

The highly successful Birdquest / Wild Images tour to Galápagos in 2014 was a fantastic wildlife and photographic experience, with beautiful Swallow-tailed Gulls certainly being one of the highlights (Johanne Charbonneau).

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GALÁPAGOS

22 MAY – 3 JUNE 2014

TOUR LEADER: ANDY SWASH

Any visit to Galápagos, the aptly named 'enchanted islands', is guaranteed to be a wonderful wildlife experience, particularly if it involves a cruise around the archipelago in a specially chartered luxury motor yacht. And so it proved with the highly successful and enjoyable Birdquest / Wild Images tour this year, during which all 33 of the available Galápagos endemic and near-endemic birds (based on the latest taxonomic changes) were seen well. But it was the amazing creatures of Galápagos and their total lack of fear of humans that made the tour such a magical experience, allowing us intimate encounters with some of the most fascinating birds, mammals, reptiles and, for those who wished, fish, on our beautiful planet. And the photographic opportunities were endless...



The Tip Top IV at anchor in Tagus Cove, Isabela (Johanne Charbonneau).

Our itinerary involved a 10-night cruise aboard the well-appointed and extremely comfortable and stable *Tip Top IV* and took us to ten of the islands, providing a unique opportunity to see all of the 'available' endemic birds. Due to restrictions imposed by the Galápagos National Park Service, it is no longer possible to land at the two sites where the Critically Endangered and declining Mangrove Finch is still known to occur, so we had to content ourselves with trying to find all the other species. We also saw virtually all of the endemic mammals and reptiles, as well as an excellent range of the islands' more notable invertebrates and plant life. Our total bird list was 69 species – a good tally for mid-summer, which is not the best time of year for most of the North American shorebirds that occur in Galápagos during the northern winter. The views we managed to obtain of virtually all the species, including eleven of the twelve species that are currently categorized as globally threatened, were exceptional. We also found a few rare migrants and vagrant species, adding to the excitement.

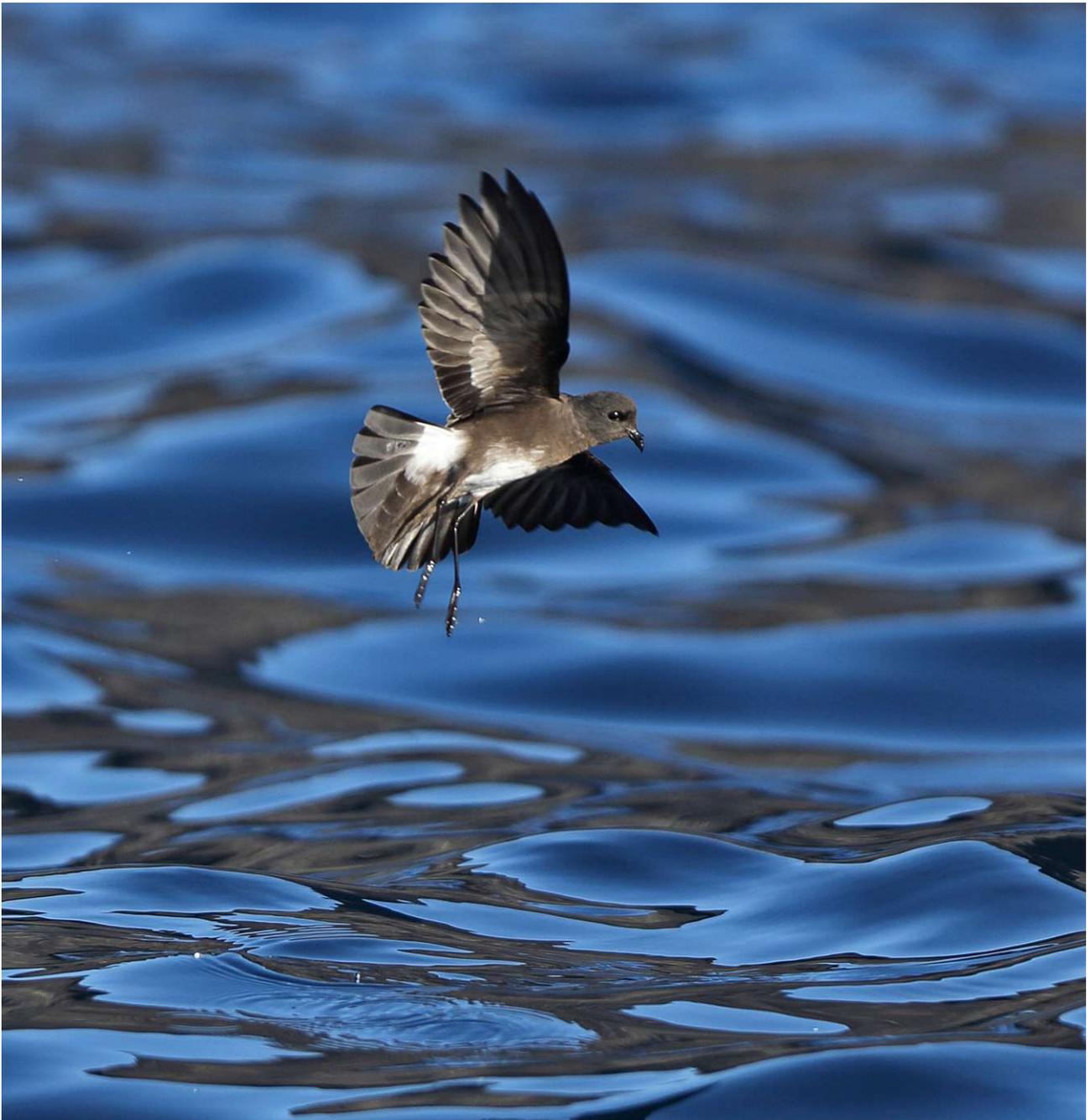
There were very many highlights during the tour, but special mention should be made of the wonderful morning spent admiring Waved Albatrosses on Española, where we even had to step carefully to avoid birds nesting on the paths; prolonged views of a preening Galápagos Crake in the highlands of Isabela; excellent views of Charles (Floreana) Mockingbirds during a panga (dinghy) ride along the coast of the tiny island of Champion (landing is not permitted on this island, which is one of only two remaining strongholds for this Critically Endangered species); Medium Tree-finches (also now categorized as Critically Endangered) at point-blank range in the highlands of Floreana; close views of Flightless Cormorants and Galápagos Penguins on Isabela; the evening gathering of Galápagos Petrels off Santiago (another of the Critically Endangered breeding endemics); walking amongst breeding colonies of Blue-footed, Nazca and Red-footed Boobies and displaying Great and Magnificent Frigatebirds; and a pair of breeding Galápagos Barn Owls with two youngsters on Santa Cruz. But for some of the participants the 'bird sighting of the tour' was prolonged and very close views of about ten pairs of Galápagos Martins at a breeding site on Isabela, allowing some excellent images to be taken of this very rarely photographed species.

