amazingly, this tiny woodpecker hovered across a pasture to greet us, almost hitting us in the process, before settling in more suitable habitat for walk-away views.

We were up early the next morning for a pre-dawn coffee and snack that morphed into grilled sandwiches and chips by our local hotelier! This meant we were well fed for the journey up into the mountains of El Cairo where no sooner had we transferred to several jeeps at dawn than our local guide was showing us a group of Crested Ant-Tanagers! Moments later, we knew we had arrived somewhere special when the most common birds were Velvet-purple Coronet and the endangered Gold-ringed Tanager! The El Cairo area is truly birding from the top-drawer with a fabulous array of Chocó endemics easily seen from a seldom-travelled road. Special mention should be made of our great views of a fine selection of colourful tanagers that included the endemic Black-and-gold Tanager, the Chocó endemic Purplish-mantled Tanager, the smart Indigo Flowerpiercer, the wonderful Glistening-green Tanager, several Black-chinned Mountain-Tanagers, numerous Chestnut-breasted and Yellow-collared Chlorophonias, a pair of Golden-collared Honeycreepers and several Rufous-throated Tanagers. Other mouth-watering frugivores worth mentioning were our excellent views of Black Solitaire and Orange-breasted Fruiteater, whilst our list of hummingbirds included Empress Brilliant, Brown Inca and Violet-tailed Sylph (all Chocó endemics). Other Chocó endemics and localized species that we found included the much-wanted Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Uniform Treehunter, Pacific Tuftedcheek, the aptly-named Beautiful Jay, Chocó Warbler, Chocó and Nariño Tapaculos, and Dusky-bellied Bush-Tanagers. Other more widespread goodies included a confiding Tyrannine Woodcreeper, superb Olive Finches, Yellow-vented Woodpecker, vociferous Sharpe's Wrens, the retiring Bronze-olive Pygmy-Tyrant, walk-away views of Black-billed Peppershrike, noisy Ochre-breasted Tanagers, Rusty Flowerpiercer and Tricoloured Brush-Finch. One night a Tropical Screech-Owl gave some of us fine views from our hotel patio! Leaving El Cairo we made a few stops outside of town where we watched a Green-fronted Lancebill at a flowering shrub and saw our first Parker's Antbirds in the undergrowth, but an uncooperative Bicoloured Antvireo frustratingly denied us! That afternoon at La Suiza we had no sooner stepped into the reserve

when the hoped-for Cauca Guan crashed onto a nearby perch. A very vocal Pale-eyed Thrush was very entertaining on its high perch and several marvellous Red-ruffed Fruitcrows were seen in this woodland alive with their deep, booming hoots.

The next morning at La Suiza, we started out with a Chestnut Wood-Quail but it was a tricky one to see! More Cauca and Sickle-winged Guans were seen and just when we thought it was impossible we found the calling Wattled Guan on its perch for quick scope views including a bit of that colourful wattle for some. An additional highlight was the beautiful Golden-plumed Parakeets perching in the trees over the road for good views. Forest passerines included several Strong-billed Woodcreepers, acrobatic Streaked Xenops, and a choice selection of tyrannids with Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet, Variegated Bristle-Tyrant and Rufous-breasted Flycatcher. The beautiful Inca Jay was commonplace, two individuals of the declining Cerulean Warbler were a nice find and along the river we saw a male Torrent Duck. Just before lunch, we caught up with a Whiskered Wren, before setting off on our journey to the pleasant city of Manizales. Here on the grounds of our hotel we did some afternoon birding where the highlight was a Chestnut-crowned Antpitta that came bounding across an embankment at eye level and was almost too close to focus! There were also good looks at Yellow-throated Brush-Finch, and a lovely Hook-billed Kite flew into some trees overhead for excellent scope views.

The next morning at Rio Blanco, our owling efforts were stymied by an unresponsive screech-owl. However soon after dawn, a Masked Saltator posed beautifully above its nest giving us a show of a lifetime! After a hearty breakfast, we then moved to the antpitta feeder where Chestnut-crowned Antpittas were dominant, but we were also treated to several visits from the endemic Brown-banded Antpittas. Our morning walk along the wide track of the reserve gave us brilliant views of perched Scaly-naped Parrots, a handsome male Masked Trogon, and the lovely Rufous-crowned Tody-Tyrant. We also saw Black-billed Mountain-Toucans well in between our successful bouts with skulking Blackish and Spillmann's Tapaculos, however it seemed the rest of the antpittas preferred to have the day off. Seeing a Slate-crowned Antpitta was one of the fantastic results of the day but from the crunch of leaf litter underfoot it was apparent this site was suffering from the drought-like conditions. Flocks were almost non-existent but we eventually found one mixed flock giving us excellent views of Pale-edged Flycatcher, Mountain Wren, Blue-and-black Tanager and Grey-hooded Bush-Tanager. A singing Grass-green Tanager sat out for ages in a nearby tangle for excellent looks whilst a Red-crested Cotinga teed up on a nearby snag. Back at the small lodge, we enjoyed Collared Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, Long-tailed Sylph and the much-wanted Tourmaline Sunangel visiting the garden flowers. That afternoon we added White-tailed Tyrannulet, Golden-headed Quetzal, and Powerful and Crimson-mantled Woodpeckers all showing brilliantly.

The next morning found us in the high paramo of Nevado del Ruiz at over 4000m. The day dawned cold and grey but we still saw a fantastic selection of birds in a very short time. In a little over an hour, we had seen several Stout-billed Cinclodes, White-chinned Thistletails, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Grass Wren, showy Tawny Antpittas and Plumbeous Sierra-Finch. Top-of-the-bill though was a male of the restricted-range Bearded Helmetcrest that showed so well on a nearby bush. Descending to tree line we continued our great series of hummers with stunning views of both Black-thighed and Golden-breasted Pufflegs, Great Sapphirewing and Buff-winged Starfrontlet. A Paramo Tapaculo showed no fear as we all marvelled at him so closely it seemed like he would have perched on our outstretched hand! A male Paramo Seedeater perched up at the side of the road after seeing numerous Plain-coloured Seedeaters. At lunch, a Many-striped Canastero posed quite well atop a bush and a small lake featured Andean Teal and Andean Duck. In the forest patches lower down several of us scrambled into the bush for a splendid Ocellated Tapaculo whilst those who stayed near the road scoped up a male Purple-backed Thornbill! A second try for the nominate subspecies of Rufous Antpitta met

with success for some, and a small flock contained the lovely Golden-crowned Tanager as well as Black-backed Bush-Tanager before we dropped even further in elevation to some very productive humid forest. Here the late afternoon got off to a great start with a stunning Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan blasting its call, a pair of White-banded Tyrannulets at close range, and a babbler-like flock of Rufous Wrens provided one of the great spectacles of the tour as they filled the bushes with their movement and sound. We then had what was probably the most enjoyable mixed flock of the tour composed of Black-capped Tyrannulet, Blue-backed Conebill, Capped Conebill (the white capped form), Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, Pale-naped Brush-Finch and Slaty Brush-Finch. The birds had found a tasty fruiting bush over the road allowing us repeated views of each species.

The next day we travelled to Jardin suffering a puncture along the way, but some roadside birding here yielded Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet and Colombian Chachalaca. Before long, we had the tyre changed to arrive in time to do some afternoon birding in Jardin, where a local stake-out came up trumps for the endangered endemic Red-bellied Grackle! We then moved to a very picturesque lek of Andean Cock-of-the-Rock providing a memorable spectacle and afterwards in the river below we had great views of White-capped Dipper. The next morning we drove up into the reserve for a productive morning that featured the critically endangered Yellow-eared Parrot with a family group of three providing very good views near their nest. Possibly even more spectacular however were our views of a nesting pair of Chestnut-crested Cotingas that were feeding young and perching in plain view at any time of day! Here we also enjoyed the lovely Black-collared Jay along with a superb selection of montane specialties that included White-browed Spinetail, Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, and the monotypic Tanager Finch.

Our next port-of-call was the Rio Claro area in the rich Magdalena valley. Here at about 600m elevation the climate was warm, and the birds were of mostly lowland affinity. A wide, flat track through the reserve allowed for some easy birding that was off to a great start with a Cinnamon Woodpecker poking its head out of its nest hole! Certainly one of our top birds seen here was the duetting pair of endemic White-mantled Barbets. One morning we walked a track that led to a wonderful Oilbird cave where we had superb views of these bizarre birds. The other highlight of our walk here were the endemic Antioquia Bristle-Tyrants that eventually showed incredibly well. There was a nice selection of forest birds here that included the bizarre Brownish Twistwing, a male Fasciated Antshrike, a few Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaners, Western Slaty-Antshrike, Checker-throated, White-flanked and Dot-winged Antwrens, Blue-crowned and White-bearded Manakins, musical White-breasted Wood-Wrens, Rufous-tailed Jacamars and a lovely Capped Heron. Back at the main reserve we had an almost comical Barred Puffbird, lovely Western White-tailed Trogons, and excellent views of a great selection of tyrannids that included Yellow-crowned and Brown-capped Tyrannulets, Forest Elaenia, Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant, Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher, Olivaceous Flatbill, Panama Flycatcher (for some) and Long-tailed Tyrant. Other memorable birds included Thrush-like Schiffornis, magnificent Black-chested Jays, the lovely Yellow-tufted Dacnis, Cinnamon and One-coloured Becards, Band-backed and Black-bellied Wrens, Purple Honeycreeper and Lemon-rumped, Plain-coloured and Dusky-faced Tanagers to name a few!

The next day we started the journey to Anori early allowing us to make a detour to a very productive roadside marsh. There was some concern beforehand that the marsh might have dried up due to the El Niño drought so it was with great relief when we stepped off the bus and immediately spotted our first of 13 Northern Screamers! We studied this much-wanted bird at great length whilst we enjoyed a lovely accompaniment that included Chestnut-fronted and Blue-and-yellow Macaws, garrulous Brown-throated Parakeets, lovely Orange-winged Parrots, numerous Black-bellied Whistling-Duck together with a small party of White-faced Whistling-Ducks, the all black Wattled Jacanas, and a few waders including Greater

and Lesser Yellowlegs side-by-side. Our journey out of the lowlands continued as we picked up Bicoloured Wren, Savanna Hawk and Laughing Falcon before we soon found ourselves in the mountains again. Our journey then took an interesting twist when thankfully our good driver Miguel wrestled the bus's mechanical failure under control. We were now without a bus however, so after some discussion we hopped onto one of the comfortable interstate bus lines! This minor inconvenience actually turned into a cross-cultural experience that made our journey that much more interesting. We even broke the journey with a very tasty lunch of grilled meats, good proportions of ice creams and a flat-screen playing an Arsenal football match. Our public bus left us right at our lodge's doorstep in time for dinner, and our newly serviced bus arrived with our cases later that evening!

Located at the northern end of the central Andes, Anori is home to several endemics including the Chestnut-capped Piha for which the reserve is named. We had a full day and a morning to bird the area surrounding the lodge and trails up into the reserve. We started with Sooty-headed Wren and Parker's Antbirds in the lower part of the reserve but we did not find a Chestnut-capped Piha until later in the morning when one individual showed fairly well in a mixed flock. After going amiss on our first morning, the forest was suddenly alive with flocks of Red-bellied Grackles on our second morning as we watched them uttering their strange clicks and whistles as they moved through the cloud forest trees for fruits and invertebrates. For some the major highlight was a fine pair of Lanceolated Monklets that suddenly enlivened a dull moment. We were very pleased to have such great looks at a Stiles's Tapaculo after working so hard to see this species, and also memorable was an obliging Wing-barred Piprites and a lovely pair of Blue-black Grosbeaks. From the forest trails we also picked up Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner, Rufous-rumped Antwren (but only for some), Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, White-throated Spadebill, and Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch. From the lodge veranda there were always hummingbirds on the feeders including Green-crowned Brilliant and in the trees overhead saw Scrub Tanager, Black-winged Saltator and Bronze-winged Parrots.

That evening we enjoyed a lovely dinner in Medellin, and the following morning we enjoyed an actual lie-in before making our way to Medellin airport. This would be the final leg of the tour, and after a short flight to Santa Marta on the Caribbean coast, we met our new drivers and 4WD vehicles. Eventually all three vehicles arrived in Minca for lunch, after which we headed off for the hot bed of endemism, the Santa Marta mountains and up to the new El Dorado lodge. To reach the lodge, one has to travel along a rough and rocky road, but we broke up the journeys there and back with frequent stops. During our exploration of these rich mountains we explored from the foothills to the highest accessible areas, and pulled in a good number of specialities.

Our birding began in the middle elevations with the skulking Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, a vocal Rusty-breasted Antpitta, and the shy Santa Marta Tapaculo, and several White-lored Warblers. Here we also connected with a superb Sooty-capped Hermit singing on its lek perch and enjoyed a small party of Yellow-billed Toucanets. Around the comfortable lodge, the gardens were full of birds as Green Violetears and Violet-crowned Woodnymphs fought around the feeders also visited by the shy White-tailed Starfrontlet. Gorgeous Bay-headed and Black-capped Tanagers and Blue-naped Chlorophonias hopped around the bananas whilst the endemic form of the soon to be split Stripe-headed Brush-Finches visited the compost heap. From the lodge we made some nocturnal forays too, and after much persistence, some of us saw the newly described Santa Marta Screech-Owl and we finally nailed the much-wanted Mottled Owl in the spotlight. A few attempts were required before we finally found a remarkably tame Santa Marta Antpitta and many of us also had an up close and personal encounter with Santa Marta Rufous Antpitta (surely a good split based on its unique vocalizations). From the lodge we explored the higher altitudes, and here we found more endemics and specialities. Here a Flammulated Treehunter had us all piling out of the vehicles for great views of this desirable species. Almost

immediately upon our arrival at the higher elevations we enjoyed a mixed flock composed of the lovely Yellow-crowned Redstart, the slow-moving Santa Marta Warbler and the arboreal Streak-capped Spinetail. The occasional fog cleared and the fine weather conditions enabled us to enjoy superb views of a small party of perched Santa Marta Parakeets thanks to Roger's good spot! Our downhill walk continued as we enjoyed the lovely Rusty-headed Spinetail, Santa Marta Mountain-Tanagers, the highland form of Grey-breasted Wood-Wren, and the Santa Marta Toucanet. Other goodies included a pair of White-tipped Quetzals, a very cooperative Brown-rumped Tapaculo, and a few of us managed to see a Lined Quail-Dove that briefly walked into view. We enjoyed nice close-ups of a pair of Grey-throated Leaf-tossers but unfortunately, a party of Black-fronted Wood-Quails moved away all too quickly. The Golden-breasted Fruiteaters were most cooperative and White-rumped Hawk in flight was lovely. Our long wait for the Blossomcrown did not have the intended result but instead yielded a lovely Santa Marta Woodstar visiting a flowering tree along with a nice selection of other birds such as Red-billed Parrots, Black-hooded and Yellow-legged Thrushes and Black-headed Tanager. Lower down in the Minca area, we got off to a great start with male and female Coppery Emeralds, a pair of Scaled Piculets Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and-white Wrens, Greenish Elaenia, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Golden-fronted Greenlet and Swallow Tanager. The very crisply marked Golden-winged Sparrow impressed us all and we eventually saw a somewhat difficult male Black-backed Antshrike.

The following morning saw us heading rapidly east towards the usually arid Guajira Peninsula, however as we drove through monsoon like rains for almost the entire drive we wondered what lie ahead! The arid peninsula juts out into the Caribbean Sea (becoming progressively drier towards the east) and harbours a number of specialities only shared with adjacent Venezuela. To arrive at our first site we had to navigate through a potentially vehicle-eating plain of mud that our 4wd vehicles managed to pass. Luckily, we had a break in the rain to eat our breakfast and contemplate the dark clouds on the horizon. Not knowing if this rainless window would be our only chance for these birds we somewhat desperately grasped for as many birds as possible before an ensuing downpour had us evacuating the site for fear we would never make it out of the mud! We made our way to the nearby coastal mudflats where we saw a nice selection of waterbirds that included White and Scarlet Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill, American Flamingo, Wilson's Plover, Semipalmated and Grey Plovers, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers, Hudsonian Whimbrel, Willet, Common Dowitcher and Ruddy Turnstone. From the beach, we also found several Carib Grackles, and in the flocks of swallows we found about a dozen Purple Martins.

Late that morning the rain eventually cleared allowing us to make a productive walk into the featureless landscape of thorn forest. Species such as Black-crested Antshrike, Buffy Hummingbird, Red-billed Emerald, Northern Scrub-Flycatcher, the handsome White-whiskered Spinetail, Slender-billed Inezia, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, and Pileated Finch were quite common and responded with a flurry of attacks to pygmy-owl whistles. We also had several good views of Russet-throated Puffbirds perched out on the cacti, the lovely Northern White-fringed Antwren, Orinoco Saltator, and the striking Vermilion Cardinal. Eventually we made it out of the labyrinthine woodland, seeing Glaucous Tanager near some houses along the way, before we broke for lunch on the beach during which we picked up a Lesser Black-backed Gull winging past. That afternoon we kept working on the arid country birds with good results seeing Caribbean Hornero, Yellow-breasted Flycatcher, and Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. Finally, after looking practically the entire day we got our Tocuyo Sparrow!

The last day was essentially a travel day, but we spent the morning on Isla Salamanca. Our main target bird, the Chestnut-winged Chachalaca duly obliged, and at the same spot, we enjoyed more Bare-eyed Pigeons and Russet-throated Puffbirds. We moved along the coast, checking for wetland species as we went. A good assortment of widespread herons, waders and terns were found and we noted a rare Arctic

Skua (Pomarine Jaeger). A final stop for Bicoloured Conebill was successful as well as the stunning Prothonotary Warbler and a Yellow-chinned Spinetail, but it was a Chestnut Piculet that sent us into raptures! Suddenly Carl had a Bronze-brown Cowbird back out on the road everyone went running for whilst a Panama Flycatcher appeared and a Black-collared Hawk was spotted at the edge of the marsh.