The non-avian highlights included watching those lumbering giants, Galápagos Giant Tortoises, on both Isabela and on Santa Cruz; hordes of basking Marine Iguanas, as well as swimming individuals on many of the islands; Land Iguanas on North Seymour and on Isabela; four species of endemic lava lizards; two endemic snakes; and, for those who opted to go snorkeling, a bewildering array of marine life, including innumerable colourful fishes and playful Galápagos Sea Lions.

The tour began in Quito, where we spent a night in a very comfortable hotel before being transferred to the new airport to catch a morning flight to the island of Baltra, the principal 'gateway' to Galápagos. The first bird to be seen on arrival was one of the Galápagos endemics, and our first Darwin's Finch – Small Ground Finch, a species we were to encounter subsequently on most days. Having collected our luggage we were met by Ernesto Vacas, who was to be our naturalist guide for the duration of our stay in the islands. After a short

bus ride to the quay on Baltra from which we were to board our boat, we had our first views of Blue-footed Boobies, Brown Pelicans and Common (Brown) Noddies feeding along the shore and Magnificent Frigatebirds soaring overhead. A Galápagos Dove was also seen near the quay – the second endemic bird in just a few minutes! After a short while we donned our life-jackets for the first of many times and boarded the pangas to be transported to our motor yacht, the *Tip Top IV*, which was to be our home for the next 10 nights. Even during this short journey the first storm-petrels were seen – Elliot's Storm Petrels (formerly also called White-vented Storm Petrels) – feeding in the harbour. Having acquainted ourselves with the boat and our cabins, we had the introductory and statutory safety briefings, followed by an excellent lunch. We then navigated towards the first island we were to visit, North Seymour.

During the brief journey to North Seymour we saw our next Galápagos endemic, Galápagos Shearwater, and before going ashore spent an hour or so watching many more passing the boat *en route* to their breeding sites on the island. There were also a few Elliot's Storm Petrels feeding in the wake; this is a mysterious species in that an endemic subspecies, *galapagoensis*, occurs commonly in Galápagos yet a nest has never been found! Other species seen from the boat while we were moored off North Seymour included Red-billed Tropicbirds and a few Common Noddies.



Elliot's Storm Petrels were a common sight throughout the tour, with birds often flying very close to the boat or following in the wake (Andy Swash).



A male Magnificent Frigatebird showing the diagnostic purple gloss to the mantle feathers (Johanne Charbonneau).

Mid-afternoon we headed off in the pangas for North Seymour and made our first 'dry' landing. Soon after setting foot on the island we saw our first Swallow-tailed Gulls, which all agreed is surely the most beautiful gull in the world. The rest of the afternoon was spent strolling leisurely through the large breeding colonies of Blue-footed Boobies and Great and Magnificent Frigatebirds – the main attractions on this island. The breeding season was in full swing, with many of the boobies already having small chicks, while some were still on eggs and others were displaying, the males whistling plaintively, the females 'quacking' and pairs walking slowly and comically around each other with a lifted gait displaying their striking blue feet. There was also a great deal of activity amongst the frigatebirds, and the mixed colony provided an excellent opportunity to compare these two very similar species side by side and to admire their elaborate displays. Many of the males were sitting with their red balloon-like gular pouches inflated and would spread and vibrate their wings and give their distinctive 'whistling' call whenever a female came near. We came across our second Small Ground Finch and a handful of Galápagos Doves. During our walk across North Seymour we found our first Galápagos Lava Lizards and many large Land Iguanas, some of which were close to the path, making for many memorable photos. (The Land Iguana was introduced onto North Seymour from Baltra many years ago, after which it was extirpated from that island; fortunately, a subsequent reintroduction of individuals from North Seymour back onto Baltra has proved successful). Once back on board the *Tip Top IV* we rounded off the afternoon with the daily checklist and a delicious meal followed by an early night during which we set sail for Genovesa (Tower), situated to the north-east of the archipelago – the most northerly island on our journey.



Good numbers of Land Iguanas were seen on North Seymour (Andy Swash).



Always a great favourite, Blue-footed Boobies were breeding in good numbers on North Seymour and many pairs were seen displaying (Colin MacConnachie).

When we awoke next morning, we were anchored in the flooded caldera of Genovesa, home to the world's largest colony of Red-footed Boobies. The sky was full of birds, as boobies and frigatebirds (here mainly Great) streamed by on their way to and from their nesting sites in the interior of the island, and Galápagos Shearwaters, Swallow-tailed Gulls and Red-billed Tropicbirds patrolled the steep cliffs. Our first landing of the day, early in the morning and before other visitors were about, was at Darwin Bay. Here, Swallow-tailed Gulls and huge numbers of Red-footed Boobies and Great Frigatebirds were seen nesting in the mangroves. About 90% of the Red-footed Booby population on Genovesa is of the brown phase, but we soon found a few white-phase birds sitting precariously on their flimsy nests in the bushes. We also saw our first Lava Gulls of the tour on the beach here (a bird that sadly has the ignominious distinction of being the rarest gull in the world).



Two forms of Red-footed Booby occur in Galápagos, with brown phase birds (TOP: Andy Swash) out-numbering white phase birds (БОТТОМ: Johanne Charbonneau) by a ratio of about ten to one.



A female Great Frigatebird on the nest; female Great and Magnificent Frigatebirds are easily told apart by the colour of the eye-ring – red in Great Frigatebird and blue in Magnificent Frigatebird (Andy Swash).