After a quick wash and brush up at an interesting (!) motel in Barranquilla, we all flew back to Bogotá to board our international flights. It had been an enjoyable and eventful trip. Many of the birds had obliged superbly, we had met some wonderful Colombian people, and we had experienced an amazing cross-section of the country. Everywhere we went we felt welcomed and I am already looking forward to my next trip to the world's number one!

SYSTEMATIC LIST

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from Threatened Birds of the World, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/index.html>

TINAMIDAE

Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* (H): Single birds were heard on a few occasions in the Rio Claro and Anori areas, but they were always out of reach.

PODICIPEDIDAE

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*: A few seen near to Bogotá.

PELECANIDAE

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis*: We had day totals of 75 and 50 birds seen along the Caribbean coast at the end of the tour.

PHALACROCORACIDAE

Olivaceous Cormorant (Neotropic C) *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*: First seen at Lagunas Pedro Palo and El Sonso. We saw a few others along our route and they were common along the Caribbean Coast at the end of the tour.

ANHINGIDAE

Anhinga (Darter) *Anhinga anhinga*: A few were seen at Laguna de Sonso and another on the screamer marsh.

FREGATIDAE

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens*: We saw only three of this kleptoparasite along the Caribbean coast.

ARDEIDAE

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*: We did not see this boreal migrant until the end of the tour with three on the coast of La Guajira.

Cocoi Heron (White-necked H) *Ardea cocoi*: About 20 were seen at Laguna de Sonso, and two more were seen at the Anori reservoir later in the tour.

Great Egret *Casmerodius albus*: We saw small numbers at several wetland sites, with an impressive gathering of over fifty birds over the drying pool of Laguna de Sonso. Now usually placed in the genus *Ardea*.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*: Small numbers were seen at scattered wetlands including Laguna de Sonso and then at least a hundred were seen around La Guajira and on Isla Salamanca at the end of the tour. 'Thula' is an Araucano (Chilean) Indian name for the Black-necked Swan, erroneously given to the Snowy Egret!

Little Blue Heron *Florida caerulea*: Our first was a single as we drove out of El Paujil, and we saw another seven or so at sites along the Caribbean coast.

Reddish Egret *Dichromanassa rufescens*: At least 20 of these attractive herons were seen along the Caribbean Coast. Now classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, its population

is estimated to be between 10,000 and 19,999 and declining. It has recently been up-listed to this category because, despite its large range it occupies a restricted habitat and is patchily distributed. For this reason it is assumed to have a moderately small and declining global population.

Tricoloured Heron *Hydranassa tricolor*: Three at La Guajira were followed by a single on Isla Salamanca. Also formerly called the Louisiana Heron. Together with the previous two species placed in the genus *Egretta*.

Striated Heron *Butorides striatus*: Small numbers seen at several different wetland areas.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*: Common and widespread. It remains to be seen whether the splitting of Eastern Cattle Egret *B. coromandus*, recently adopted in Rasmussen, P. C. & J.C. Anderton (2005): Birds of South Asia. The Ripley Guide, will be accepted more widely. They are very different, so I see no reason why it should not!

Capped Heron *Pilherodius pileatus*: We had a great view of this attractive heron in the stream bed at the Oilbird cave.

Black-crowned Night-Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax*: A single was seen near Bogotá on the first day, and later in the tour at La Guajira a few individuals were spotted.

Yellow-crowned Night-Heron *Nyctanassa violacea*: At least 20 individuals were seen on the coastal tide flats of La Guajira.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis*: A single adult was seen at Laguna de Fúquene but you had to be quick! The subspecies here is the localized endemic *bogotensis*, which is declining due to habitat destruction.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE

Whispering Ibis (Bare-faced I) *Phimosus infuscatus*: Quite a few encounters, including good numbers at Laguna de Sonso and some big flocks totalling 100 birds during our eventful travel day to Anori.

White Ibis *Eudocimus albus*: A total of 15 were seen on the tidal flats of La Guajira.

Scarlet Ibis *Eudocimus ruber*: A single bird at La Guajira, almost pink in plumage, was not a juvenile but in fact a rather pale adult.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus*: About 8 seen in the Laguna de Sonso area were our only ones.

Roseate Spoonbill *Ajaia ajaja*: About 100 or so were seen well in the wetlands at La Guajira. Always a delight to see well.

PHOENICOPTERIDAE

American Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*: We enjoyed the spectacle of at least 120 of these beauties at La Guajira. The Old World Greater Flamingo *P. roseus* is often lumped in this species with the name Greater Flamingo being used for the enlarged species.

ANHIMIDAE

Northern Screamer *Chauna chavaria*: It was great bonus to see this splendid species during one of our travel days, with a total 13 seen. Voted as runner-up for bird of the trip! Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at fewer than 10,000 and is thought to be decreasing. It is restricted to lowland marshes, swamps, lagoons, the banks of slow-flowing rivers and seasonally flooded alluvial plains, often in areas surrounded by forest. It is exclusively vegetarian, grazing the green parts of succulent aquatic plants, although digging for unknown food items is regular. Loss of habitat owing to drainage of wetlands for cattle and agriculture is probably resulting in slow population declines, but is unlikely to affect seasonally flooded and deeper wetlands in the near future. Collection of eggs, capture as pets and possibly illegal hunting in some areas, are unquantified threats.

ANATIDAE

White-faced Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna viduata*: We saw at least a half-dozen of these attractive tree ducks at our screamer marsh.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*: About 400 were seen when heading for Anori.

Andean Teal (M Andean T) *Anas andinus*: Six were scoped up and seen well along the Nevado del Ruiz road.

Merida Teal (M Speckled T) *Anas altipetens*: It was great to find three of this localized species on the gravel pit near to Bogotá. Note that many authors lump these birds from the Eastern Andes in Andean Teal (above). The two differ mainly in speculum colour. In addition, both forms are sometimes lumped in Speckled Teal *A. flavirostris*.

Blue-winged Teal *Anas discors*: Good numbers in wetlands around Bogotá and at Laguna de Sonso.

Torrent Duck *Merganetta armata*: We had great views through the scope of a single male at La Suiza. The subspecies here, *colombiana*, is very pale. This variable species (they get darker from north to south) may end up being treated as more than one species.

Andean Duck *Oxyura ferruginea*: Three were seen well through the scope on the small pool along the Nevado del Ruiz road.

CATHARTIDAE

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*: Widespread in small numbers, though more common further north. The South American Checklist Committee (SACC) now place this family in a separate order, Cathartiformes, and recent genetic data strongly refute a cathartid-stork relationship. The monophyly of the Cathartidae is strongly supported by multiple data sets (meaning that scientists have proved that the family contains the most recent common ancestor of all family members as well as all of the descendants of that common ancestor), and the family is sufficiently distinctive that fossil cathartids can be recognized as far back as the middle Eocene (about 50 million years ago).

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*: A single was seen from the bus in its characteristic low soaring flight below Anori.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*: Numerous and widespread. This commensal will only increase in numbers as the human population grows!

PANDIONIDAE

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*: Our first was noted in the Bogotá area, and singles were seen at Laguna de Sonso and below Anori. In spite of the cosmopolitan nature of this species, no breeding in South America has yet been documented.

ACCIPITRIDAE

Hook-billed Kite *Chondrohierax uncinatus*: A nice surprise was seeing this handsome raptor land on a nearby perch for brilliant scope views at our Manizales hotel. A very distinctive raptor.

American Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*: One of the most elegant birds of the Neotropics, we were able to admire around eight individuals at El Paujil, drifting gracefully over the canopy.

Pearl Kite *Gampsonyx swainsonii*: Our first perched on a wire was spotted from the moving bus by Denzil and near the end of the tour a perched pair was spotted by Keith on La Guajira.

White-tailed Kite *Elanus leucurus*: Four were seen in the Bogotá area and we saw a fifth during our travel day to Anori.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*: Five were seen at the marsh we stopped at en route to Anori.

Double-toothed Kite *Harpagus bidentatus* (H): A soaring single was heard calling above the dense forest canopy.

- Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea*: A single bird was seen on our last day on Isla Salamanca.
- Plain-breasted Hawk *Accipiter ventralis*: A single showed pretty well in flight at Jardin and a second nearly took my head off as I played tape for the problematic bush-tyrant.
- Barred Hawk *Leucopternis princeps*: This handsome raptor was seen fairly well in flight from the El Cairo area.
- Savanna Hawk *Heterospizias meridionalis*: We saw around 10 birds during the journey to Anori and a few were also noted on Isla Salamanca.
- Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis*: A close perched bird was spotted by Hilary for great views on our last morning spent at Isla Salamanca.
- Harris's Hawk (Bay-winged H) *Parabuteo unicinctus*: At least two were seen at La Guajira and Salamanca.
- Grey Hawk *Buteo nitidus*: One was seen near to the Oilbird caves at Rio Claro and a second was seen at La Guajira. The latest tendency is to re-lump Grey-lined (the form we saw) and Grey (the Central American form) Hawks. No one has really come up with any conclusive evidence justifying the suggested split.
- Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris*: Numerous and widespread in small numbers.
- White-rumped Hawk *Buteo leucorrhous*: Two encounters with our first from the Bogotá area at Pedro Palo and then we had good views of a second in the Santa Marta mountains.
- Broad-winged Hawk *Buteo platypterus*: A reasonably regularly encountered wintering raptor with six seen during the tour.
- Ornate Hawk-Eagle *Spizaetus ornatus*: A high soaring adult was seen at Anori and heard again there the next day.

FALCONIDAE

- Northern Caracara (Crested C) *Caracara cheriway*: Small numbers at a few sites and most numerous on La Guajira where we saw about 10 during the morning.
- Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*: Another widespread open country raptor that was seen regularly in small numbers, and was most numerous during the second half of the tour. 'Chimachima' is an onomatopoeic local Argentinian name for this species.
- Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans*: A perched bird I spotted from the bus was seen very well en route to Anori. A widespread species, but always great to see!
- Barred Forest-Falcon *Micrastur ruficollis* (H): We heard a distant bird calling early one morning at El Dorado.
- American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*: A total of eight were seen, some of which were from the bus during journeys.
- Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis*: In the Santa Marta mountains we had a single bird near the El Dorado lodge one morning.
- Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis*: Two at Laguna de Sonso were seen in flight and a third was seen in the Santa Marta mountains.

CRACIDAE

- Chestnut-winged Chachalaca *Ortalis garrula*: It took a few passes up and down, but in the end we found this one on our last morning at Isla Salamanca where we studied three at great length, and little did we know at the time the avian goodies that awaited ahead!
- Colombian Chachalaca *Ortalis columbiana*: Two showed briefly during our tyre puncture and we were pleased to find this one at the screamer marsh, but several days earlier Denzil and Mike had already found two at our Cali hotel garden. The taxonomy of the Speckled Chachalaca complex, of which Colombian Chachalaca is part, is somewhat complex.

- Band-tailed Guan *Penelope argyrotis* (H): A couple of distant individuals heard calling was our only encounter with this species in the Santa Marta mountains.
- Andean Guan *Penelope montagnii*: Just one group sighting, with good views of them above Bogotá on our first morning there!
- Cauca Guan *Penelope perspicax*: Thought extinct until a few years ago, we had great views of this superb endemic at La Suiza, where we saw up to eight on both dates, including some great close-ups. This species qualifies as Endangered as it has a very small known range in which severely fragmented habitat patches are declining. Its population is believed to be very small and divided into extremely small subpopulations which are inferred (as a result of ongoing habitat loss and hunting) to be declining.
- Wattled Guan *Aburria aburri*: Seeing a calling individual mid-morning through the scope was an excellent result from La Suiza, with some of us even seeing the colourful wattle. This species is classified as Near Threatened because it has a small population which is suspected to be declining moderately rapidly owing to habitat loss and hunting.
- Sickle-winged Guan *Chamaepetes goudotii*: First seen well near to the hummingbird feeders near to Cali, and others were seen at El Cairo, at La Suiza, and in the Santa Marta Mountains.

PHASIANIDAE

- Crested Bobwhite *Colinus cristatus* (H): One possibly two individuals were heard on La Guajira but we were unable to see them. A relicual family treatment from Hilty and Brown as new world quail are now placed in their own family the Odontophoridae.
- Black-fronted Wood-Quail *Odontophorus atrifrons*: At Santa Marta only a few of us managed to get on this one before they disappeared into the understorey. This species is classified as Vulnerable owing to its small range and population, both of which must be declining in response to habitat loss. The range is small and fragmented with recent records from only one area. The Colombian East Andes have been subject to four centuries of extensive degradation, with progressive deforestation of the lower montane slopes. In Boyacá and Santander, however, where forest loss was gradual until the 1960s and 1970s, some sizeable tracts remain, and habitat is beginning to regenerate owing to land abandonment. The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is threatened by agricultural expansion, logging and burning. On the west slopes, marijuana plantations expanded widely in the 1980s, and were sprayed by the government with herbicides in the early 1990s. The Sierra de Perijá is heavily deforested up to 2,000m, by cattle-ranching at lower elevations and narcotics cultivation higher up. It is also hunted at least in some parts of its range.
- Chestnut Wood-Quail *Odontophorus hyperythrus*: At La Suiza a few of us saw a male well as it walked into view but the rest of us had it in flight on two occasions as it crossed the road. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at fewer than 10,000. It occurs on both slopes of the West and Central Andes, of Colombia, south to Cauca and the head of the Magdalena valley in Huila. It is uncommon and local in montane evergreen forest, forest edge, secondary growth, and there is some evidence that it frequents coffee plantations with shade trees, at 1,600-2,700 m. The population is likely to be fewer than 10,000 in three subpopulations, each of which requires taxonomic validation. Its forest habitats have suffered widespread and severe deforestation over centuries of human colonisation, particularly in the Central Andes, with resultant fragmentation and isolation of populations. Further degradation owing to agricultural expansion is projected in the Central Andes, and the slopes of the Cauca and Magdalena valleys are now characterized by remnant (often secondary) forest patches, pasture, coffee, banana and sugarcane plantations. There is also evidence of hunting pressure.

ARAMIDAE

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna*: A single bird was seen well at the screamer marsh.

RALLIDAE

White-throated Crake *Laterallus albigularis*: One individual came incredibly easy as it walked out into a patch of open mud at Pedro Palo.

Bogotá Rail *Rallus semiplumbeus*: A handsome endemic, allowing for several great views at the gravel pits near to Bogotá, where we saw at least six including some showy individuals. This species is listed as Endangered because its range is very small and is contracting owing to widespread habitat loss and degradation.

Purple Gallinule (American P G) *Porphyrio martinicus*: A single was seen at Laguna de Sonso.

Spot-flanked Gallinule *Gallinula melanops*: The isolated population around Bogotá (*bogotensis*) was reasonably common and conspicuous at some of the marshes we visited on our first day.

Common Gallinule (C Moorhen, Laughing Moorhen) *Gallinula galeata*: This armchair tick is the result of a recent proposal that has officially passed the South American Checklist Committee (SACC). New world birds have been split from old world birds as Common Gallinule but possibly will be renamed Laughing Moorhen. Evidence includes molecular data showing *G. chloropus* is polyphyletic, strikingly different vocalizations of New World birds to Old World forms, and shield and head shape differences of American and European birds, as well as the longer bill of New World gallinules.

American Coot *Fulica americana*: Also relatively numerous in the marshes around Bogotá where they are represented by the race *columbiana* which has a distinctly yellow tone to the base of the bill, giving them a quite different appearance.

JACANIDAE

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*: Two races were encountered: the more typical *melanopygia* in the Cauca Valley (Laguna de Sonso) and the mostly uniform black *hypomelaena* at the screamer marsh. The two forms occur sympatrically in some areas.

CHARADRIIDAE

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*: Fairly widespread in small numbers.

Black-bellied Plover (Grey P) *Pluvialis squatarola*: Up to 25 birds were seen along the Caribbean coast towards the end of the tour.

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus*: A total of 35 were seen between La Guajira and Isla Salamanca.

Thick-billed Plover *Charadrius wilsonia*: At least a dozen birds were seen on the tidal mudflat we visited at La Guajira.

SCOLOPACIDAE

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*: Two were seen in the marshes near to Bogotá, and another at Laguna de Sonso.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*: One at Laguna de Sonso and up to fifteen were seen at the screamer marsh.

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca*: Up to 30 were seen at La Guajira and on Isla Salamanca and a few were also noted at the screamer marsh for direct comparison with the previous species.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularia*: Six birds were noted at wetland sites ranging from the Bogotá area to the Caribbean coast.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*: About 25 were noted at La Guajira and four more were seen at Isla Salamanca on our last morning. These birds appeared to be the eastern nominate subspecies

semipalmata based on size and structure and overall colour. The western form *inornata* may well be a separate species. The two forms differ not only in size, plumage, and voice, but also in their timing and route of migration and timing of moult. The two forms also differ in their North American breeding grounds with western birds nesting on the interior western prairie grasslands and eastern birds only in Atlantic coastal salt marshes.

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres*: At least 20 were seen at La Guajira mudflat and a couple more were seen the next day at Salamanca.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*: At Laguna de Sonso we had around 15 birds and then 200 of these tiny peeps were seen at La Guajira.

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos*: We had good views of several of these migrants in the drying pond that was Laguna de Sonso.

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla*: Numerous at La Guajira with up to 500 birds seen.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri*: The most common shorebird during our visit to La Guajira with up to 2000 birds seen foraging on the tidal mudflat.

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus*: Over 25 birds were seen at La Guajira and two more were seen at Isla Salamanca on our last morning.

Short-billed Dowitcher (Common D) *Limnodromus griseus*: Up to 50 birds were seen foraging on the tidal mudflat of La Guajira.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata*: Two were seen near to Bogotá while we were looking for the following species.

Noble Snipe *Gallinago nobilis*: At least two seen well at the gravel pits near to Bogotá, including our superb views of one which showed extremely well in the open at incredibly close range. Colombia's sprawling capital seems to be THE easiest place to see this northern Andean speciality.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*: A dozen birds were seen at Laguna de Sonso and then smaller numbers were seen on the Caribbean coast.

STERCORARIIDAE

Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua) *Stercorarius parasiticus*: Ok, so no White-cheeked Pintail but at Isla Salamanca we had good views of what appeared to be an injured bird.

LARIDAE

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus graellsii*: We had good views of this vagrant species to the South American continent as we sat drinking beer on the beach waiting for our fish and chips.

Laughing Gull *Larus atricilla*: Ten birds were seen at Isla Salamanca on our last day.

Gull-billed Tern *Sterna nilotica*: A single bird at rest was scoped up at Isla Salamanca.

Caspian Tern *Sterna caspia*: Three were seen at La Guajira and five more at Isla Salamanca, looking impressive when side-by-side with their smaller relatives.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo*: Four birds at rest were seen at La Guajira.

Least Tern *Sterna antillarum* (NL): One bird at rest was seen by Arnold at Isla Salamanca.

Royal Tern *Sterna maxima*: Three were seen in flight at La Guajira, and another ten or so at Isla Salamanca.

Sandwich Tern *Sterna sandvicensis*: Fifteen birds were noted on different days on the Caribbean coast. Recent genetic research suggests that North American and European Sandwich Terns are not the same species.

RYNCHOPIDAE

Black Skimmer *Rynchops nigra*: Six birds were seen over the screamer marsh.

COLUMBIDAE

Rock Dove (feral) *Columba livia*: An introduced species that was fairly common in cities and smaller towns.

Band-tailed Pigeon *Columba fasciata*: Fairly common and widespread with several good views of perched birds. Highest numbers were noted at Jardin and in the Santa Marta mountains. One of the most widespread New World birds, ranging from Alaska to Argentina. Here the Neotropical form *albilinea*, which has been regarded by some authors as a full species.

Bare-eyed Pigeon *Columba corensis*: Somewhat numerous in the dry scrub on La Guajira and Isla Salamanca, and we saw about 15 in total. The species is named after the Venezuelan town of Coro.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Columba cayennensis*: Small numbers of this widespread pigeon were seen at various sites. The scientific name refers to Cayenne or French Guyana, an epithet that in early ornithology usually indicated a species of otherwise unknown provenance.

Ruddy Pigeon *Columba subvinacea* (H): A few heard at Anori – a faster song than the following species.

Plumbeous Pigeon *Columba plumbea* (H): Singles were heard at El Cairo and the Rio Claro area.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata*: Two rather different-looking forms of this one were encountered, *pentheria* in the Eastern Andes (the ones we saw in the Bogotá area with underparts shaded cinnamon and outer tail feathers tipped rusty), and the white-tipped *caucaea* in the Cauca valley.

Common Ground-Dove (Scaly G-D) *Columbina passerina*: Small numbers (a total of eight) were seen along the Caribbean coast.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*: Small numbers of this widespread species were seen in open country.

Scaled Dove *Scardafella squammata*: Up to 40 birds were noted at La Guajira.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*: This often shy dove was seen and heard regularly throughout the tour.

Lined Quail-Dove *Geotrygon linearis*: This shy dove was regularly heard and seen well briefly at least by Keith and Arnold on one occasion in the Santa Marta mountains.

White-throated Quail-Dove *Geotrygon frenata* (H): A couple heard at El 18.

PSITTACIDAE

Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna*: A pair of these giants were seen very well flying fairly close at the screamer marsh.

Chestnut-fronted Macaw *Ara severa*: Three were seen well at the screamer marsh where we scoped them perched.

Scarlet-fronted Parakeet (Red-fronted P) *Aratinga wagleri*: First seen in flight in the Cali area, our best views were from the Santa Marta Mountains, where they were pretty common. We managed to scope up one perched group, but otherwise most were flying over. Here the nominate race. Species in this genus, as well as *Leptosittaca* and those in *Pyrrhura*, often go by the name 'conure'.

Brown-throated Parakeet *Aratinga pertinax*: We first saw around 20 birds at the screamer marsh and they were fairly common in the Caribbean where they were often seen perched up on cacti.

Golden-plumed Parakeet (G-p Parrot) *Leptosittaca branickii*: We had good views of several perched birds at La Suiza where we saw 20 individuals and another six were seen at Rio Blanco. A threatened species, seemingly partly dependent on wax palms (*Ceroxylon*) for nesting. Some people fear that eventually this species may follow the fate as the related Yellow-eared

Parrot. Classified as Vulnerable by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 2,500 – 9,999 individuals and is decreasing. Very high levels of forest clearance, fragmentation and degradation have presumably resulted in this species undergoing rapid population declines and consequently qualifying as Vulnerable. Total numbers are difficult to assess, but the population is (as a precaution) considered to be small.

- Yellow-eared Parrot *Ognorhynchus icterotis*: One of the highlights of the tour was seeing a nesting trio of these superb birds at Jardin. One of Jean's favourites. Classified as Critically Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at just 600 individuals but is currently increasing. Recent evidence suggests the population around Jardin is c250. This species is Critically Endangered because the known range (especially the nesting area) is extremely small. Suitable habitat is severely fragmented throughout its historical range and continues to be lost and degraded. Conservation action is addressing some of the key issues but the future of this species remains extremely uncertain. It has suffered considerable habitat loss and fragmentation (90-93% of montane forest in Colombia) throughout its range. However, several sizeable areas of habitat remain within its historic range, suggesting additional causes of decline. Wax palm mortality is accelerating and they suffer poor recruitment because cattle browse young trees, and logging in adjacent areas increases their susceptibility to disease. Wax palms are incredibly long-lived and slow-growing (mature individuals are over 500 years old) and they are used in Palm Sunday Church services. In Ecuador, hunting for food was prolific, and trapping has had some impact in Colombia, although the species is notoriously hard to keep in captivity.
- Santa Marta Parakeet *Pyrrhura viridicata*: Another of the tour highlights were our superb and prolonged views of perched birds in the Santa Marta mountains. Roger got more than he bargained for when he spotted these birds! Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 5,000 – 10,000 individuals and decreasing. Only 15% of the original vegetation in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta remains, albeit largely on the north slope where this species occurs. The main threat is the conversion of forest to marijuana and coca plantations which was compounded by the government spraying herbicides on the sierra. It is not known whether this approach is still taken by the Colombian authorities. Threats that followed human immigration to the area from the 1950s onwards are agricultural expansion (e.g. livestock), logging, burning and afforestation with exotic trees (e.g. pines). Thankfully the species has not been found in the local bird trade.
- Rufous-fronted Parakeet *Bolborhynchus ferrugineifrons* (H): A small group was heard flying through an impenetrable wall of fog along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Green-rumped Parrotlet *Forpus passerinus*: At least 20 noted on the day that we went to La Guajira, where they were pretty common.
- Spectacled Parrotlet *Forpus conspicillatus*: A near-endemic that first showed nicely in the coffee plantations near Bogotá and then we saw them especially well at Laguna de Sonso where birds were once again nesting in the buildings at the headquarters! Also seen at several other sites.
- Orange-chinned Parakeet *Brotogeris jugularis*: Common at Rio Claro and a few were also seen at La Guajira. Many were flying over in raucous groups, but we also enjoyed some good views of perched birds.
- Rusty-faced Parrot *Hapalopsittaca amazonina*: Untickable views of a distant pair in flight at Rio Blanco. This species is listed as Vulnerable because its small population consists of very small, scattered subpopulations that are likely to be undergoing continuing declines, owing to widespread habitat loss.
- Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus*: Five were seen at Laguna de Sonso and we went on to have good views of at least 25 birds in the Rio Claro region, all of the race *rubrigularis*.

Red-billed Parrot *Pionus sordidus*: Only seen in the Santa Marta Mountains, where it is represented by the endemic race *saturatus*. A species conspicuously absent from most of the remainder of the country.

White-capped Parrot *Pionus seniloides*: A total of 15 were seen above Jardin on a few occasions.

Bronze-winged Parrot *Pionus chalcopterus*: Five birds were seen on our first visit and two more on our second visit during our time at Jardin.

Orange-winged Parrot *Amazona amazonica*: Excellent close-ups of three birds perched in a nearby tree at the screamer marsh.

Scaly-naped Parrot (S-n Amazon) *Amazona mercenaria*: Our excellent views of birds perched at close-quarter was very special. We were even able to see the armoured appearance of the bird's head and neck feathers, the basis for their scientific name (Mercenary Parrot).

CUCULIDAE

Dwarf Cuckoo *Coccyzus pumilus*: Our first in the coffee plantations of La Mesa was a rare record and we went on to have several excellent views of a couple of these attractive cuckoos at Laguna de Sonso.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*: A few encounters, with a total of seven noted during the tour.

Greater Ani *Crotophaga major*: Our first was somewhat of a surprise in the agricultural area of La Mesa, a few more were seen at Laguna de Sonso, and another ten were seen in the Rio Claro area.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*: Very common and widespread, the default ani in most of the country.

Groove-billed Ani *Crotophaga sulcirostris*: Several of this smaller and slightly more retiring ani were seen well at La Guajira.

Striped Cuckoo *Tapera naevia* (H): A distant heard-only at Laguna de Sonso.

STRIGIDAE

Tropical Screech-Owl *Otus choliba*: A very cooperative bird showed brilliantly on the grounds of our El Cairo hotel.

Santa Marta Screech-Owl *Megascops gilesi*: This newly described species took plenty of effort to track down, but for those that persisted we eventually had superb views at El Dorado. Note that all New World *Otus* are now placed in *Megascops*.

White-throated Screech-Owl *Megascops albogularis* (H): This species was strangely unresponsive and heard only distantly at Rio Blanco.

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium brasilianum*: A feisty individual was seen very well in the dry scrub at La Guajira.

Mottled Owl *Ciccaba virgata*: One of the highlights of our Santa Marta birding were the excellent pre-dawn views we had of a responsive bird in the spotlight.

STEATORNITHIDAE

Oilbird *Steatornis caripensis*: Our excursion into the 'gruta', near Rio Claro, was great fun, and we enjoyed fabulous views of at least 15 of these strange birds, and heard their weird calls. We were even able to admire them through the scope!

NYCTIBIIDAE

Common Potoo (Grey P) *Nyctibius griseus*: Great views of a roosting bird at Laguna de Sonso.

CAPRIMULGIDAE

Rufous-bellied Nighthawk *Lurocalis rufiventris*: One was seen by Carl below Anori during one of his supply runs.

Lesser Nighthawk *Chordeiles acutipennis*: One was seen by Carl near our Cartago hotel.
Common Nighthawk *Chordeiles minor*: We enjoyed some marvellous views of a roosting bird in a tree at Laguna de Sonso and at our Manizales hotel we enjoyed its mournful song.
Pauraque (Common P) *Nyctidromus albicollis*: A few seen, many of which were just seen flying off the road early in the morning.

APODIDAE

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris*: Pretty common and widespread, with the greatest numbers being around Jardin, particularly on the journey there.
Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutilus*: First seen at El 18 near to Cairo where we saw around 20 and later a total of 60 were seen on separate days at Anori.
Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*: At least 20 were seen well at El 18, with just a few others elsewhere.
Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyura*: A few of these distinctively shaped birds were seen at Rio Claro.

TROCHILIDAE

Green Hermit *Phaethornis guy*: Singles were noted at El 18 from both our morning and afternoon visits there.
Tawny-bellied Hermit *Phaethornis syrmatophorus*: Easier to hear than see, the lekking birds that we heard seemed incredibly good at staying out of view. We did end up seeing one at El 18 and a few in the El Cairo area pretty well though.
Long-billed Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris*: A single bird was seen fairly well at Rio Claro. This form ranges from Central America into northern Venezuela.
Sooty-capped Hermit *Phaethornis augusti*: Thanks to Denzil's good spotting we all managed to see a singing bird at its lek. We had excellent views after stepping inside the forest where we all saw the bird very close and picked up a few ants in the process.
Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*: We enjoyed some good sightings of this tiny hermit at Anori. Hilty & Brown lump this form (together with Black-throated Hermit *P. atrimentalis*) in Longuemare's Hermit *P. longuemareus*, to form an expanded Little Hermit.
Green-fronted Lancebill *Doryfera ludovicae*: Some good roadside views of a bird feeding at a flowering tree below El Cairo.
White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora*: Very numerous at the hummingbird feeders near to El 18, and away from there, just a few seen in the Rio Claro area.
Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae*: Also fairly common at the hummingbird feeders near to El 18 and a few were also seen at the feeders at Anori.
Green Violetear *Colibri thalassinus*: First seen near to El Cairo, but easiest to watch at the feeders at Rio Blanco and El Doradal. 'Thalassinus' is Latin for 'sea green'.
Black-throated Mango *Anthracothorax nigricollis*: Small numbers seen with the best views at the hummingbird feeders near to El 18, and also several in the flowering trees at Laguna de Sonso.
Ruby-Topaz Hummingbird *Chrysolampis mosquitus*: An eleventh hour find of which we all had very good scope views of an adult male resting and preening in the shade of an *Erythrina* crown at Laguna de Sonso.
Western Emerald (West Andean E) *Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus*: This species largely escaped us, but Hilary did manage to photograph a resting perched bird from the trails at Anori.
Red-billed Emerald *Chlorostilbon gibsoni*: This species was found to be quite common around La Guajira, though most seen were females.
Coppery Emerald *Chlorostilbon russatus*: A male in hovering flight was first spotted by Roger and was quickly followed by a female insecting at the same spot.

Violet-crowned Woodnymph (Blue-c W) *Thalurania colombica*: One was noted around Laguna Pedro Palo on our second morning and a few seen elsewhere, including some many views in the Santa Marta mountains.

Green-crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania fannyi*: A male of this species was first seen at the Oelman feeders and later in the tour they were quite common on the feeders at Anori.

Blue-headed Sapphire *Hylocharis grayi*: Another stunner at the feeders at El 18, where we were delighted to see a fine male that returned to the same feeder several times.

Buffy Hummingbird *Leucippus fallax*: We saw at least six individuals of this species in the arid country of La Guajira. This species is one of the more colourful members of a genus comprised of rather plain-looking hummers whose distributions are actually very interesting from a biogeographical and historical evolutionary standpoint.

Andean Emerald *Amazilia franciae*: We saw at least 40 at the feeders near to El 18, where they showed their iridescent crowns off beautifully, likewise they were common at the feeders of Anori.

Steely-vented Hummingbird *Amazilia saucerrottei*: At least 30 were noted at the hummer feeders at El 18 and usually there were about a dozen on the feeders of Anori. They really catch the light when they turn towards you!

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl*: This common and widespread species was regularly encountered in small numbers.

White-vented Plumeleteer *Chalybura buffonii*: We saw one individual of this relatively uninteresting hummingbird in the coffee country above La Mesa feeding in an *Erythrina*, with others seen below San Lorenzo.

Speckled Hummingbird *Adelomyia melanogenys*: This is usually more common and widespread, but we recorded only a few birds at El 18 and above Jardin.

Blossomcrown *Anthocephala floriceps*: Our very patient vigil for this hummer ended without much of a result with only one bird seen briefly by Hilary and myself. Classified as Vulnerable by BirdLife International.

Fawn-breasted Brilliant *Heliodoxa rubinoides*: Only seen at the feeders at El 18. Here the race *aequatorialis*.

Green-crowned Brilliant *Heliodoxa jacula*: This species was common on the feeders at Anori.

Empress Brilliant *Heliodoxa imperatrix*: Three in total, including a male, were seen very well near to El Cairo. One of the many Chocó specialities that we saw in this excellent area.

White-tailed Hillstar *Urochroa bougueri*: We noted at least six in the El Cairo area, with some good views. These were birds of the nominate race, which shows a prominent rufous malar. Those found on the east slope in Ecuador belong to the race *leucura*. Two species may be involved.

Shining Sunbeam *Aglaeactis cupripennis*: A total of five individuals were seen during our day in the higher elevations of Nevado del Ruiz.

Mountain Velvetbreast *Lafresnaya lafresnayi*: A single male feeding quickly at roadside flowers was mostly elusive in the Santa Marta mountains.

Great Sapphirewing *Pterophanes cyanopterus*: A splendid male was seen very well hovering at flowers at the high elevation site of Nevado del Ruiz. Here of the endemic race *caeruleus*.

Bronzy Inca *Coeligena coeligena*: Several encounters, including good views at El 18, Rio Blanco and La Suiza.

Brown Inca *Coeligena wilsoni*: We had good views of this Chocó speciality with a total of nine birds seen in the El Cairo area.

Collared Inca *Coeligena torquata*: A characteristic cloud forest hummer, encountered several times, and particularly conspicuous at the feeders at Rio Blanco.

White-tailed Starfrontlet *Coeligena phalerata*: A brilliant male visited the feeders on a few occasions at El Dorado in the Santa Marta mountains. For Jean this was a runner-up for bird-of-the-trip.