Galápagos Doves were a frequent sight on Genovesa, many being in full breeding plumage and often seen displaying (Andy Swash).

Darwin's Finches were also much in evidence and after a little searching we found the four species present on this island: Sharp-beaked Ground Finch (the subspecies *acutirostris* is endemic to Genovesa and here fills the niche of Small Ground Finch that is common and widespread in the archipelago but absent from Genovesa), Large Cactus Finch (of the small-billed subspecies *propinqua* that is endemic to Genovesa), Large Ground Finch, and Grey (Dusky) Warbler-Finch (of the subspecies *mentalis* that is endemic to Genovesa). Galápagos Doves, Galápagos Mockingbirds (of the subspecies *bauri* which is endemic to Genovesa) and Mangrove Warblers were common.



Compare those bills! The four Darwin's finches on Genovesa: Large Ground Finch (TOP LEFT: Colin MacConnachie); Large Cactus Finch subspecies *propinqua* (TOP RIGHT: Andy Swash); Sharp-beaked Ground Finch (BOTTOM LEFT: Andy Swash) and Grey (or Dusky) Warbler-Finch (BOTTOM RIGHT: Colin MacConnachie).

We also found a few Yellow-crowned Night-herons a couple of Lava Herons (another of the Galápagos endemics), a Hudsonian Whimbrel, a Semipalmated Plover and a Wandering Tattler along the shore. Perhaps the biggest surprise, though, was the discovery of a summer-plumaged White-rumped Sandpiper – a vagrant to Galápagos, which apparently has not previously been recorded on Genovesa!



A first summer Semipalmated Plover was feeding along the sandy beach in Darwin's Bay (Andy Swash), and many Hermit Crabs were also in evidence (INSET: Colin MacConnachie).



This adult White-rumped Sandpiper found on Genovesa appears to be the first record for the island; this species is a rare vagrant to Galápagos, with only a handful of records, yet we found two individuals on this tour! (Andy Swash).



Yellow-crowned Night Herons were easily found along the rocky shore at Darwin's Bay; like all the birds on Genovesa they were remarkably tolerant of human presence! (Johanne Charbonneau).



The Marine Iguanas found on Genovesa are an endemic subspecies, nanus, the smallest of the seven subspecies, described; this individual is a female (Andy Swash).



Told by its short muzzle and rather boggle-eyed appearance, the endemic Galápagos Fur Seal was almost exterminated by hunting. Thankfully, numbers have now recovered and they are often seen along rocky shores, such as here on Genovesa (Andy Swash).



A tricky manoeuvre: this juvenile Brown Pelican has almost succeeded in swallowing a Stingray (Colin MacConnachie).



Good numbers of Red-billed Tropicbirds breed along the cliffs on Genovesa (Colin MacConnachie).

Before lunch there was an opportunity for snorkeling for those who wished, and this proved to be a wonderful experience, with excellent views of many colourful fishes. Shortly afterwards there was a chance to take a sea kayak along the bottom of the cliffs. Once the temperature had started to drop in the middle of the afternoon, a panga ride across the bay and along the base of the cliffs provided excellent opportunities to photograph Red-billed Tropicbirds in flight and on their nests, as well as a few Galápagos Fur Seals, before we disembarked at 'The Cliff' (often called Prince Philip's Steps).

A short climb up to the top of the island brought us into a large mixed colony of Red-footed and Nazca Boobies, which were ridiculously tolerant of human presence and highly photogenic. Having walked slowly to the other side of the island we eventually arrived at a huge colony of Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels nesting on a plateau running back from the cliff tops (the birds in Galápagos are of the nominate subspecies *tethys* that is endemic to the archipelago). These birds, which are unique amongst storm petrels in that they visit their nest site during the day, were present in their thousands, darting backwards and forwards over the lava and occasionally alighting briefly on the surface before disappearing into the crevices in which they were nesting. Careful scanning revealed a couple of Galápagos Short-eared Owls waiting patiently near a burrow for their storm petrel prey to appear (the dark subspecies that is endemic to Galápagos, *galapagoensis*, may well represent a distinct species). By early evening we were back onboard *Tip Top IV* and, after another excellent dinner, departed on the long journey to the next island in our itinerary, Santiago (James).



Despite the huge numbers of Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels visiting their breeding colony during the day on Genovesa, photographing them in flight proved to be quite a challenge! (Andy Swash).