- Buff-winged Starfrontlet *Coeligena lutetiae*: At Nevado del Ruiz, this species appeared to be catching insects from its roadside perch allowing good views.
- Buff-tailed Coronet *Boissonneaua flavescens*: Very common and conspicuous around the feeders at Rio Blanco where they dominate the action, with just a few others elsewhere.
- Velvet-purple Coronet *Boissonneaua jardini*: Stunning views of several males in the El Cairo area – a delightful Chocó endemic.
- Tourmaline Sunangel *Heliangelus exortis*: This species was seen very well on several occasions visiting the garden of Rio Blanco and several more seen in the Jardin area. Colombia is definitely the country to see this one.
- Glowing Puffleg *Eriocnemis vestitus*: At Cerro de Guadalupe near Bogotá there were two individuals that showed a few times perched and in hovering flight but a couple of folks missed them.
- Coppery-bellied Puffleg *Eriocnemis cupreovertris*: Up to six showed very well from our visits to Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá, including the extra bonus of a female on her nest. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, it occurs from the Mérida mountains, north-west Venezuela, south along both slopes of the East Andes to Cundinamarca, north-east Colombia. It is apparently uncommon in montane and elfin forest borders, páramo vegetation with scattered low shrubs and, in Cundinamarca, secondary scrub (nesting in dense vegetation), at 1,950-3,000m. Its habitats in the Colombian East Andes have been extensively degraded, with forest in its lower elevational range, on the western slope, largely cleared for intensive crop cultivation and pasture. Deforestation is locally severe in Mérida and Táchira, Venezuela, primarily owing to agricultural colonization, with many areas of páramo and forest already cleared for commercial and subsistence cultivation.
- Golden-breasted Puffleg *Eriocnemis mosquera*: We had several good views of a total of five birds during our day spent at Nevado del Ruiz. A restricted-range species shared with Ecuador.
- Black-thighed Puffleg *Eriocnemis derbyi*: We saw at least two birds, the second bird perching for us at close-quarter allowing excellent views during our day at Nevado del Ruiz. This restricted-range, near-endemic is classified as Near-Threatened. This species is thought to have a declining population and a moderately small range which is declining owing to habitat loss.
- Greenish Puffleg *Haplophædia aureliae*: First seen at El 18, this rather drab and unimpressive puffleg was also seen well around El Cairo.
- Booted Racket-tail *Ocreatus underwoodii*: We enjoyed a few encounters with this widespread but attractive species, though most were females.
- Purple-backed Thornbill *Ramphomicron microrhynchum*: A fabulous result for one half of the group with a perched male whilst the rest of us were busy tracking down (successfully) an Ocellated Tapaculo. One of Roger's favourites!
- Viridian Metaltail *Metallura williami*: At least six seen in the higher areas along the Nevado del Ruiz road. A fairly non-descript hummer.
- Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina*: We saw both the reddish-tailed nominate race in all three Andean chains, and the very distinct and blue-tailed *districta*, endemic to the Santa Marta and Perijá mountains.
- Bearded Helmetcrest *Oxygogon guerini*: Another incredible species that we enjoyed an excellent encounter with along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Long-tailed Sylph *Aglaiocercus kingi*: Our best views of this delicate and widespread species were on the feeders at Rio Blanco. The subspecies here, *emmae*, is characterized by the lack of a throat patch and a shimmering green upper tail. It has sometimes been considered a separate species, usually incorporating *caudatus* or *mocoa*, or both, as races.
- Violet-tailed Sylph *Aglaiocercus coelestis*: We enjoyed some fantastic views of both males and females of this superb Chocó endemic in the El Cairo area.

- Wedge-billed Hummingbird *Schistes geoffroyi*: One individual feeding at roadside flowers gave us excellent close-quarter views at El 18.
- Santa Marta Woodstar *Chaetocercus astreans*: Below El Dorado we all had a good look at a female with several of us even seeing her through the scope. A Birdquest group first!
- Purple-throated Woodstar *Philodice mitchellii*: Just one showed well at the feeders at El 18.
- White-bellied Woodstar *Acestrura mulsant*: A perched female was seen by only a few of us for just a brief moment before disappearing.

TROGONIDAE

- White-tipped Quetzal *Pharomachrus fulgidus*: Superb views of a few birds in the San Lorenzo area, here of the Santa Marta endemic form *festatus*. One of the species shared between the Santa Marta Mountains and Venezuela's coastal cordilleras.
- Golden-headed Quetzal *Pharomachrus auriceps*: A male was seen in flight but mostly eluded us at El Cairo, but then at Rio Blanco we had good views of a perched bird.
- Western White-tailed Trogon *Trogon chionurus*: Seen very well at Rio Claro.
- Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris*: We started out seeing this species at El 18, and had yet more fine males at La Suiza and Anori. They can be separated from the following species by the width of the tail barring.
- Masked Trogon *Trogon personatus*: We had good views of a pair of this lovely species at Rio Blanco.
- Northern Violaceous Trogon *Trogon caligatus* (H): This species was heard at Rio Claro.

ALCEDINIDAE

- Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana*: A single bird was seen in the Rio Claro area. Note that New World kingfishers are now treated as part of a separate family, the Cerylidae.

MOMOTIDAE

- Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum*: At Rio Claro only a couple of us saw a bird spotted by Jean.
- Blue-crowned Motmot *Momotus momota* (H): A heard only record in the Minca area. Note that following a review of Blue-crowned Motmot in a recent paper by Gary Stiles, this species complex has recently been split into six species. Here the trans-Andean form Whooping Motmot *M. subrufescens* (E Panama and NW South America). The five additional forms are Blue-crowned Motmot, *Momotus coeruleiceps* (NE Mexico); Blue-diademed Motmot, *Momotus lessonii* (Middle America); Amazonian Motmot, *Momotus momota* (Amazon basin);; Trinidad Motmot, *Momotus bahamensis* (Trinidad and Tobago) and Andean Motmot *Momotus aequatorialis*. A second author called for the form found in W Ecuador and NW Peru to receive separate species status, Silver-banded Motmot *Momotus argenticinctus*, but this has yet to be widely accepted.
- Andean Motmot *Momotus aequatorialis*: We enjoyed a good number of sightings of this smart species. Notice the recent English name change from Highland. It was reasonably conspicuous at several sites including El 18, the El Cairo area and at La Suiza, with several other sightings too.

GALBULIDAE

- Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda*: First seen at Rio Claro, and we later saw up to six birds on La Guajira. Here the subspecies *pallens*.

BUCCONIDAE

Barred Puffbird *Nystalus radiatus*: We enjoyed some brilliant views of two of these charismatic birds at Rio Claro.

Russet-throated Puffbird *Hypnelus ruficollis*: A real stunner that we found at La Guajira on the Caribbean coast. Now that this species and Two-banded Puffbird *H. bicinctus* are treated as separate species, this species has a very small range in north-eastern Colombia and north-western Venezuela.

Moustached Puffbird *Malacoptila mystacalis*: A pair seen brilliantly was one of the trip highlights and was seen on just the second day of the tour. A favourite of Mike and Denzil.

Lanceolated Monklet *Micromonacha lanceolata*: Absolutely superb! At Anori a pair perched nearly side by side at eye-level in a neighbouring canopy was certainly the most memorable sighting in all of my twenty plus observations of this species in various countries. Andrew's runner-up for bird-of-the-trip!

CAPITONIDAE

White-mantled Barbet *Capito hypoleucus*: Great views of a pair at Rio Claro. It was great to watch them bending their heads right down and bobbing their tails up and down as they emitted their quiet calls. A so-called Nechí endemic, confined to the humid forests of the middle Magdalena Valley. The Nechí is actually a tributary of the Cauca river, its drainage being on the east side of the top end of the Central Andes but west of the Serranía de San Lucas. Its drainage is often considered part of the 'Magdalena Valley', though technically it really isn't. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 2,500 – 9,999 individuals and is decreasing. This species has a very small and severely fragmented range. Habitat loss is occurring rapidly in some parts of its range, and the population is likely to be declining.

Red-headed Barbet *Eubucco bourcierii*: We enjoyed a male of this stunner early on at Laguna Pedro Palo, and then had a couple more at El Cairo and Anori.

RAMPHASTIDAE

Yellow-billed Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus calorhynchus*: A good find by Roger for us all to have great looks at a pair of this species along the road to San Lorenzo.

Andean Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus albivitta*: First seen at Laguna Pedro Palo with further sightings around El Cairo, La Suiza, Rio Blanco and Jardin.

Santa Marta Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus lautus*: We enjoyed some good scope views of five of these in the San Lorenzo area. Another of the would-be species created in the potential splitting-up of Emerald Toucanet, something that has not yet happened. One author has pointed out that the allopatric taxa (the proposed splits) are no more distinctive than those known to intergrade.

Crimson-rumped Toucanet *Aulacorhynchus haematopygus*: One showed well to Hilary and Carl at El Cairo while the rest of us were seeking tapaculos, and a second was later found at Anori.

Collared Aracari *Pteroglossus torquatus*: One was seen as we neared the end of our travel day to Anori, but stopping the public bus was not an option.

Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan *Andigena hypoglauca*: It was an excellent bonus to find a single bird that really put on show for us on the way back down from our day along the Nevado del Ruiz road. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, the world population is unknown but is suspected to be declining moderately rapidly owing to habitat loss.

Black-billed Mountain-Toucan *Andigena nigrirostris*: We had good looks at two birds that showed fairly well at Rio Blanco and a third was later seen briefly above Jardin.

Keel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos sulfuratus*: Great views of a total of five in the Santa Marta mountains. The bills have to be seen to be believed!

Chestnut-mandibled Toucan *Ramphastos swainsonii*: We saw at least one bird quite well through the scope at Rio Claro.

PICIDAE

Chestnut Piculet *Picumnus cinnamomeus*: One individual appeared and quickly disappeared just as the rain began on La Guajira, so it came as a very welcome surprise when Mike found a second bird that almost everyone saw on Isla Salamanca. This fairly localized species also occurs in western Venezuela.

Scaled Piculet *Picumnus squamulatus*: We all enjoyed superb studies of two of this somewhat uncommon bird from the Minca area of the Santa Marta mountains.

Olivaceous Piculet *Picumnus olivaceus*: Two showed well at Laguna Pedro Palo and four more were seen in the Rio Claro area.

Greyish Piculet *Picumnus granadensis*: It took a persistent effort but the performance of three birds at Laguna de Sonso was very rewarding. Often not an easy species to come by!

Spot-breasted Woodpecker *Chrysoptilus punctigula*: Several were seen well in the Laguna de Sonso area – a real stunner in our scopes.

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker *Piculus rivolii*: This stunner was seen very well through the scope at Rio Blanco. Woodpeckers don't get much better than that!

Golden-olive Woodpecker *Piculus rubiginosus*: A widespread but quite variable species. We saw a single at El 18 and a few at El Cairo in the Western Andes (*pacificus*), and saw singles at La Suiza and Manizales in the Central Andes (*gularis*). Both of these subspecies are endemic.

Cinnamon Woodpecker *Celeus loricatus*: Our first bird, a female poking her head out of a nest hole, was a real delight at Rio Claro. We saw a total of three birds during our birding there.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*: Two birds seen at Laguna de Sonso were our only records.

Red-crowned Woodpecker *Melanerpes rubricapillus*: A couple in the coffee country above La Mesa, two more at Laguna de Sonso, and common for the second half of the tour.

Smoky-brown Woodpecker *Veniliornis fumigatus*: First seen at Laguna Pedro Palo but it did not stick around for long unfortunately, and heard later near to El 18.

Red-rumped Woodpecker *Veniliornis kirkii*: One was seen briefly in the coffee country above La Mesa.

Yellow-vented Woodpecker *Veniliornis dignus*: We enjoyed great views of this desirable and attractive woodpecker at El Cairo.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos*: Two at El Dorado showed quite well near the lodge.

Powerful Woodpecker *Campephilus pollens*: At Rio Blanco two pairs involved in what appeared to be a territorial dispute put on quite a show for us for excellent studies.

DENDROCOLAPTIDAE

Tyrannine Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla tyrannina*: A single individual of this large woodcreeper was seen extremely well near to El Cairo.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus*: A single individual was seen well near the Oilbird caves. It is not entirely well known what form is found here but most likely our birds belong to *sylvioides* ranging from Mexico to NW Colombia (and synonymous with races *enochrus* and *levis*).

Strong-billed Woodcreeper *Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*: A couple of pairs were seen very well at La Suiza and then seen again in the Santa Marta mountains.

Black-banded Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes picumnus* (H): This species was strangely elusive with two heard in the Santa Marta mountains.

- Straight-billed Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus picus*: Several seen in open country and woodland in the Rio Claro area (*dugandi*) and also seen on La Isla Salamanca at the end of the tour (*picrostris*).
- Cocoa Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus susurrans*: Two were seen at the Oilbird caves near to Rio Claro and a third was seen below El Dorado.
- Olive-backed Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus triangularis*: This montane woodcreeper showed briefly to a few of us in a mixed species flock at Anori.
- Streak-headed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*: An open country species that we first saw in the light woodland of Laguna de Sonso, and we went on to see at least five others in the Rio Claro area.
- Montane Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*: This attractive and well-marked woodcreeper was regularly seen in the Western and Central Andes (the endemic *sneiderni*), and also in the Santa Marta mountains (the endemic *sanctaemartae*).
- Brown-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus pusillus* (H): Two singing birds near to El Cairo would not show despite being frustratingly close.

FURNARIIDAE

- Stout-billed Cinclodes *Cinclodes excelsior*: Great views of up to 10 birds along the Nevado del Ruiz road, including some very obliging individuals.
- Caribbean Hornero *Furnarius longirostris*: Four birds were seen at La Guajira, and though they were furtive, our position allowed us many good views as they paraded across an open patch of ground.
- Andean Tit-Spintail *Leptasthenura andicola*: A handsome bird of shrubby high country, of which two were seen very well along the Nevado del Ruiz road. Here of the race *andicola*.
- Azara's Spintail *Synallaxis azarae*: Our best views were had near to El Cairo with a couple of roadside birds.
- Silvery-throated Spintail *Synallaxis subpudica* (H): A frustrating heard-only with a few birds near to Bogotá at the start of the tour. At the end of the tour, several in the group opted to make another attempt in Bogotá before our evening flight that resulted in our excellent views of at least four birds.
- Pale-breasted Spintail *Synallaxis albescens*: This open country spintail was seen at Laguna Pedro Palo, with a handful of others being noted during the tour.
- Slaty Spintail *Synallaxis brachyura*: A pair seen and voice recorded at Laguna de Sonso was possibly a new record for the area and a third was seen near to El Cairo.
- Rusty-headed Spintail *Synallaxis fuscorufa*: An attractive Santa Marta endemic that we teased into view with great results. Classified as Vulnerable by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at between 2,500 and 9,999 and is thought to be decreasing. This species has a small range and population, which is fragmented and declining due to habitat destruction caused by illegal agriculture, logging and burning. Intensification of these pressures, and hence increased inferred rates of population decline have led to its up listing to Vulnerable. It may even warrant up listing to Endangered once more detailed information on rates of forest loss becomes available.
- Rufous Spintail *Synallaxis unirufa* (H): At Jardin a heard only encounter with a bird that would not budge was our only encounter.
- White-whiskered Spintail *Synallaxis candei*: A cracking and showy spintail, of which we saw several very well at La Guajira. Hilary's runner-up for bird-of-the-trip! This species has a relatively small range in north-eastern Colombia and north-western Venezuela.
- White-browed Spintail *Hellmayrea gularis*: Our superb views of a pair of these attractive and unusual looking spintails was a highlight from our birding at Jardin. A monotypic genus named after

Carl Eduard Hellmayr (1878-1944), a German/US ornithologist and author of the 'Catalogue of birds of the Americas', 1924, a classic work that is still a very important reference for anyone with a serious interest in the taxonomy and distribution of Neotropical birds.

- Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomea*: This marshland bird showed very nicely in the mangroves of Isla Salamanca on our last day.
- Streak-capped Spinetail *Cranioleuca hellmayri*: Another localized spinetail (endemic to the Santa Marta Mountains and Sierra de Perijá) that showed very well indeed in the mixed flocks above San Lorenzo.
- Ash-browed Spinetail *Cranioleuca curtata*: Unbeatable close-ups of several of these arboreal spinetails at Laguna Pedro Palo, near to Bogotá.
- Red-faced Spinetail *Cranioleuca erythrops*: Fairly common at El 18 west of Cali where we noted at least three and also recorded at La Suiza.
- White-chinned Thistletail *Schizoeaca fuliginosa*: Great views of a of pair high up along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Many-striped Canastero *Asthenes flammulata*: Another highland furnarid that showed well along the Nevado del Ruiz road, where we saw a singing male.
- Pearled Treerunner *Margarornis squamiger*: A most handsome cloudforest denizen that we saw very well in the mixed flocks above Jardin.
- Fulvous-dotted Treerunner (Star-chested T) *Margarornis stellaris*: We enjoyed repeated encounters with this highly localized 'mossy forest' species in the El Cairo area. The spots on the throat are actually pretty hard to see in the field, though we were fortunate enough to see them incredibly well! Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, this species occurs on the west slope of the West Andes from west Colombia (south Chocó) south to Carchi, Ecuador, with small populations in Antioquia, Colombia, and Chimborazo, Ecuador. It is rare in Ecuador, and, though formerly considered relatively common in Colombia, the extent of habitat destruction within its range suggests that it has declined. It inhabits humid montane forest, especially mossy cloud forest, from the midstorey to the canopy, at 1,200-2,200m, but principally above 1,600m. It is primarily threatened by rapid and ongoing deforestation in the Chocó region, largely owing to intensive logging, human settlement, cattle grazing, mining and coca and palm cultivation, with destruction particularly severe within its elevational range.
- Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens*: Great looks at a few different birds at El 18 with another single at Anori.
- Pacific Tuftedcheek *Pseudocolaptes johnsoni*: We had quite nice views of this attractive furnarid near to El Cairo with a total of three seen. This form was formerly lumped (as in Hilty & Brown) in Buffy Tuftedcheek *P. lawrencii* of Central America.
- Western Woodhaunter *Hyloctistes virgatus*: A single bird in the company of an understory flock at Anori was unresponsive with only Jean getting a good view of it.
- Lineated Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla subalaris*: This somewhat secretive and skulking furnarid was glimpsed at Laguna Pedro Palo, but then at El 18 we managed to have good views of a few birds.
- Montane Foliage-gleaner *Anabacerthia striaticollis*: One seen well at Laguna Pedro Palo was strangely our only one.
- Slaty-winged Foliage-gleaner *Philydor fuscipennis*: Repeated good views of at least two birds and hearing their vocalization confirmed this species for the Oilbird cave at Rio Claro.
- Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner *Automolus rufipectus*: Most of us saw this species fairly well at mid-altitude in the Santa Marta mountains but unfortunately it could not be refound in a subsequent attempt. Formally lumped in Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, this interesting and vocally distinct endemic has recently been described as an endemic species.

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner *Philydor rufus*: Quite common at Anori where we saw four individuals.

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner *Automolus ochrolaemus*: Two individuals showed quite well at the Oilbird cave. A widespread subspecies that shows a great deal of variation in vocalizations across its range, and in the Amazon even within purported subspecies on different soil types, here the subspecies *pallidigularis*.

Flammulated Treehunter *Thripadectes flammulatus*: Another of the tour highlights was not only to find this special species but to see it so well in the scope in the Santa Marta mountains.

Striped Treehunter *Thripadectes holostictus* (H): A single encounter with a bird that would not responded to playback near to Jardin.

Streak-capped Treehunter *Thripadectes virgaticeps*: This often elusive and skulking species gave itself up easily this year and we were able to enjoy great close-up views at El 18.

Uniform Treehunter *Thripadectes ignobilis*: A west slope bird that we saw very well near to El Cairo.

Streaked Xenops *Xenops rutilans*: Three birds were seen in the El 18 area and at Rio Blanco, here the form *heterurus* found in the Central and Western Andes. In the Santa Marta mountains a single bird was seen, here of the race *perijanus*.

Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus*: A few were seen in the Rio Claro area.

Grey-throated Leaf-tosser *Sclerurus albigularis*: A pair of these ground birds singing nearby at our feet came quite easily at El Dorado. Here the subspecies *propinquus* endemic to the Santa Marta mountains.

THAMNOPHILIDAE

Fasciated Antshrike *Cymbilaimus lineatus*: We all had good views of this species in the Rio Claro area.

Black-crested Antshrike *Sakesphorus canadensis*: Common in the dry forest at La Guajira, where several showed very well in response to the pygmy-owl tape and our day count for the day was nearly 30 individuals.

Black-backed Antshrike *Sakesphorus melanonotus*: Eventually seen by all and most had good views of a male of this much-wanted and localized species.

Bar-crested Antshrike *Thamnophilus multistriatus*: We enjoyed great views of at least a male in the coffee country above La Mesa. A pair was also seen well at the site of our puncture en route to La Suiza. A near-endemic, generally replacing the previous at higher elevations. Outside Colombia only known from the Venezuelan side of the Sierra de Perijá.

Uniform Antshrike *Thamnophilus unicolor*: Great views of a male at El 18, west of Cali, and heard again at Anori. The subspecies in Colombia is *grandior*.

Western Slaty-Antshrike *Thamnophilus atrinucha*: A pair was seen well at the Oilbird cave near Rio Claro.

Plain Antvireo *Dysithamnus mentalis* (H): One heard-only at Anori, but were unable to see it.

Western Antshrike (Bicoloured Antvireo) *Thamnomanes occidentalis* (H): A frustrating encounter with a female near to El Cairo who remained just out of sight and would not come out for us.

Pacific Streaked-Antwren (Pacific A) *Myrmotherula pacifica*: We heard and tried to see a few individuals without success near the Oilbird caves at Rio Claro.

Checker-throated Antwren *Myrmotherula fulviventris*: At the Oilbird cave we saw at least four birds foraging in the forest interior. This is one of several species of dead-leaf specialist antwren species that are now placed in the separate genus *Epinecrophylla*.

White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris*: A male was seen in a mixed flock along the trail to the Oilbird cave at Rio Claro. Represented here by the subspecies *albigula*.

Slaty Antwren *Myrmotherula schisticolor*: A group of three birds showed well in the forest of El 18, and we went on to see others at Anori.

Dot-winged Antwren *Microrhophias quixensis*: A pair was seen in a mixed flock along the trail to the Oilbird cave at Rio Claro.

- Northern White-fringed Antwren *Formicivora intermedia*: Fairly common at La Guajira where we noted up to 15 and enjoyed some fabulous views of showy males.
- Rufous-rumped Antwren *Terenura callinota*: A single in the canopy at Anori was hard to see well as it stayed high but at least a few of us managed to get at least brief views.
- Jet Antbird *Cercomacra nigricans*: We all had good views of a female in the woodland at Laguna de Sonso.
- Parker's Antbird *Cercomacra parkeri*: This one caused some initial confusion but nevertheless we all had good views of a couple of pairs of this recently described species near to El Cairo as well as Anori.
- Dull-mantled Antbird *Myrmeciza longipes* (H): Heard at Rio Claro but failed to come in to the tape.

FORMICARIIDAE

- Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius analis*: One was came in fairly close in an area of dense understorey near the Oilbird cave at Rio Claro but our views were poor. Note that molecular data indicates that antthrushes' closest relatives are tapaculos and not antbirds and antpittas.

GRALLARIDAE

- Moustached Antpitta *Grallaria alleni* (H): We put in a good effort to no avail for this shy skulker using good technique at La Suiza.
- Chestnut-crowned Antpitta *Grallaria ruficapilla*: This very attractive species came as quite a surprise near the grounds of our Manizales hotel, showing at incredibly close range with little fear. Later at Rio Blanco, we watched two bold individuals that had taken charge of the worms at the feeders!
- Santa Marta Antpitta *Grallaria bangsi*: Once again they proved difficult to begin with, but we ended up getting superb views of this bird at El Dorado. This species has been up listed to Vulnerable because new information suggests that it has a small range, which is fragmented and declining owing to habitat destruction caused by illegal agriculture, logging and burning. It is currently described as common, but its population size is unknown. However, it is likely to be undergoing a rapid decline as a result of habitat loss.
- Bicolored Antpitta *Grallaria rufocinerea*: This super-skulker was only just glimpsed by a couple of us at Rio Blanco.
- Chestnut-naped Antpitta *Grallaria nuchalis* (H): This year we never had any birds call from within striking range and our patient attempts at Rio Blanco and elsewhere went unrewarded.
- Yellow-breasted Antpitta *Grallaria flavotincta* (H): This Chocó endemic was heard at close range in the El Cairo area but could not be teased into view. It is easier in Ecuador where they can be hand fed worms!!
- Rufous Antpitta *Grallaria rufula*: Some of us managed a glimpse of this bird above Bogotá and others had better views along the Nevado del Ruiz road, here of the subspecies *rufula*.
- Santa Marta Rufous Antpitta *Grallaria [rufula] spatiator*: Many of us had great views of a skulking individual above San Lorenzo, but sadly it was missed by Jean and Arnold. It certainly must be a different species from the one above, the vocalizations are so fundamentally different! A thorough review of the various Rufous Antpitta forms is long overdue.
- Tawny Antpitta *Grallaria quitensis*: We had great looks along the Nevado del Ruiz road where they happily posed in the open at close range!
- Brown-banded Antpitta *Grallaria milleri*: A notoriously difficult species to see well, until now that is! This year we enjoyed fabulous views of up to three birds coming to worms at Rio Blanco, allowing amazing views for all. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 250 – 999 individuals and is decreasing. This species is known from very few locations in a very small range.

- Rusty-breasted Antpitta *Grallricula ferrugineipectus*: Many of us enjoyed good views of this species in the Santa Marta mountains but sadly it was missed by Jean.
- Slate-crowned Antpitta *Grallricula nana*: At Rio Blanco we had great success in calling in a cooperative individual at precisely where 'x' marks the spot!

RHINOCRYPTIDAE

- Ash-coloured Tapaculo *Myornis senilis*: This Chusquea bamboo-lover was seen very well at Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá. A monotypic genus, with a noticeably longer tail than in *Scytalopus* spp. Colombia is home to a bewildering number of skulking little tapaculos!!
- Northern White-crowned Tapaculo *Scytalopus atratus* (H): At Anori there was one heard-only encounter with a bird that remained out of reach. Incredibly, we saw 9 species of *Scytalopus*, which is a noteworthy accomplishment!
- Santa Marta Tapaculo *Scytalopus sanctaemartae*: Eventually we all enjoyed a good view of this Santa Marta endemic, showing its little white crown patch as it scurried along by a small stream for us.
- Blackish Tapaculo *Scytalopus latrans*: It took quite a bit of perseverance to see this one well at Rio Blanco but in the end most of us prevailed.
- Choco Tapaculo *Scytalopus chocoensis*: At El Cairo this species showed quite well to almost the entire group twice in response to playback but not three times! This form was formerly lumped in Nariño Tapaculo *S. viciniior*.
- Stiles's Tapaculo *Scytalopus stilesi*: Sadly, most *Scytalopus* tapaculos are pretty similar to look at and are only really identifiable by range and voice. This newly described species is no exception, but did show brilliantly to all at Anori. Named for Gary Stiles, an active professor of Colombia's National University, author of *The Birds of Costa Rica* and an influential member of the SACC.
- Nariño Tapaculo *Scytalopus viciniior*: This tapaculo was very polite, showing quite nicely early in our El Cairo birding. It was the start of a rollercoaster ride of great ticks!
- Mattoral Tapaculo (Rufous-rumped T) *Scytalopus griseicollis*: Another endemic skulker that showed very well to all in the cloud forest above Bogotá on our first morning.
- Brown-rumped Tapaculo *Scytalopus latebricola*: Another Santa Marta endemic, replacing the Santa Marta Tapaculo at higher elevations, that we saw very well above San Lorenzo.
- Spillmann's Tapaculo *Scytalopus spillmanni*: This version of the 'Brown-rumped Tapaculo' showed well to playback at Rio Blanco.
- Paramo Tapaculo *Scytalopus canus*: Brilliant views along the Nevado del Ruiz road. This one gave probably the best tapaculo show of all, as surrounded on all sides, it serenely straddled an awkward perch watching all of us with our heads and open mouths gaping mere feet away. The tapaculo that made it onto Roger's top ten!
- Ocellated Tapaculo *Acropternis orthonyx*: After a bit of a hike up into a dense bamboo patch, those that made the effort enjoyed some wonderful views of this amazing bird along the Nevado del Ruiz road. This crane-like bird is surely the best of the tapaculos! This memorable sighting after such a great effort made it Noel and Hilary's bird-of-the-trip!

PIPRIDAE

- Blue-crowned Manakin *Pipra coronata*: We had good views of this species in the Rio Claro area with a total of four seen there.
- Lance-tailed Manakin *Chiroxiphia lanceolata* (H): A very distant heard-only on La Guajira.
- Golden-winged Manakin *Masius chrysopterus*: A couple of female plumaged birds were seen near to El Cairo.

- White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus*: Several were seen well in the Rio Claro and area and also seen around Minca. The pops and cracks of the displaying males are always good value!
- Western Striped Manakin *Machaeropterus striolatus*: Both sexes were seen on different occasions at Rio Claro. Here of the endemic race *antioquiae*, named after the Antioquia Department, in the eastern part of which Rio Claro is located, and of which Medellin is the capital.
- Wing-barred Manakin (Wing-b Piprites): At Anori we had superb views of a very cooperative individual in what would the next day become the monklet trees!
- Thrush-like Mourner (T-I Schiffornis, T-I Manakin) *Schiffornis turdinus*: A responsive bird was seen quite well at Rio Claro. Our bird was found in the Magdalena valley and likely belongs to Slender-billed Schiffornis *S. stenorhyncha*. However as Carlos Daniel Cadena, Colombian ornithologist at the Universidad de los Andes and SACC member has stated regarding *Schiffornis* in Colombia: "Based on what we are learning about the complexity of patterns of differentiation and the affinities of Colombian populations of other birds, I'm not sure one can safely say to which of the species under the proposed new classification would one assign Colombian birds."

RUPICOLIDAE

- Andean Cock-of-the-Rock *Rupicola peruviana* : We visited a splendid lek of displaying males at Jardin where the birds really put on a great show for us in fabulous light. An experience like this is truly one of the world's great spectacles, and was Jean's bird-of-the trip! I am following the Hilty and Brown sequence but note that today *Rupicola* are widely considered to be members of the Cotingidae family, a fact confirmed by all genetic analyses.

COTINGIDAE

- Red-crested Cotinga *Ampelion rubrocristatus*: A single bird at Rio Blanco was seen very well at close range through the scope.
- Chestnut-crested Cotinga *Ampelion rufaxilla*: Absolutely superb! A nesting pair at Jardin provided unbeatable views and an additional three birds were seen in the area later that day. A day count of 5 of these rare birds is simply astounding. With good reason voted by Andrew as his bird-of-the trip!
- Green-and-black Fruiteater *Pipreola riefferii*: First seen at El 18 where we saw two and at least six more were seen and heard at other sites.
- Barred Fruiteater *Pipreola arcuata*: At Jardin we tried for a bird but it went quiet all too quickly.
- Orange-breasted Fruiteater *Pipreola jucunda*: Once again, this gorgeous species showed brilliantly and repeatedly near to El Cairo. Another Chocó speciality.
- Golden-breasted Fruiteater *Pipreola aureopectus*: Our first were heard at Anori (subspecies *aureopectus*), and then we had brilliant views of confiding males of this fabulous fruiteater in the Santa Marta Mountains. Here the race *decora*, endemic to this massive mountain range.
- Chestnut-capped Piha *Lipaugus weberi*: A bird at Anori was seen quite well by most of us but it slipped away before Noel could get on it. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 1,000 – 2,499 individuals and is decreasing. This recently described species has a very small and severely fragmented range and population. Remaining forest continues to be degraded and destroyed, and its range and population are therefore inferred to be declining.
- Barred Becard *Pachyramphus versicolor*: One of the prettiest in the genus, and we enjoyed a pair nesting and perching on the radio tower near to El Cairo.
- Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*: This species was fairly common in the Rio Claro area.
- White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polychopterus*: A single at Laguna de Sonso was our only one of the tour.

- Black-and-white Becard *Pachyramphus albogriseus*: We first saw a female at Laguna Pedro Palo, and later saw males below El Cairo and at Anori.
- One-coloured Becard *Platypsaris homochrous*: At least two were seen well in the Rio Claro area. Although the female is superficially similar to Cinnamon Becard, the male is very distinctive.
- Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata*: A couple of these widespread birds were seen noted near to Minca.
- Red-ruffed Fruitcrow *Pyroderus scutatus*: At least six were seen very well along the road at La Suiza. Here the near-endemic (there are a few records from NW Ecuador) race *occidentalis*, showing a solid reddish/chestnut breast and upper belly.

TYRANNIDAE

- Sooty-headed Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias griseiceps*: We enjoyed many good looks at Laguna Pedro Palo and in the coffee country lower down and also saw a couple at Rio Claro.
- Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias plumbeiceps*: A first bird was seen quite low in a tree near the road at El 18, and at least two additional birds showed well at La Suiza. Perhaps more numerous in Colombia than elsewhere.
- Black-capped Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias nigrocapillus*: Brilliant views of this smart-looking tyrant in that wonderful flock we experienced on the lower stretches of Nevado del Ruiz.
- Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias uropygialis*: On our second visit to Cerro Guadalupe near Bogotá we had good views of three birds.
- Ashy-headed Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias cinereiceps*: We had great views in the El 18 area, and we went on to see others at La Suiza. Distinctive when seen well, and vocally obvious, it is one of a confusing array of tyrant flycatchers with yellow underparts and dark ear-covert patches, that, to make matters worse, go around in the same mixed flocks!
- Golden-faced Tyrannulet *Zimmerius chrysops*: First seen at Laguna Pedro Palo and regularly encountered (often obvious vocally) for much of the tour. The birds we saw at El Cairo were interesting vocally, and are currently part of the nominate form, but watch this space as this species complex continues to be studied. The most recent split based on vocal and genetic data is Choco Tyrannulet *Z. albigularis* from further south (SW Colombia (Nariño) to NW Ecuador).
- Brown-capped Tyrannulet *Ornithion brunneicapillum*: Great views of this cracking little fellow at Rio Claro.
- Southern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum*: A few were seen quite well below Minca and quite numerous around La Guajira.
- Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet *Phaeomyias murina*: Four were seen well as we waited for our puncture repair by motorbike service.
- Northern Scrub-Flycatcher *Sublegatus arenarum*: This one was fairly common in the dry scrubby forest at La Guajira.
- Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus*: The famous "free beer" bird first seen well at Laguna de Sonso with several more also seen well at Rio Claro.
- Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii*: An excellent sighting of two birds perched at length in the open at Rio Claro.
- Greenish Elaenia *Myiopagis viridicata*: A single was noted in the woodland below Minca.
- Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*: First seen heard at Laguna Pedro Palo with up to ten seen there and seen in the coffee country lower down, it was generally pretty common (in small numbers), noisy and widespread, at lower and middle elevations.
- Mountain Elaenia *Elaenia frantzii*: A regularly encountered highland species, that we first saw at Laguna Pedro Palo. The subspecies we saw was *pubica*. The species was named after Alexander von Frantzius, a nineteenth century German collector in Brazil and Costa Rica.

White-throated Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus leucophrys*: A common and widespread highland flycatcher, and often the first to appear and the most inquisitive when trawling with the pygmy-owl tape. We saw the subspecies *notatus* in the Central Andes and *montensis* which is endemic to the Santa Marta Mountains.

White-tailed Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus poecilocercus*: We enjoyed some very good views of this warbler-like species at Rio Blanco.

White-banded Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus stictopterus*: Three were seen well along the Nevado del Ruiz road.