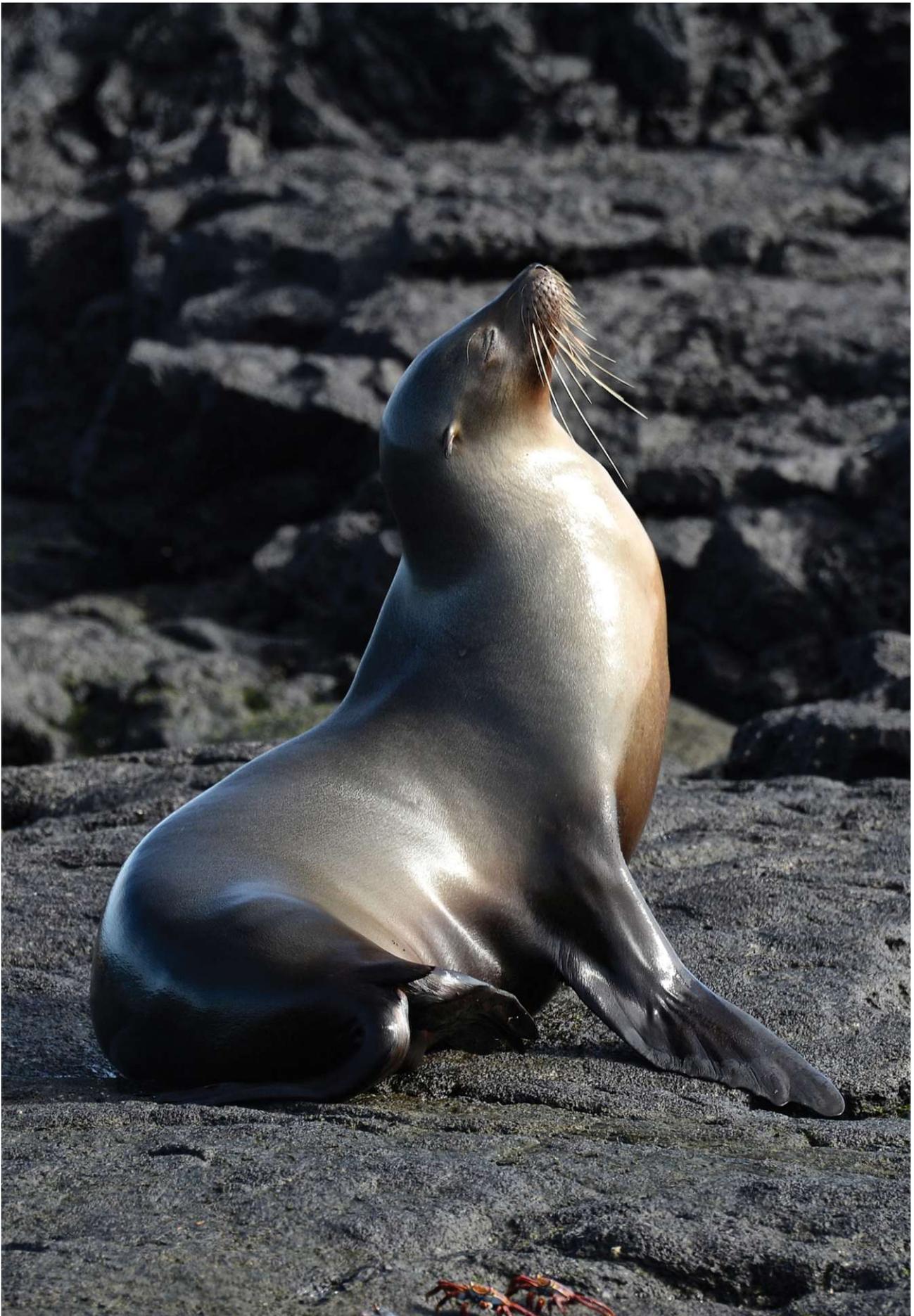
When we awoke the next morning, we found ourselves moored in James Bay (Puerto Egas) on the western end of Santiago, having traveled 60 nautical miles from Genovesa overnight. After an early breakfast we headed off in the pangas. On the way to the beach our first Galápagos Hawk of the tour flew over and once we had landed we set off on a trail through the scrubby vegetation just inland. Soon after starting our walk we saw another Galápagos Hawk perched close by. The vegetation was much more reminiscent of savanna than anything we had seen so far, and we immediately started to find more insects – with Monarch and Queen butterflies being particularly conspicuous. We also saw many Small Ground Finches and a few Galápagos Mockingbirds (these birds being of the subspecies *bindloei*), as well as about ten Galápagos Doves. Along the rocky shoreline there were many opportunities to photograph basking Marine Iguanas – which were so tame that we had to be careful not to tread on them by mistake! A few waders were observed, including Hudsonian Whimbrels, a couple of Wandering Tattlers, a few Semipalmated Plovers and some American Oystercatchers (of the subspecies *galapagensis*, which as its name implies is endemic to Galápagos). We also had excellent views of Lava Herons, as well as a few more Yellow-crowned Night Herons. Basking Galápagos Fur Seals and Galápagos Sea Lions, and innumerable Sally Lightfoot Crabs were also very photogenic. Out to sea a fairly large pod of Common Bottlenose Dolphins was feeding some distance offshore. Soon after returning to the boat the snorkelers headed off to a nearby rocky promontory, where many colourful fishes and, remarkably, a Hawksbill Turtle were seen.



Galápagos Mockingbirds, here of the subspecies *bindloei*, were fairly common in the coastal scrub on Santiago (Andy Swash).

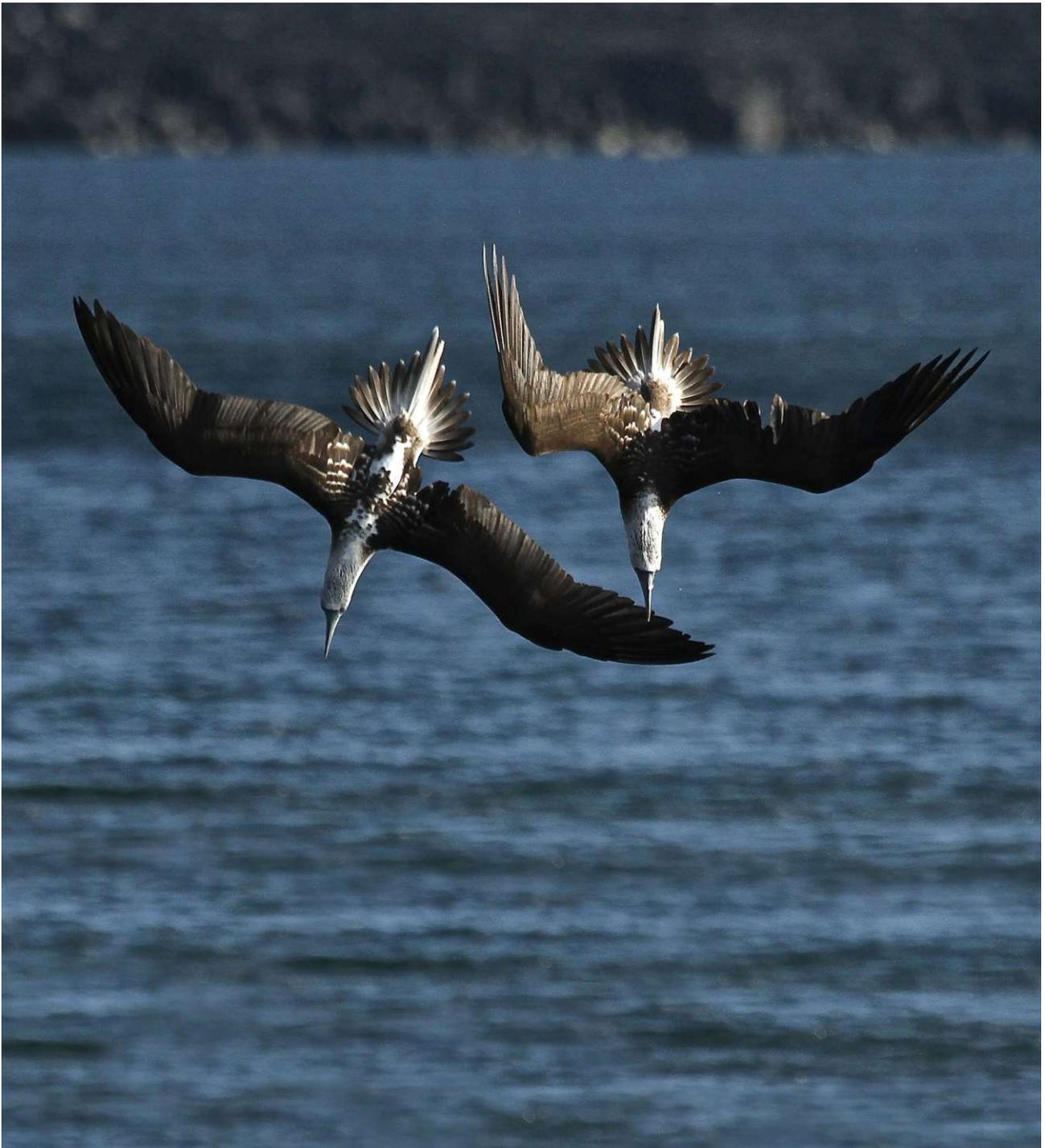


Amazingly colourful Sally Lightfoot Crabs were a very conspicuous feature of the rocky shore at Puerto Egas (Andy Swash).

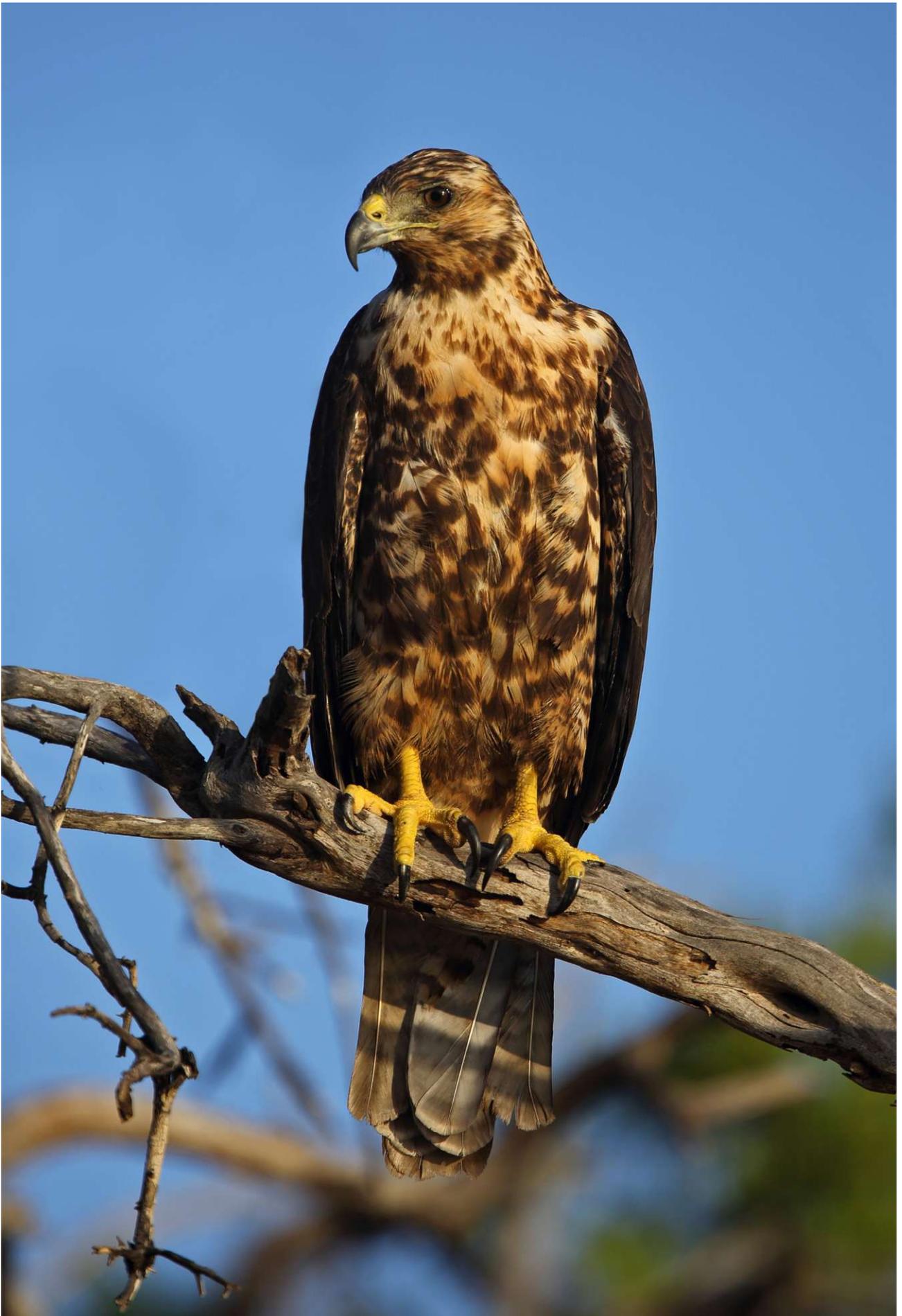


As their name suggests, Galápagos Sea Lions are endemic to Galápagos – and although numerous are listed as Endangered. This photogenic female was hauled out on the rocks at Puerto Egas on Santiago (Colin MacConnachie).