Torrent Tyrannulet *Serpophaga cinerea*: Surprisingly, a single that we saw at La Suiza, was our only one.

Slender-billed Tyrannulet *Inezia tenuirostris*: Several of this tiny and distinctive tyrant flycatcher were seen very well at La Guajira. Another species that is restricted to northeast Colombia and northwest Venezuela.

Agile Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes agilis*: This species came quite easy with great views of at least six of these distinctive flycatchers at Cerro La Guadalupe, above Bogotá.

Streak-necked Flycatcher *Mionectes striaticollis*: A single of the race *colombianus* was seen in the El Cairo area. Note that this and the following two species are lek-forming members of a largely frugivorous genus of flycatchers.

Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus*: One was seen well in the Santa Marta Mountains, here of the endemic subspecies *galbinus*.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleaginea*: We saw our first near the Oilbird cave of Rio Claro and we saw a few more in the foothills of the Santa Marta mountains around Minca.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon superciliaris*: Our first birds seen were recorded below El Cairo and additional birds were heard at Anori. It appeared that this species was also present in the Rio Claro area but we were unable to confirm this.

Sepia-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon amaurocephalus*: Up to five birds were seen at Rio Claro.

Rufous-breasted Flycatcher *Leptopogon rufipectus*: At La Suiza two birds were seen in the understorey but not by the entire group and later in the tour a third was seen briefly at Jardin.

Antioquia Bristle-Tyrant *Phylloscartes lanyoni*: A pair tried their best to frustrate us in the canopy of the forest near to the Oilbird caves near to Rio Claro, but eventually gave in and allowed us some good views. Then we were very pleased by a completely spontaneous showing of a bird perched at close-focus range in the subcanopy. Two individuals were also recorded at Anori. A Nechí endemic only described about two decades ago. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 1,000 – 2,499 individuals and is decreasing. This species qualifies as Endangered owing to its very small, severely fragmented range, within which habitat loss is occurring at a rapid rate. Its population is assumed to be very small and declining, and made up of extremely small subpopulations.

Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant *Pogonotriccus ophthalmicus*: One seen at El 18 was our only one of the tour.

Variiegated Bristle-Tyrant *Pogonotriccus poecilotis*: Three birds total were seen at La Suiza with their bright buff wing bars showing distinctly.

Yellow Tyrannulet *Capsiempis flaveola* (NL): This species was seen by several in our group at La Guajira.

Bronze-olive Pygmy-Tyrant *Pseudotriccus pelzelni*: It took a couple of individuals but eventually we had good views of this retiring species in the Choco forests of the El Cairo area.

Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant *Pseudotriccus ruficeps*: This often elusive flycatcher gave us a great show with a pair coming out and displaying excitedly on open perches. A really smart little bird!

Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant *Myiornis atricapillus*: At Rio Claro we had brilliant scope views of this diminutive passerine. In fact, together with Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant they qualify as the smallest passerines in the world!

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant *Lophotriccus pileatus*: We managed to see a couple of these noisy flycatchers at Anori. This species has an unbelievably loud voice for its size!

Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant *Atalotriccus pilaris*: This tyrannid of dryer woodland was seen nicely on La Guajira. Here the nominate race.

Rufous-crowned Tody-Tyrant *Poecilotriccus ruficeps*: A pair of this gorgeous little inhabitant of the undergrowth was seen well at Rio Blanco.

Southern Bentbill *Oncostoma olivaceum*: A weird little flycatcher which some of us managed to see briefly during our visit to Oilbird cave.

Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer*: A common inhabitant of the dry forest at La Guajira where we saw at least three.

Black-throated Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus granadensis*: Our first bird showed very well at El 18, and we had more good views above Jardin, here of the nominate subspecies. We also saw the endemic subspecies *lehmanni* in the Santa Marta mountains.

Black-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps*: This little canopy species was showed quite well on separate days at Rio Claro.

Common Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum cinereum*: Small numbers seen at various locations. All of those that we saw should be referable to *sclateri*.

Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum sylvia*: Lovely views of this cute one in the woodland at Laguna de Sonso.

Brownish Flycatcher (B Twistwing) *Cnipodectes subbrunneus*: We saw a single that responded well to playback near the Oilbird cave at Rio Claro, and another was seen along the trail at Rio Claro. They are called twistwings due to the uniquely stiffened and twisted outer primary shafts in the male which he uses to make a surprisingly loud and rather menacing sound as he slowly floats horizontally between perches.

Olivaceous Flatbill *Rhynchocyclus olivaceus*: Great views of one along the main track at Rio Claro and three more were seen during our walk to the Oilbird cave.

Yellow-olive Flycatcher *Tolmomyias sulphureus*: This widespread species was first seen in the coffee country above La Mesa. We saw others at Rio Claro, and we also saw one below Minca.

Yellow-breasted Flycatcher *Tolmomyias flaviventris*: A single was seen and another was heard as we walked during our afternoon walk along the country road at La Guajira.

White-throated Spadebill *Platyrinchus mystaceus*: Several of us were able to get on this understory flycatcher before it disappeared at Anori.

Ornate Flycatcher *Myiotriccus ornatus*: This unusually colourful flycatcher was seen very well at El Cairo as well as Anori.

Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher *Terenotriccus erythrurus* (H): The clear two-note whistle was heard at Rio Claro but the bird could not be found.

Handsome Flycatcher *Myiophobus pulcher*: A few of groups of this seemingly gregarious flycatcher were seen well in the feeding flocks in the El Cairo area. The subspecies here is *bellus*.

Cinnamon Flycatcher *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea*: Regularly encountered in the Andes (*pyrrhoptera*), and in the Santa Marta Mountains we saw the endemic *assimilis*.

Olive-sided Flycatcher *Contopus cooperi*: A single was scoped perched above El Cairo and a second was seen at La Suiza. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 1,200,000 and it is listed as near-threatened as it has undergone a moderately rapid decline.

Western Wood-Pewee *Contopus sordidulus*: Calling birds were seen at El 18 as well as the El Cairo area.

Smoke-coloured Pewee *Contopus fumigatus*: Two singles were seen on different days near to El Cairo.

Acadian Flycatcher *Empidonax virens*: Singles of these wintering flycatchers were seen at El 18 and at Rio Claro. Like quite a few other boreal migrant flycatchers, this one establishes a winter territory, which it proclaims by its often incessant calling.

- Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*: A bird of streams and rivers that was seen fairly frequently after our first sighting at Laguna Pedro Palo. The white-winged race that we saw, *angustirostris*, may be split off as a separate species, White-winged Phoebe.
- Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*: First seen in the coffee country above La Mesa, we saw small numbers at a few sites, including some fine males. Ten at La Guajira was our maximum count.
- Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca fumicolor*: A high altitude species with at least four seen well along the Nevada del Ruiz road. The birds we saw belong to the buffy-browed race *brunneiceps*.
- Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca rufipectoralis*: One was seen quite well above Jardin.
- Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris*: We had very good views of the nominate subspecies around El Cairo and saw a few more at Rio Blanco and above Jardin. Note that the form *nigrita* from the Merida Andes in Venezuela is sometimes split off as Blackish Chat-Tyrant *O. nigrita* and *thoracica* of southern Peru and Bolivia is generally split off as Chestnut-belted (or Maroon-belted) Chat-Tyrant *O. thoracica*.
- Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca diadema*: A single was seen very well above Jardin where the subspecies was *gratiosa*.
- Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant *Myiotheretes striaticollis*: A distant bird was found by Carl above Jardin.
- Pied Water-Tyrant *Fluvicola pica*: Our first three of these distinctive wagtail replacements were at Laguna de Sonso and we went on to see others on the way into El Paujil and at La Guajira.
- White-headed Marsh-Tyrant *Arundinicola leucocephala* (NL): Roger had one of these instead of lunch during our day on La Guajira.
- Long-tailed Tyrant *Colonia colonus*: Several individuals of this distinctive tyrannid were noted at Rio Claro.
- Cattle Tyrant *Machetornis rixosus*: A total of at least 15 were noted, but the most memorable will be the one we saw as we caught our breath after the bus incident.
- Flammulated Attila *Attila spadiceus*: We managed to see this species fairly well at El 18. The division of Bright-rumped Attila *A. spadiceus* into (South America east of the Andes) and Flammulated Attila *A. spadiceus* (Mexico south to Western Ecuador) may be an over-simplification (or complication) depending on your viewpoint!
- Panama Flycatcher *Myiarchus panamensis*: Two of this rather drab *Myiarchus* were seen on a few occasions and to Mike's chagrin there was even a single in the mangroves on La Isla Salamanca on the last morning.
- Apical Flycatcher *Myiarchus apicalis*: It was a most pleasant surprise to find a pair of this rarely seen and endemic species at Laguna de Sonso. Easily recognized by voice and the pale tips to the tail feathers.
- Pale-edged Flycatcher *Myiarchus cephalotes*: This highland *Myiarchus*, which is easily recognised by the pale edges to its tail feathers, was seen at Rio Blanco and heard in the Santa Marta mountains.
- Brown-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus tyrannulus*: Several showed well at La Guajira, where their brown crests really stood out well.
- Great Crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus crinitus*: This wintering species was most conspicuous in the Rio Claro area. *Crinitus* is Latin for 'long-haired, hairy', undoubtedly referring to the crest.
- Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer*: As usual, the plaintive call was heard more often than the bird was seen, though we did set eyes on at least one below El Cairo.
- Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*: A widespread bird of open areas, even found right in the centre of towns.
- Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua*: Somehow the only bird we saw was not until the Minca area.

- Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis*: Numerous and widespread at lower elevations.
- Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*: A few were seen in the Rio Claro area. This and the previous species are highly variable and can be a little confusing. They are the subject of an identification paper in a recent Neotropical Birding magazine.
- Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus*: First seen during the journey to Jardin but most numerous at Rio Claro.
- Golden-crowned Flycatcher *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*: A couple showed well at El 18, and they were seen fairly regularly at El Cairo and La Suiza.
- Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus*: First noted in the coffee country above La Mesa, and particularly vocal and easily seen at Rio Claro. Small but fierce, and so-called because of its habit of harassing other bird species in order to appropriate their newly finished nest for their own use.
- Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*: This migrant was first seen at Laguna de Sonso by Hilary with just a few others seen in the Cali area and during the journey to Anori.
- Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*: TK was one of the most common and widespread species of the tour!
- Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis*: One of the results of Roger's tireless lunchtime efforts from La Guajira!

HIRUNDINIDAE

- Purple Martin *Progne subis*: We saw several males of this boreal migrant along the Caribbean coast.
- Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*: Several were seen on the drive to Laguna de Sonso, with others in the Rio Claro area and on the journey to Anori.
- Brown-bellied Swallow *Notiochelidon murina*: At least 100 noted on the first day at throughout the day, and we had at least 50 at Nevado del Ruiz. The scientific name murina (= mouse-coloured) is a pretty good summary of this high-elevation stunner!
- Blue-and-white Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*: Widespread in small numbers at moderate to high elevations.
- Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*: First seen at Laguna de Sonso and subsequently pretty common.
- Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*: At least 250 noted at Laguna de Sonso and then not seen again until nearly the final day when we noted at least 5 at La Guajira.

CORVIDAE

- Black-collared Jay *Cyanolyca armillata*: Four of these very smart jays showed well above Jardin.
- Beautiful Jay *Cyanolyca pulchra*: Another highlight of the trip was getting such great views of this most handsome Chocó endemic in the El Cairo area. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International this scarce and local species is apparently restricted to pristine primary forest habitats within a small range, and it is therefore likely to be declining moderately rapidly owing to ongoing logging and habitat clearance.
- Black-chested Jay *Cyanocorax affinis*: A cracker of a jay that we enjoyed in the Rio Claro area and again at lower elevations in the Santa Marta Mountains.
- Inca Jay *Cyanocorax yncas*: A most handsome bird, first seen commonly at La Suiza and heard again at Jardin.

CINCLIDAE

- White-capped Dipper *Cinclus leucocephalus*: One was spotted below the bridge near the town of Jardin.

TROGLODYTIDAE

- Bicolored Wren *Campylorhynchus griseus*: We first saw this one as we drove north to Medellin waking Carl up in the process! We later saw them on a couple of occasions along the Caribbean coast. A large and handsome wren, and a cousin of Central America's Rufous-naped and Mexico's Giant Wrens.
- Band-backed Wren *Campylorhynchus zonatus*: Seen very well in the Rio Claro area. Here of the race *curvirostris*.
- Rufous Wren *Cinnycerthia unirufa*: As we ended our great day below Nevado del Ruiz, we were overtaken by one of the best spectacles of the trip when a noisy family party of at least eight really did the boogie shake shake for us as they cascaded through the understorey in constant movement and sound.
- Sharpe's Wren (Sepia-brown W) *Cinnycerthia olivascens*: This babbler-like species was first seen well in the El Cairo area. This species replaces the previous at lower elevations.
- Grass Wren *Cistothorus platensis*: A few were at high altitude along the Nevado del Ruiz road. Here the comparatively long-tailed *aequatorialis* race, one of the South American subspecies that seem to be quite different from the North American *stellaris* group. Vocal differences are quite obvious and several species are likely involved but the details remain to be worked out.
- Apolinar's Marsh-Wren (Apolinar's W) *Cistothorus apolinari*: We were all pleased to get superb views of three of this localized endemic at Laguna Fúquene. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 1,000 – 2,499 individuals and is decreasing. This species has a very small population and range. It is thought to be declining rapidly, owing to loss and degradation of its severely fragmented habitat. All subpopulations are suspected to be extremely small, and some have been extirpated over the last few decades.
- Sooty-headed Wren *Thryothorus spadix*: Nearly everyone had a quite good view of at least one of these skulking and localized wrens at Anori, and a few others heard there.
- Black-bellied Wren *Thryothorus fasciatoventris*: Great views of one near to the Oilbird caves at Rio Claro and others heard in the area. Excellent vocalizations!
- Whiskered Wren *Thryothorus mystacalis*: Another great songster, which some of us saw very well at Laguna Pedro Palo on the first day, with others catching up with fine views of the two birds we had just before lunch at La Suiza.
- Rufous-breasted Wren *Thryothorus rutilus*: Good views of a couple on the lower slopes of the Santa Marta mountains, here of the race *laetus*.
- Colombian Wren *Thryothorus columbianus*: Excellent views of a couple of very confiding individuals of this well-marked wren above La Mesa.
- Bay Wren *Thryothorus nigricapillus*: The barred race *schottii* was seen well at lower elevations of the El Cairo area and on a few occasions around the Rio Claro area.
- Rufous-and-white Wren *Thryothorus rufalbus*: A bird with an unforgettable song, but just one was seen around Minca and a few folks unfortunately missed it. Here of the rather bright race *cumanensis*.
- Buff-breasted Wren *Thryothorus leucotis*: This one was spotted by Keith at La Guajira, here the subspecies *venezuelanus*.
- Southern House Wren *Troglodytes musculus*: Common and widespread, especially in man-altered habitats, and a very familiar voice during the tour.
- Mountain Wren *Troglodytes solstitialis*: The race *solitarius* was seen pretty well at Rio Blanco.
- White-breasted Wood-Wren *Henicorhina leucosticta*: At the Oilbird cave we did pretty well seeing this cute little songster hop about in the understorey.

Grey-breasted Wood-Wren *Henicorhina leucophrys*: Regularly heard at higher elevations with a number of good views. At upper elevations in the Santa Marta mountains we saw the *anachoreta* race which may deserve separate species status.

Southern Nightingale-Wren *Microcerculus marginatus*: One individual of this retiring species was seen fairly well in response to tape at the Oilbird cave.

Chestnut-breasted Wren *Cyphorhinus thoracicus*: We were delighted to get excellent views of a couple of obliging birds at El 18 with practically no effort. Colombia is probably the best place in the world to see this species.

MIMIDAE

Tropical Mockingbird *Mimus gilvus*: An open country species which we first saw around Bogotá. A few others were seen elsewhere, and they were most conspicuous around La Guajira. A species that seems to be expanding its range both northward and southward.

TURDIDAE

Andean Solitaire *Myadestes ralloides*: A wonderful songster that once again performed well with several good views of the race *plumbeiceps* at El 18 and in the El Cairo area, with others heard only.

Black Solitaire *Entomodestes coracinus*: Brilliant views of two very obliging birds close to El Cairo. A real stunner and a difficult bird to see over much of its range.

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush *Catharus aurantiirostris*: Two birds showed quite well in the forested bends below El Cairo.

Grey-cheeked Thrush *Catharus minimus*: A shy bird near the Oilbird cave unfortunately did not allow us to approach it before scampering off.

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus*: We enjoyed up to ten of this wintering species at Laguna Pedro Palo and otherwise only heard a few more. Not always easy to identify from the previous species.

Yellow-legged Thrush *Platycichla flaviceps*: Several were seen well in the Santa Marta Mountains where the subspecies is *venezuelensis*.

Pale-eyed Thrush *Platycichla leucops*: At La Suiza these bug-eyed birds must have really had their hormones raging as they were blasting their song from exposed perches with little concern and allowing for great views.

Great Thrush *Turdus fuscater*: Ubiquitous at higher elevations. We saw *gigas* in the Eastern Andes around Bogotá, *quindio* (endemic) in the Central and Western Andes, and *cacozelus* (a very pale subspecies that is also endemic) in the Santa Marta Mountains.

Glossy Black-Thrush *Turdus serranus*: A few singing birds were seen in the El Cairo area and above Jardin we saw one individual and heard others.

Black-hooded Thrush *Turdus olivater*: A few were seen (and others heard) on the way down from San Lorenzo at middle elevations in the Santa Marta Mountains, here of the endemic race *sanctaemartae*.

Pale-breasted Thrush *Turdus leucomelas*: First seen in the coffee country above La Mesa and then relatively common at Rio Claro as well as the Caribbean coast.

Black-billed Thrush *Turdus ignobilis*: Common and conspicuous for much of the tour but absent from the Santa Marta Mountains. A rather dull thrush.

SYLVIIDAE

Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus*: This delicate bird showed well in the Rio Claro area and we later had one on the lower slopes of the Santa Marta mountains.

Tropical Gnatcatcher *Polioptila plumbea*: We did not begin seeing this species until La Guajira, where they were common.

VIREONIDAE

- Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis*: A single showed well at Laguna Pedro Palo, and we saw another later that day in the coffee country lower down.
- Black-billed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis nigrirostris*: The Andean counterpart of the previous species, which we had excellent views of at El Cairo, including through the scope at close range.
- Yellow-browed Shrike-Vireo *Vireolanius eximius* (H): We heard distant individuals at Rio Claro and at Anori the bird was fairly close for a moment but all too quickly moved away.
- Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*: A total of about 6 were noted during the tour with a peak count of c4 during the journey to Anori.
- Brown-capped Vireo *Vireo leucophrys*: First seen at Laguna Pedro Palo and fairly regularly encountered in mixed flocks during the first half of the tour.
- Rufous-naped Greenlet *Hylophilus semibrunneus*: A pair of this distinctive greenlet were seen very well above La Mesa on the second day and also at Anori.
- Golden-fronted Greenlet *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*: We had a superb look at this species below Minca.
- Scrub Greenlet *Hylophilus flavipes*: Our only sighting in the coffee country above La Mesa was quite good.
- Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus*: At least three of these active insectivores were seen in a subcanopy flock near the Oilbird cave of Rio Claro.

ICTERIDAE

- Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*: Seen at a number of locations. This species is a brood parasite whose numbers must have undoubtedly gone up with the increase in deforested country. Named after Buenos Aires, the capital of Argentina.
- Bronze-brown Cowbird *Molothrus armenti*: Most of our group had a good view of this endemic form at Isla Salamanca. This form was almost unknown until its rediscovery on Isla Salamanca in the 1970s at which time around a dozen specimens were collected. Once these specimens were compared with Bronzed Cowbird *M. aeneus* it was apparent that *armenti* was merely the southernmost race of *M. aeneus*.
- Giant Cowbird *Scaphidura oryzivora*: We saw a flock of at least a dozen one morning when we walked along the road below Anori. Like other cowbirds, it is a brood parasite, laying its eggs in the nests of oropendolas and caciques.
- Chestnut-headed Oropendola *Zarhynchus wagleri*: Four showed well at Rio Claro and another eight were seen the next day near the Oilbird cave.
- Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus*: This species was easy to see at middle elevations in the Santa Marta Mountains.
- Russet-backed Oropendola *Psarocolius angustifrons*: We saw at least a dozen around Jardin including near our hotel.
- Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*: Our first was at Laguna de Sonso but something did not seem quite right about these birds, and the population may well have been established from escaped birds. Several others were seen in the Rio Claro area (subspecies *vitellinus*).
- Carib Grackle *Quiscalus lugubris*: We saw around ten birds along the coastline at La Guajira where they seem to have recently colonized.
- Great-tailed Grackle *Quiscalus mexicanus*: Fair numbers near the Caribbean coast. This species does not yet seem to have shown the huge habitat and inland expansion it has had in North and Central America.
- Red-bellied Grackle *Hypopyrrhus pyrohypogaster*: We enjoyed excellent studies of four of these rare and beautiful grackles above Jardin. Also thrilling were the Anori birds on our second morning there when a whistling group of at least 20 birds actively foraged all around us in

the subcanopy really bringing the forest alive. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International, the world population is estimated at 1,000 – 2,499 individuals and is decreasing. Although recent surveys have shown this species to occur at more sites than previously known, its remaining habitat is very limited, severely fragmented and declining, probably at an increasing rate. Its population is very small, and the component subpopulations extremely small and declining.

Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Agelaius icterocephalus*: Small numbers were seen well in the marshes at Laguna de Fúquene and we saw them again at the screamer marsh.

Orchard Oriole *Icterus spurius*: This boreal migrant was fairly common at Laguna de Sonso at the time of our visit with up to ten birds seen.

Orange-crowned Oriole *Icterus auricapillus*: We had good views through the scope of three birds nectar feeding in *Erythrina* in the coffee country of La Mesa. A fourth was seen in the Rio Claro reserve.

Yellow Oriole *Icterus nigrogularis*: The common oriole in the dry woodlands of La Guajira with up to ten seen.

Yellow-backed Oriole *Icterus chrysater*: Two of these attractive orioles with a beautiful song were seen at our Jardin hotel.

Red-breasted Blackbird *Leistes militaris*: One was seen at our Jardin hotel and a second was seen on the journey to Rio Claro.

PARULIDAE

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia*: We recorded just three of this attractive, tree-creeping, widespread winterer.

Tennessee Warbler *Vermivora peregrina*: A couple were seen at Laguna de Sonso and then reasonably numerous during the Caribbean section. 'Peregrinus' is Latin for 'wanderer'. This species breeds mainly in Alaska and Canada, and was described from a migrant specimen collected in Tennessee!

Tropical Parula *Parula pitiayumi*: First seen at Laguna de Sonso and El 18 and also noted at a few other localities.

Yellow Warbler *Dendroica aestiva*: Seen in ones and twos at a few locations.

Cerulean Warbler *Dendroica cerulea*: Two individuals of this declining boreal migrant were a very good find at La Suiza. This species is listed as Vulnerable, because its population is estimated to have undergone a rapid decline owing to continuing habitat loss and fragmentation on its breeding and wintering grounds.

Blackburnian Warbler *Dendroica fusca*: The most numerous wintering warbler at higher elevations, with up to 20 noted in a day at El 18. Many spectacularly colourful males were noted amongst them.

Bay-breasted Warbler *Dendroica castanea*: A few birds were noted at Rio Claro. Many were fairly drab, but one or two males were starting to develop some nicely coloured flanks.

Northern Waterthrush *Seiurus noveboracensis*: Small numbers were seen only in the Rio Claro area near streams. Named after New York City (novum = new; Eboracum = York!).

Prothonotary Warbler *Protonotaria citrea*: A poor year for this one, with good views of just a single bird in the mangroves on Isla Salamanca.

Canada Warbler *Wilsonia canadensis*: A fairly common winter resident of montane forests, we logged eight in total, including some fine males.

Slate-throated Redstart (S-t Whitestart) *Myioborus miniatus*: A common, widespread and delightful resident of the montane forests

- Golden-fronted Redstart (G-f Whitestart) *Myioborus ornatus*: A most attractive cloudforest denizen. We saw two distinct subspecies, the white-faced *chrysops* in the mountains near Bogotá, and the yellow-faced nominate in the Central and Western Andes.
- Yellow-crowned Redstart (Y-c Whitestart) *Myioborus flavivertex*: We saw several of these delightful birds around San Lorenzo – it is one of the most conspicuous Santa Marta endemics. Slightly atypical for a *Myioborus* whitestart, being somewhat slow and deliberate in its movements and almost *Basileuterus* warbler-like in appearance.
- Choco Warbler *Basileuterus chlorophrys*: We had many good views of a few individuals during our Choco birding near El Cairo. This form is usually lumped (including Hilty & Brown) in Golden-bellied Warbler *B. chrysogaster* but it is sure to be split by the SACC as soon as someone publishes vocal analysis and writes a proposal. Currently it is an IOC split. This is probably one of the many allopatric lumps done by Peters from the 1940's when they had no idea the voices of the two forms are completely different.
- Citrine Warbler *Basileuterus luteoviridis*: We had just one flock of three birds in the Jardin area.
- Black-crested Warbler *Basileuterus nigrocristatus*: First seen well above Bogotá, and then at a few other montane sites.
- Russet-crowned Warbler *Basileuterus coronatus*: An attractive warbler of mid-elevation forests that has a sweet song and is easier to hear than see! We saw them a few times, and first noted them in the El Cairo area.
- White-lored Warbler *Basileuterus conspicillatus*: This Santa Marta endemic was not uncommon at middle elevations allowing us several great views. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, it is relatively common in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, where it inhabits humid montane forest, forest borders and well-developed second growth and shade-coffee plantations at 450-2,200m, where it forages at low to mid-levels, principally in the undergrowth and understory. It appears tolerant of a degree of habitat degradation. All remaining forest in the Santa Marta mountains is seriously threatened by agricultural expansion, logging and burning. Only 15% of the sierra's vegetation is unaltered, with the south-east slope extensively deforested, and the west slope, between 800 and 1,600m, largely cleared for coffee and illegal marijuana plantations.
- Chestnut-capped Warbler *Basileuterus delattrei*: First seen in the coffee country above La Mesa and a couple of others were seen at Minca, in the Santa Marta Mountains.
- Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus*: First noted at in the El Cairo area and fairly common at most mid-altitude sites.
- Santa Marta Warbler *Basileuterus basilicus*: Another warbler endemic to the Santa Marta Mountains. It can be elusive but we were fortunate in finding a small group of six fairly quickly which showed very well. A large, slow and aberrant species, that perhaps does not belong in *Basileuterus* – it was formerly placed in *Hemispingus*! This species is listed as Vulnerable because its range is estimated to be small, fragmented and declining owing to ongoing deforestation of its montane forest habitat. Despite possibly tolerating some habitat degradation, it is threatened by extensive deforestation, and has lost 21% of its habitat. It is likely to have undergone a rapid and continuing decline.
- Buff-rumped Warbler *Basileuterus fulvicauda*: In the coffee country above La Mesa we enjoyed stunning close-ups of this little beauty belting out its impressive, loud song nearly at our feet.

COEREBIDAE

- Bicolored Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor*: Common and easy to see on Isla Salamanca where two or three were found very quickly. I'm following the Hilty & Brown family arrangement here, but nowadays all of the following species are known to be tanagers based on indisputable genetic data.

- Blue-backed Conebill *Conirostrum sitticolor*: A bright and attractive inhabitant of the cloudforest, we had great views of several of the nominate subspecies along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Rufous-browed Conebill *Conirostrum rufum*: We had great looks at this smart endemic on our second visit to Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá. This endemic is confined to the Eastern Andes and the Santa Marta mountains (but in the latter only occurring at elevations we could not get to).
- Capped Conebill *Conirostrum albifrons*: Three, including a couple of males, of the white-capped race *centralandium* were seen well along the lower slopes of Nevado del Ruiz as well as Jardin.
- Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*: As usual, common and widespread.
- Bluish Flower-piercer *Diglossopsis caerulea*: We had just one good sighting of this species from the El Cairo. Flower-piercers are nectar thieves, as their name suggests piercing the flowers at their base without performing any pollination duties.
- Masked Flower-piercer *Diglossopsis cyanea*: An intensely coloured species that was pretty common at most montane sites, with several close views.
- Indigo Flower-piercer *Diglossa indigotica*: We managed superb views of two of these excellent flowerpiercers again at El Cairo, a rather smart and bright Chocó endemic.
- Glossy Flower-piercer *Diglossa lafresnayii*: Often difficult to identify from the following species. We noted a few in the Bogotá area, and several more along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Black Flower-piercer *Diglossa humeralis*: We managed to see two distinct races: in the eastern Andes above Bogotá we found the nominate (with a small blue grey shoulder patch, thus making it tricky to tell from Glossy), and in the Central Andes we saw the uniform black *aterrima* along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- White-sided Flower-piercer *Diglossa albilatera*: Perhaps the most common and widespread of the flower-piercers. This and the following species are the only two flower-piercers in Colombia exhibiting sexual dimorphism. Here the nominate race.
- Rusty Flower-piercer *Diglossa sittoides*: We saw two different individuals in the Santa Marta mountains.
- Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus*: A single male at Rio Claro was our only one of the trip.
- Green Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes spiza*: We saw a few birds at El 18 and below El Cairo.
- Golden-collared Honeycreeper *Iridophanes pulcherrima*: At first a female had us a little puzzled until suddenly the cracking male appeared to make our El Cairo birding only that much sweeter!
- Turquoise Dacnis (T Dacnis-Tanager) *Dacnis hartlaubi*: Many of us had several good views of a pair of this endemic species as they visited a fruiting tree at Laguna Pedro Palo. Classified as Vulnerable. This species has a highly disjunct and poorly understood range. It is very close to qualifying as Endangered, because the known range is very small and presumably declining (with possibly some local extirpations) in response to continuing habitat loss. However, it has been recorded at more than five locations and exhibits some habitat tolerance.
- Yellow-tufted Dacnis *Dacnis egregia*: It was a pleasant surprise to find this rather attractive dacnis at Rio Claro, where we saw a male on both days. Note that this form was formerly lumped in Black-faced Dacnis *D. lineata*.

TERSINIDAE

- Swallow-Tanager *Tersina viridis*: We enjoyed several sightings on the lower slopes of the Santa Marta mountains, especially at Minca. Note that nowadays this one is no longer considered a distinct family.

THRAUPIDAE

- Blue-naped Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia cyanea*: Our first two were noted at Pedro Palo, and we went on to see several more during the tour, the showiest of which were the ones in the Santa

Marta Mountains. Note that chlorophonias and euphonias are known to be finches belonging in the Fringillidae.

- Yellow-collared Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia flavirostris*: This species was very much in evidence at El Cairo where we saw a total of seven birds, usually feeding at mistletoe, including some really stunning close-ups.
- Chestnut-breasted Chlorophonia *Chlorophonia pyrrhophrys*: We enjoyed great views of a few pairs of this very smart bird at El Cairo.
- Golden-rumped Euphonia *Euphonia cyanocephala*: At El 18 we had quite good views of this lovely frugivore feeding on mistletoe berries and singing from an exposed perch. In the El Cairo area we saw a second male.
- Orange-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia xanthogaster*: First seen in the El 18 area and seen again at El Cairo and Anori. Like most races, the birds we saw (*oressinoma*), are actually yellow-bellied. A species conspicuously absent from the (impoverished) Santa Marta Mountains.
- Orange-crowned Euphonia *Euphonia saturata*: A fine male that showed well was seen at Laguna de Sonso.
- Trinidad Euphonia *Euphonia trinitatis*: Three were seen at La Guajira and many more heard giving their 'dee dee' calls.
- Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia lanirostris*: Another euphonia that was first seen in the coffee country above La Mesa, and later we had quite a few other encounters including food numbers around Rio Claro.
- Fulvous-vented Euphonia *Euphonia fulvicrissa*: A single male put in an appearance at Rio Claro. Here at the southern end of the species' range.
- Fawn-breasted Tanager *Pipraeidea melanonota*: A single put in an appearance at Laguna Pedro Palo at the beginning of the tour and another five individuals were shared between a few sites.
- Glistening-green Tanager *Chlorochrysa phoenicotis*: We had good views of this splendid Chocó endemic in that exciting mixed flock at El Cairo.
- Multicoloured Tanager *Chlorochrysa nitidissima*: Our views of a fabulous male were so superb that this legendary species was voted bird of the trip! Classified as Vulnerable due to its small range, known from a small number of locations. Its known population is suspected to be small, fragmented into very small subpopulations, and declining as a result of continuing habitat loss.
- Speckled Tanager *Tangara guttata*: Four individuals were seen in the mixed flocks at Anori.
- Rufous-throated Tanager *Tangara rufigula*: We had repeated good looks at this smart looking tanager from our Choco birding in the El Cairo area.
- Golden Tanager *Tangara arthus*: A stunning montane species that we saw at a number of sites. First noted at Pedro Palo and El 18 where they were, as usual, fairly common.
- Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala*: We saw four of these very smart tanagers on the pacific slope near to El Cairo.
- Saffron-crowned Tanager *Tangara xanthocephala*: Just one showed fairly well at El 18.
- Flame-faced Tanager *Tangara parzudakii*: One of the most attractive in the genus, we were delighted to find several of the race *lunigera* in fruiting trees at Pedro Palo.
- Metallic-green Tanager *Tangara labradorides*: There was just one brief sighting at El 18 that several of us missed. A fairly poor name for what is a rather bluish bird.
- Blue-necked Tanager *Tangara cyanicollis*: We first saw this striking species at Laguna Pedro Palo and in the coffee country above La Mesa as well as several other sites associated with second growth.
- Golden-hooded Tanager *Tangara larvata*: This species was quite common in the Rio Claro where we recorded at least 20 individuals.

Plain-coloured Tanager *Tangara inornata*: This species showed well at Rio Claro. Probably the dullest in the genus, but pretty nonetheless at close range, and a good 'South America tick'!

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*: Two distinctive races were seen of this one: the turquoise-bellied *delecticia* in the Andes, and *toddi* in the Santa Marta Mountains, which is all grass-green except for the bay head. The name 'gyrola' is derived from the Latin 'gyros', or ring, and refers to the golden nuchal collar present in most races of this species.

Scrub Tanager *Tangara vitriolina*: Another species which has a tendency to occupy areas of second growth. First noted in the coffee country above La Mesa, it is one of the more numerous and widespread tanagers in Colombia's valleys and on the adjacent slopes, but outside the country it is a localized speciality in northern Ecuador.

Beryl-spangled Tanager *Tangara nigroviridis*: Another common, widespread and attractive denizen of the montane forests.

Blue-and-black Tanager *Tangara vassorii*: First noted at Rio Blanco where we saw at least four, but more common above Jardin where we saw nearly a dozen in the mixed species flocks.

Black-capped Tanager *Tangara heinei*: We had regular encounters with this strikingly sexually dimorphic *Tangara*. First noted at El 18 and La Suiza.

Black-headed Tanager *Tangara cyanoptera*: A total of four noted at lower and middle elevations in the Santa Marta Mountains.