We then cruised the short distance to Espumilla Beach and had lunch while moored off, somewhat distracted by the Blue-footed Boobies feeding nearby. After landing on the beach in the afternoon we explored the fringing mangroves and scanned the lagoon just inland. On the lagoon were a good number of White-cheeked Pintails (of the endemic Galápagos subspecies *galapagensis*) and, amazingly, yet another White-rumped Sandpiper (also apparently a first record, for Santiago)! The trail along the back of the mangroves was alive with Darwin's Finches and 'pishing' elicited an amazing reaction, with sometimes dozens of birds flying in to investigate, some even flying around our heads. Most of the finches were Small and Medium Ground Finches (the last of the four endemic ground finches), although a few Large Ground Finches were also seen. Other highlights during our afternoon walk along the beach were incredibly close views of Galápagos Hawks, which were totally unconcerned by our presence, more *bindloeii* Galápagos Mockingbirds and our first Galápagos (Large-billed) Flycatcher. Soon after returning to the boat, and as the sun set, Galápagos Petrels started to appear in the distance and we soon found ourselves surrounded by hundreds of these Critically Endangered birds, some passing close by and calling as they returned to their nests in the highlands of Santiago – a truly memorable experience.



Blue-footed Boobies were seen feeding off Santiago, sometimes fairly close to the boat (Johanne Charbonneau).



An immature Galápagos Hawk surveys the scene from the mangroves fringing Espumilla Beach (Andy Swash).



American Oystercatchers were feeding along the tideline at Espumilla Beach during the late afternoon; the endemic subspecies on Galápagos, galapagensis, numbers just 300 individuals (Andy Swash).



A few Brown Pelicans were loafing on Espumilla Beach; the birds on Galápagos are of the endemic subspecies urinator (Andy Swash).



The commonest Darwin's Finches at Espumilla Beach were Small Ground Finch (LEFT: adult male) and Medium Ground Finch (RIGHT: immature) (Andy Swash).



Hundreds of Galápagos Petrels were seen off Santiago at dusk before heading inland to their breeding colonies (Andy Swash).

We awoke the next morning to find ourselves cruising slowly along the north coast of Isabela and those up early were treated to the wonderful sight of Wolf Volcano. The next hour or so of seawatching produced good views of a few Galápagos Petrels, our first Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrels – a species that is usually encountered well away from land, several Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels and many Elliot's Storm Petrels. While we were having a later-than-usual breakfast, the boat navigated to Punta Vicente Roca on the north-west tip of Isabela and dropped anchor. During this journey we had crossed the Equator and were invited by the captain to visit the bridge to see 0° come up on the chart plotter. Soon after arriving at Punta Vicente Roca, we boarded the pangas and spent a couple of hours cruising below the nearby cliffs and around the cove. Pattering Elliot's Storm Petrels came very close to the boat, Galápagos Shearwaters skimmed past and Common Noddies and a few Blue-footed Boobies were perched low down on the cliffs, also allowing a very close approach. However, our first Galápagos Penguins sitting on a rock and swimming close by, and Flightless Cormorants hopping across the boulder beach rather stole the show! Some of the snorkelers who took to the water later in the morning had tantalizing views of Green Turtles underwater, despite the rather turbid conditions.



Brown Noddies were seen throughout the archipelago, though the best sightings were at Punta Vicente Roca on Isabela during a panga ride along the base of the cliffs (Andy Swash).



The first Galápagos Penguin seen during the tour – an adult at Punta Vicente Roca (Colin MacConnachie).



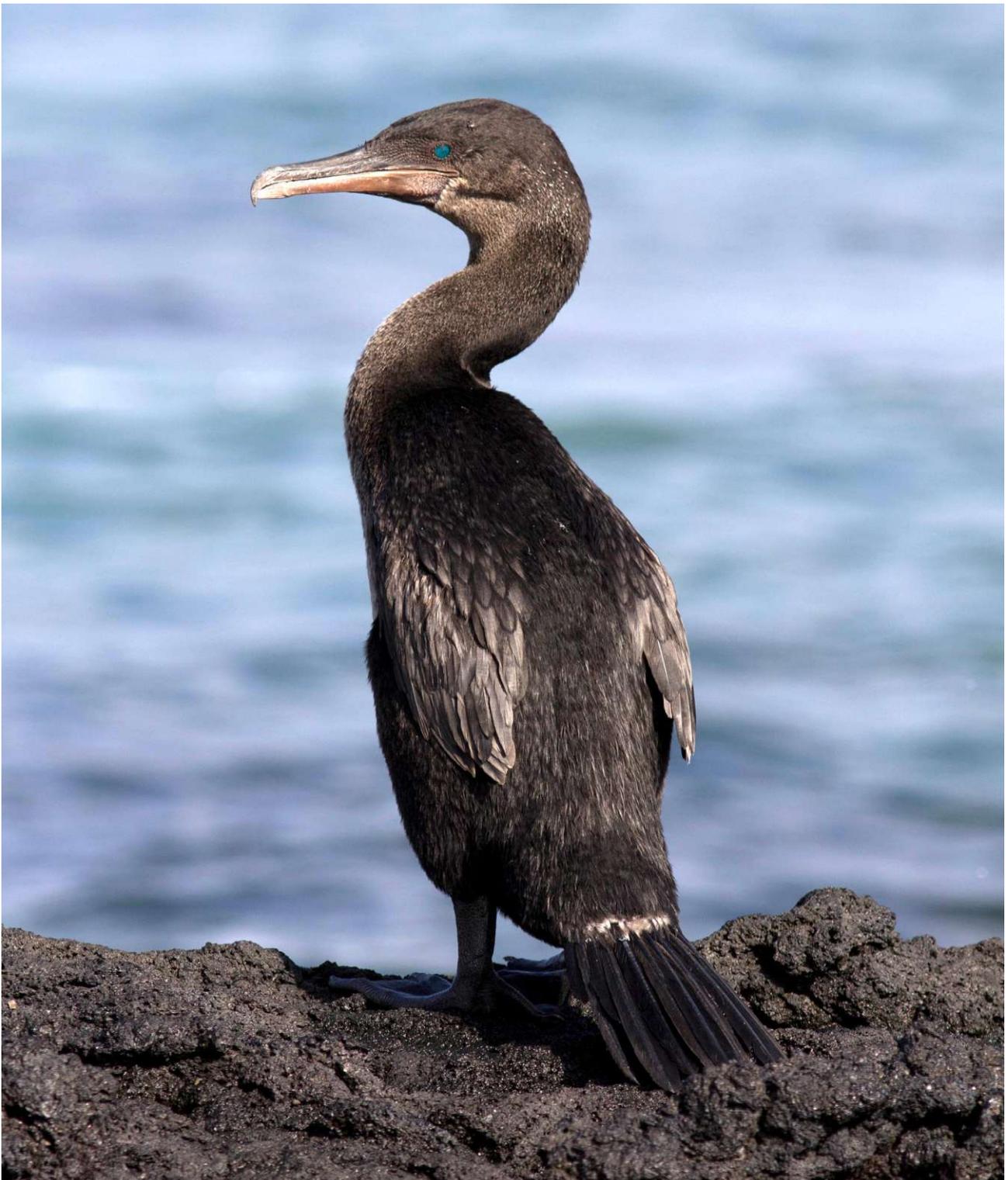
A panga ride off Punta Vicente Roca on Isabela was eventually rewarded with good views of Ocean Sunfish (Colin MacConnachie).