Purplish-mantled Tanager *Iridosornis porphyrocephala*: A spectacular species which showed very well on several occasions around El Cairo, and again at Anori. Classified as Near Threatened by BirdLife International, it occurs in the West Andes of Colombia (principally on the Pacific slope north to south Chocó, and at the north end of the Central Andes in Antioquia) and north-west Ecuador (where it is definitely known only from Carchi and Imbabura, with an uncertain record from Loja in the south). It inhabits the lower growth of humid mossy forest and forest borders, principally at 1,500-2,200m, but has been recorded to 750m in Cauca, and 2,700m in Antioquia. It is threatened by rapid and ongoing deforestation, largely the result of intensive logging, human settlement, cattle-grazing and mining, with severe destruction in the core of its elevational range.

Golden-crowned Tanager *Iridosornis rufivertex*: A cracking species that we saw well albeit briefly along the Nevado del Ruiz road.

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager *Anisognathus igniventris*: We were treated to repeated good looks at this stunner. Two races were encountered, differing in crissum colour: *lunulatus* in the Eastern Andes, and *erythrotus* in the Central Andes.

Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager (Black-cheeked M-T) *Anisognathus melanogenys*: Another handsome Santa Marta endemic which was fairly common but great to see!

Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager *Anisognathus lacrymosus*: This washed-out version of the previous species was seen well above Jardin.

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager *Anisognathus somptuosus*: First seen at El 18, we noted this striking species at four locations.

Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager *Anisognathus notabilis*: We were all pleased to get fantastic views of a pair of this large, attractive and localized species in the El Cairo area.

Hooded Mountain-Tanager *Buthraupis montana*: This chunky and attractive species was first seen on our way down from the Nevado del Ruiz road, and later we saw another one above Jardin.

Black-and-gold Tanager *Bangsia melanochlamys*: A bird was initially spotted by Roger at El Cairo at some distance but then came in to some nearby shrubs for excellent looks. Classified as Vulnerable by BirdLife International. Its small population is assumed to be declining owing to the reductions in habitat. However, it has recently been found from northern locations within its range where it had been thought to be extinct, and its known range has therefore increased.

Gold-ringed Tanager *Bangsia aureocincta*: We enjoyed plenty of great looks at this superb endemic in the El Cairo area again this year. It was one of Noel's top ten birds. Classified as Endangered by BirdLife International. The species has a very small range (670 km² !!), and is currently known from just a few localities. Continuing habitat loss and consequent range and population declines are projected for the main subpopulation, because of proposed road construction. In other areas, habitat loss is likely to be ongoing.

Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager *Dubusia taeniata*: After hearing the distinctive vocalization below us we were pleased when suddenly one showed extremely well for quite some time along the lower slopes of the Nevado del Ruiz road.

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*: Numerous and widespread. The scientific name is derived from the 'episcopal blue' plumage.

Glaucous Tanager *Thraupis glaucocolpa*: At least six of these subtly attractive tanagers showed well in the arid woodland we got to know so well on La Guajira.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*: Common and widespread.

Blue-capped Tanager *Thraupis cyanocephala*: Several encounters in the Western Andes where the subspecies is *annectens*.

Crimson-backed Tanager *Ramphocelus dimidiatus*: A widespread tanager of lowland open and secondary habitats, and particularly common for the second half of the tour. This colourful species has, of all places, been introduced into Tahiti.

Flame-rumped Tanager *Ramphocelus flammigerus*: First seen en route to the Oelman feeders, we also saw several more around and below El Cairo and a couple of the jeeps saw one nicely in the town square of Jardin. This is a Cauca Valley endemic though it is often lumped together with the following species.

Lemon-rumped Tanager (Yellow-rumped T) *Ramphocelus icteronotus*: They were fairly common on the lower Pacific slope of the El Cairo area and we had them fairly both at Rio Claro and Anori as well as during the journeys to these sites.

Highland Hepatic-Tanager *Piranga lutea*: Three were noted in the El Cairo area and individuals were also seen at La Suiza and Jardin.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra*: A grand total of eleven noted, including several bright males.

Ochre-breasted Tanager *Chlorothraupis stolzmanni*: This noisy understorey and subcanopy tanager eventually showed quite well during our Choco birding in the El Cairo area.

Crested Ant-Tanager *Habia gutturalis*: We were stunned and delighted to have this be the very first bird seen at El Cairo where we had a small flock of this stunner, which included a couple of fine males complete with spiky red crests!

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus*: A pair of this second-growth species was seen at Rio Claro.

Tawny-crested Tanager *Tachyphonus delatrii*: A family group of six were seen quite well along the trail to the Oilbird caves at Rio Claro.

Rufous-crested Tanager *Creurgops verticalis*: A female showed well to all as we descended to El Cairo one afternoon.

Grey-headed Tanager *Eucometis penicillata*: Our first were two in the coffee country above La Mesa and we went on to see a third at Rio Claro. This species is often associated with ant swarms.

Dusky-faced Tanager *Mitrospingus cassinii*: A noisy, almost antbird-like tanager of the undergrowth, we had a group of ten that caused a bit of excitement (but for the wrong reason) at Rio Claro.

Rosy Thrush-Tanager *Rhodinocichla rosea*: In the Santa Marta area we had a vocalizing bird that was buried deep suddenly burst forth allowing a few of us to have a decent view in flight.

Guira Tanager *Hemithraupis guira*: Two were first seen in the coffee country on the second day and five more were seen at Laguna de Sonso.

- Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager *Chlorospingus flavigularis*: At least six were noted in the mixed flocks at Anori.
- Ash-throated Bush-Tanager *Chlorospingus canigularis*: A species of mixed flocks that we had good views of at El 18.
- Dusky-bellied Bush-Tanager *Chlorospingus semifuscus*: Small number of the northern (Western Andes) race *livingstoni* were seen daily in the El Cairo area. Paul Coopmans noted "Southward the Western Andes is separated from the west slope of the 'unified' Andes (where the nominate race is found) by the Hoz de Minamá, the deep canyon of the Patía River; this barrier also separates e.g. Black-billed and Plate-billed Mountain-Toucans. Races do look quite different, Munchique birds looking 'odd' compared to the ones I always see above Mindo in Ecuador" Another split in the offing?
- Black-backed Bush-Tanager *Urothraupis stolzmanni*: This tree line species showed briefly to several in the group along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Grey-hooded Bush-Tanager *Cnemoscopus rubrirostris*: Four were seen in the mixed flocks at Rio Blanco and at least 10 were seen above Jardin. Very sluggish for a bush-tanager and constantly tail-pumping!
- Black-capped Hemispingus *Hemispingus atropileus*: This well-marked species was first seen at Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá and several others were seen at Nevado del Ruiz and Jardin.
- Superciliaried Hemispingus *Hemispingus superciliaris*: I believe that those we saw at Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá were the nominate race and later we had some good views of the race *nigrifrons* in the Central Andes (blackish forecrown) where they were seen along the Nevado del Ruiz road and at Jardin.
- Oleaginous Hemispingus *Hemispingus frontalis*: First seen at El 18, we also saw a few more in the Jardin area. Great name, it is the world's only bird with this lovely epithet!
- Black-eared Hemispingus *Hemispingus melanotis*: We enjoyed some great views of a few that were teased from their favoured bamboo habitat at Cerro Guadalupe in Bogotá and at Rio Blanco.
- Black-headed Hemispingus *Hemispingus verticalis*: One was spotted in a mixed flock at Cerro Guadalupe near Bogotá but only a couple of us got on the bird in time.
- Grass-green Tanager *Chlorornis riefferii*: We had excellent looks at this attractive and distinctive tanager perching out and resting for quite some time at Rio Blanco and two more were seen above Jardin.

CATAMBLYRHYNCHIDAE

- Plush-capped Finch (Plushcap) *Catamblyrhynchus diadema*: A total of six birds were seen very well at Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá. A bamboo specialist, no longer placed in its own family but within the thraupid tanagers.

FRINGILLIDAE

- Blue-black Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa cyanooides*: A pair showed very nicely from the trail at Anori. This species is now firmly placed in the Cardinalidae. Note that Fringillids as defined by Hilty and Brown have been completely redefined. Today the only Neotropical members of the Fringillidae are the siskins, goldfinches, chlorophonias and euphonias.
- Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*: We did not see this usually common species until Rio Claro, and then later had several individuals near Anori and Santa Marta. Note that placement of *Saltator* is still controversial, with some arguing for their continued placement within the Cardinalidae but with most evidence leaning towards subfamily rank within the thraupid tanagers.
- Black-winged Saltator *Saltator atripennis*: A distinctive species that was first seen in the El Cairo area with two more also coming from the La Suiza area.

- Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*: At least ten were seen in the dry scrub at La Guajira.
- Orinocan Saltator *Saltator orinocensis*: A cracking bird that was common and showy in the dry scrub at La Guajira.
- Masked Saltator *Saltator cinctus*: One of the major highlights of the tour were our great views we experienced at Rio Blanco where this rare bird was actually nesting. Mentioned as hypothetical on the east slope in Hilty and Brown! This rare and local species is listed as Near-Threatened as it is suspected to be declining moderately rapidly throughout its range owing to habitat destruction. This species occurs in the canopy of montane evergreen and elfin forest, at 1,700-3,100 m. It has been observed in dense stands of *Chusquea* bamboo in Peru and Ecuador, but recent records from Colombia and Ecuador suggest a much stronger association with *Podocarpus oleifolius*, which tends to comprise a very small proportion of total primary forest (less than 10% in Alto Quindío, Colombia), and is very slow growing and heavily logged. In Ecuador, it undertakes non-seasonal movements, perhaps in response to changes in the availability of *Podocarpus* cones. This association consequently makes the status of Masked Saltator extremely uncertain.
- Streaked Saltator *Saltator striatipectus*: Several were seen well at Laguna Pedro Palo and in the coffee country above La Mesa, with another six seen below La Minca.
- Vermilion Cardinal *Cardinalis phoeniceus*: A real beauty that is restricted to dry coastal scrub in north-eastern Colombia and northern Venezuela. We were delighted to get good views of several, including two vivid males, at La Guajira. Genetic data indicate that the Pyrrhuloxia *C. sinuatus* is the sister species to Vermillion Cardinal. *Cardinalis* is now placed with the cardinalid grosbeaks.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*: We saw individuals of both sexes of this boreal migrant at several sites. *Pheucticus* is also a member of the Cardinalidae. The species name refers to the Louisiana Territory or Colony, the Mississippi Basin claimed by France and named after King Louis XIV ('Ludovicus'); covering a much larger area than the present state of Louisiana, it was a Spanish possession from 1763, before being repossessed by the French and sold by Napoleon to the USA in 1803. Loggerhead Shrike and Carolina Wren also have this interesting historical background to their scientific names!
- Black-backed Grosbeak *Pheucticus ludovicianus*: As we left Medellin one was spotted by Carl but we were in traffic and it was a police-controlled zone.
- Red-capped Cardinal *Paroaria gularis*: A single at Laguna de Sonso where the population probably derives from escaped or released birds. *Paroaria* cardinals have been shown to be in fact thraupid tanagers!
- Pileated Finch (Grey Pileated-F) *Coryphospingus pileatus*: Up to 10 were found in the dry forest at La Guajira, including several fine males that posed at length. One of the many genera formerly placed in the Emberizidae based on bill shape but which genetic data indicate belongs with the tanagers in the Thraupidae.
- Olive Finch *Lysurus castaneiceps*: Persistence paid off when this shy understory bird perched out and sang on some exposed branches and generally put on quite a show for us in the El Cairo area. Recently placed in the genus *Arremon* by the SACC.
- Tanager Finch *Oreothraupis arremonops*: At Jardin these much-wanted birds showed brilliantly at point-blank range. Classified as Vulnerable by BirdLife International. This poorly-known species inhabits thick undergrowth in primary humid forest (mostly dense, wet, mossy cloud-forest) between 1,200 and 2,700m. Deforestation rates are accelerating within its range, primarily because of logging, human settlement, cattle-grazing, coca cultivation and gold mining.
- Yellow-throated Brush-Finch *Atlapetes gutturalis*: A relatively widespread bird that showed well near our Manizales hotel as well as Rio Blanco. The only genera in South America for which genetic

data indicate that they are true Emberizidae are: *Zonotrichia*, *Ammodramus*, *Aimophila*, *Arremon*, and *Atlapetes*.

- Pale-naped Brush-Finch *Atlapetes pallidinucha*: First seen well at Cerro La Guadalupe above Bogotá where the nominate subspecies occurs and several of the *papallactae* subspecies were seen along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Santa Marta Brush-Finch *Atlapetes melanocephalus*: One of the easier Santa Marta endemics, we noted several daily during our stay.
- Tricoloured Brush-Finch *Atlapetes tricolor*: Several of this pacific slope species were seen in the El Cairo area where we enjoyed great views of several of them.
- Moustached Brush-Finch *Atlapetes albofrenatus*: Some of us had rather quick views of a group of three birds at Laguna Pedro Palo, where the nominate race occurs.
- Slaty Brush-Finch *Atlapetes schistaceus*: Our first was part of that busy afternoon flock along the lower Nevado del Ruiz road and a second was seen at Jardin.
- Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch *Atlapetes brunneinucha*: Two were seen well at Anori. This and the following species have recently been moved to the genus *Arremon*.
- Stripe-headed Brush-Finch *Atlapetes torquatus*: We saw the *assimilis* form on both Cerro Guadalupe near Bogota and above Jardin. In the Santa Marta Mountains we had good views of the endemic subspecies *basilicus* which, along with several other subspecies, has a black breast band. A recent publication by Colombian ornithologists Carlos Daniel Cadena and Andres Cuervo recommended that eight species level taxa be recognized within *A. torquatus*: (1) Grey-striped Brush Finch *A. costaricensis* of Costa Rica and western Panama, (2) Black-headed Brush-Finch *A. atricapillus* from central and eastern Panama to the Colombian Andes, (3) *A. basilicus* from the Santa Marta Mountains, (4) *A. perijanus* from the Serrania del Perija of NE Colombia and NW Venezuela, (5) *A. assimilis* from the Andes of Venezuela, Colombia, Ecuador and most of Peru, (6) *A. torquatus* from the Andes of extreme southern Peru, Bolivia and Argentina, (7) *A. phacopleurus* from the Cordillera de la Costa of northern Venezuela, and (8) *A. phygas* from the Cordillera de la Costa Oriental of northeast Venezuela.
- Tocuyo Sparrow *Arremonops tocuensis*: Fortunately, after a long search, most of us were able to get a good view of a singing bird at La Guajira. This is another speciality restricted to northeast Colombia and north-western Venezuela.
- Golden-winged Sparrow *Arremon schlegeli*: We had a couple of sightings of this one along the Caribbean coast with brilliant views for all. A really attractive species that is probably most easily seen in Colombia. Hermann Schlegel (1804-1884) was a German ornithologist whose primary interest was Asia.
- Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivacea*: Small numbers at scattered localities with a maximum count of four at El Cairo. Genetic data indicate that *Tiaris* belongs with the thraupid tanagers. Many years ago several genera of birds were erroneously dumped into the Emberizidae based on bill shape and only now are their true affinities being brought to light.
- Dull-coloured Grassquit *Tiaris obscura*: Two at Laguna Pedro Palo escaped as a leader-only sighting.
- Paramo Seedeater *Catamenia homochroa*: A smart male showed quite nicely along the Nevado del Ruiz road, here of the nominate subspecies. *Catamenia* is a thraupid tanager as well!
- Plain-coloured Seedeater *Catamenia inornata*: Around four of the race *minor* were found along the Nevado del Ruiz road.
- Band-tailed Seedeater *Catamenia analis*: Our only sighting was of a single bird seen at the gravel pits near Bogotá.
- Thick-billed Seed-Finch *Oryzoborus funereus*: Females showed briefly on two occasions at Rio Claro but not everyone got onto them. Phylogenetic trees built using genetic data show both *Oryzoborus* and *Sporophila* clearly nested within the thraupid tanagers!

Grey Seedeater *Sporophila intermedia*: Our only sighting was of a male in open country feeders near to El 18.

Black-and-white Seedeater *Sporophila luctuosa* (NL): A male was seen at Jardin.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis*: Small numbers at several sites. First noted at Laguna Pedro Palo.

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater *Sporophila minuta*: A male perched up at the edge of the road was seen briefly from the bus as we left Anori.

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*: Small numbers of this common and widespread species were seen at various locations.

Saffron Finch *Sicalis flaveola*: A human commensal that seems to be continuing to spread. Our highest count was of c10 as we travelled to Laguna de Sonso. Genetic data indicate *Sicalis* is also a thraupid tanager.

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch *Phrygilus unicolor*: About 12 of these high-altitude finches were found along the Nevado del Ruiz road. Yep, *Phrygilus* is actually a tanager as well!

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis*: Numerous and widespread at higher elevations.

Yellow-bellied Siskin *Carduelis xanthogastra*: Four birds found at Rio Blanco and Jardin and a single at Anori were our only ones.

Lesser Goldfinch (Dark-backed G) *Carduelis psaltria*: This one was noted in small numbers at a few sites.

MAMMALS

Red-tailed Squirrel (Tropical Red S) *Sciurus granatensis*: The larger squirrel that was seen at a number of sites. Quite a variable species, as we noted in the Santa Marta Mountains.

Brown Capuchin (Tufted C) *Apebus capella*: We had good views of these omnivores at the screamer marsh.

Venezuelan Red Howler Monkey *Alouatta seniculus*: A small group of these impressive beasts were seen (and heard!) at La Suiza.

TOP TEN BIRDS OF THE TRIP

1. Multicoloured Tanager
2. Northern Screamer
3. Ocellated Tapaculo
4. Santa Marta Antpitta
5. Santa Marta Screech-Owl
6. Orange-breasted Fruiteater
- Moustached Puffbird
- Golden-collared Honeycreeper
- 9 Golden-winged Sparrow
10. Noble Snipe