We left Punta Vicente Roca during the early afternoon and navigated the relatively short distance across the Bolivar Channel to moor off the north-west coast of Fernandina at Punta Espinoza. The seawatching during the journey proved to be very exciting, with distant views of a Sperm Whale blowing and then fluking prior to a deep dive, and many Galápagos Shearwaters and Elliot's, Wedge-rumped and Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrels and a few Galápagos Petrels being seen. Before going ashore we spent some time watching a steady stream of storm petrels feeding around the stern of the boat, some of which came extremely close providing some excellent photographic opportunities.

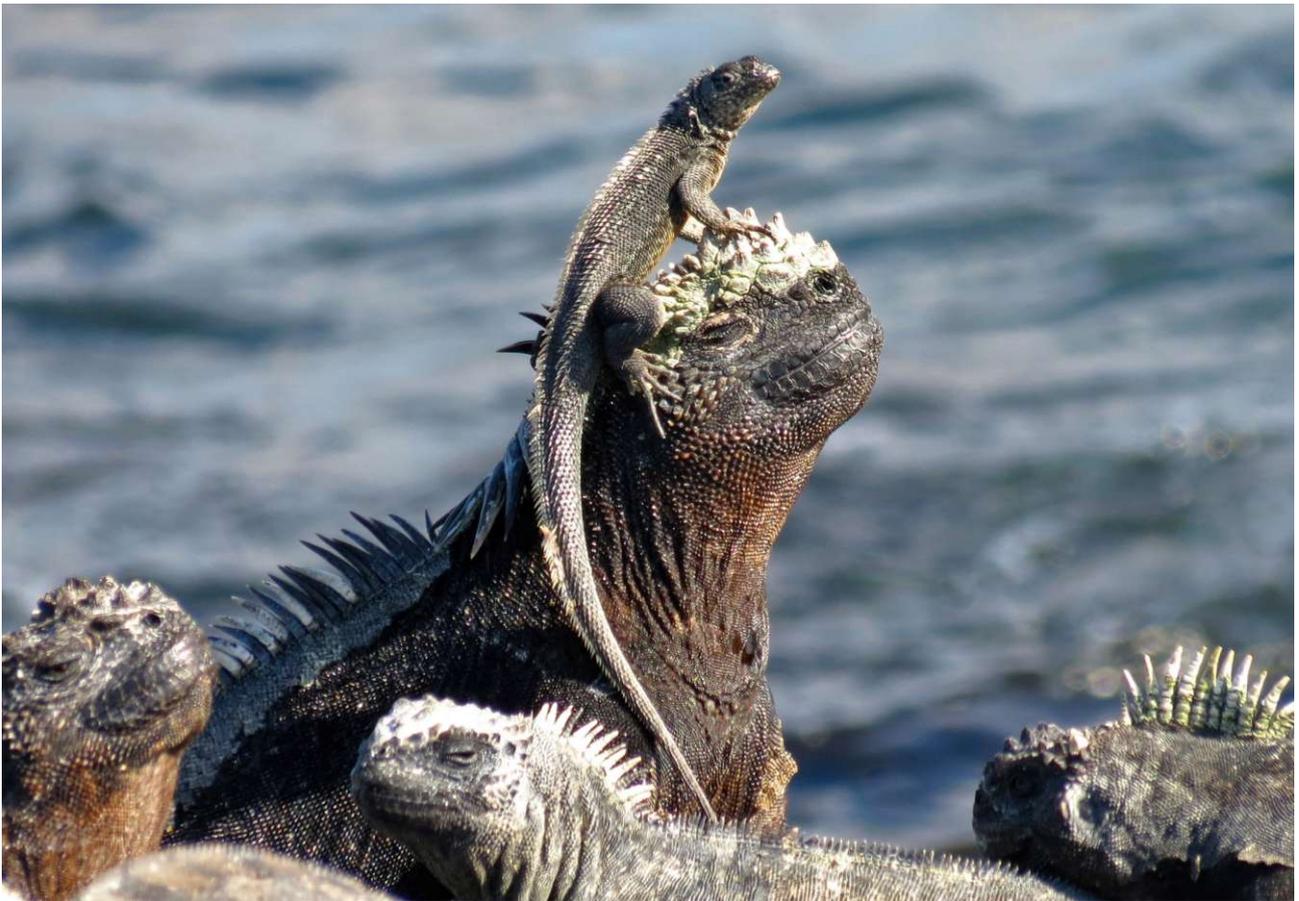


Galápagos Petrel with Elliot's Storm Petrels (TOP: Colin MacConnachie) and Band-rumped Storm Petrel (BOTTOM: Andy Swash).

Mid-afternoon we landed at the only visitor site on Fernandina and walked slowly along the shore, watching the antics at the very large colony of Marine Iguanas – as ever, oblivious to our presence. Here we also had close views of Flightless Cormorants and Great Blue Herons (of the endemic Galápagos subspecies *cognata*), and observed a Small Ground Finch feeding on the back of a Marine Iguana. We then walked out across the stark landscape of a relatively recent lava flow, admiring the many Lava Cacti that had managed to colonize the area, before reaching a mangrove-lined creek where a few large Green Turtles were seen resting. A few Galápagos Mockingbirds (those on Fernandina being of the nominate subspecies *parvulus*) and a few Mangrove Warblers were also seen. During our wanderings we also encountered a couple of Fernandina (Galápagos) Snakes. Once back onboard the *Tip Top IV*, a large raft of Galápagos Shearwaters was seen gathering in the bay before we navigated eastwards back across the Bolivar Channel towards Isabela, where we moored in Tagus Cove for the night.



Flightless Cormorants were breeding along the rocky shore at Punta Espinosa on Fernandina (Angie Cederlund).



As someone remarked on first seeing the hordes of Marine Iguanas as we landed on Fernandina (including this individual that was providing a vantage point for a Galápagos Lava Lizard!), "Imagine being shipwrecked here not knowing that these beautiful beasts are in fact vegetarians!" (Michel Métayer).



The Lava Cactus is one of only a small number of plants that has colonized the bare lava flows on Fernandina (Johanne Charbonneau).

The next morning provided one of the highlights of the tour – a panga ride soon after dawn along the bottom of the cliffs in very calm conditions giving us fantastic views of about ten pairs of Galápagos Martins, which were found to be nesting fairly low down. This Endangered bird is now one of the most elusive of the Galápagos endemics and we were delighted to have the opportunity to watch so many at very close quarters and to obtain some excellent images...



One of the highlights of the tour was finding a small breeding colony of Galápagos Martins near Tagus Cove on Isabela. The population of this little known species has declined alarmingly in recent years and it was categorized as Endangered in 2012. Very few photographs are known to exist and the opportunity to spend time watching these birds at such close quarters was probably unprecedented. The individual in the top photo is a male and the bird in the bottom photo a female (Andy Swash).



Brown Pelicans were a constant feature around the coasts of Galápagos and were occasionally seen feeding by diving – though you had to be quick on the shutter to obtain the perfect image! (Colin MacConnachie).

After spending about an hour watching the martins we returned to *Tip Top IV* and immediately began navigating south to Urbina Bay, also on Isabela, having breakfast *en route*. As soon as we arrived at Urbina Bay we headed off in the pangas and landed on the black sand beach. Our next new species was Galápagos Giant Tortoise, one of which was hiding in the shade next to the path. (The subspecies here is *vandenburghi*, which is restricted to Alcedo Volcano and makes its way to lower elevations at this time of the year). There were also large numbers of Darwin's Finches in the coastal scrub, the most numerous species being Small and Medium Ground Finches, but we also found our first tree finch – an immature Small Tree Finch. A few Dark-billed Cuckoos were seen, though they rarely appeared in the open for more than a few seconds, and ten Galápagos Mockingbirds were observed (these birds, like those on Fernandina the previous day being of the nominate subspecies *parvulus*). This area also proved to be favoured by Galápagos Flycatchers, with at least ten birds being seen, some at point-blank range, and during our walk through the coastal scrub we also encountered a couple of Land Iguanas.



A good number of Galápagos Flycatchers were seen in the coastal scrub at Urbina Bay (Colin MacConnachie).



Endemic to Galápagos, the Lava Gull is the rarest gull in the world; this individual followed the boat all the way from Urbina Bay to Elizabeth Bay (Colin MacConnachie).

Once back on board the *Tip Top IV*, we continued our navigation towards our next port of call, Elizabeth Bay. During the early afternoon we took a panga ride through the nearby mangroves, where the bird highlights were close views of about 12 Galápagos Penguins, both swimming and sitting on the rocks, and a few Flightless Cormorants, as well as our first Striated Heron and some very obliging Great Blue Herons. The crystal clear waters in the mangrove-lined creeks provided an excellent opportunity to watch Green Turtles swimming very close by and a good number of Spotted Eagle Rays.



Galápagos Penguins swam close to the pangas as we explored Elizabeth Bay (Johanne Charbonneau).



A Green Turtle coming up for air in one of the mangrove-lined creeks at Elizabeth Bay (Colin MacConnachie).



A couple of Striated Herons were seen feeding from the mangroves in Elizabeth Bay (Colin MacConnachie).

By mid-afternoon we were back on board and set sail again on the longest single navigation of the tour – around the south western point of Isabela and ultimately to the town of Puerto Villamil. The scenery as we travelled along the coast was truly spectacular and the seawatching during the three hours or so before sunset was fantastic, with many highlights, including two Markham's Storm Petrels, a Sooty Tern (which was completely unexpected, as the only breeding colony in Galápagos is on the island of Darwin way to the north), about 20 Galápagos Petrels, hundreds of Galápagos Shearwaters and Elliot's Storm Petrels, and about 30 Wedge-rumped and four Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrels, not to mention three Bryde's Whales, a Hammerhead Shark, eight Manta Rays (Pacific Mobulas), one of which was seen breaching, as were a number of Yellowfin Tuna.



Leaping Yellowfin Tuna were an impressive sight as we cruised along the coast of Isabela (Andy Swash).

Just before midnight we reached Puerto Villamil, where we moored in the harbour for the night. After breakfast, we took a short panga ride across the harbour to the town quay, where three Galápagos Penguins were swimming close inshore and Lava Gulls drifted overhead. We soon boarded a 'truck-bus' and headed off inland, across a lava plain bedecked with endemic Candelabra Cacti, where a few Common Cactus Finches were seen, together with a Dark-billed Cuckoo at close range.



This Dark-billed Cuckoo near Puerto Villamil was unusually confiding (Andy Swash).



A few Common Cactus Finches were seen, often sitting prominently on Opuntia cacti, as we headed inland from Puerto Villamil across the coastal flats; this bird is a female (Angie Cederlund).

We then started our ascent of the Sierra Negra Volcano, a journey that took us initially through the agricultural zone, where we stopped and walked along a side track. Here we were rewarded with good, albeit rather brief, views of a female Large Tree Finch (a species that is becoming increasingly elusive), two Woodpecker Finches (of the subspecies *productus*), a couple of Green (Olive) Warbler-Finches and about ten small Tree Finches. Another stop at a slightly higher elevation in the agricultural area provided our first 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatchers, a female and a dazzling male (this location on Isabela now appears to be the only accessible and reliable place on Galápagos to see the endemic form of this flycatcher – subspecies *nanus*, which may in fact warrant specific status – as for unknown reasons it has recently disappeared from its former stronghold on Floreana and has become very rare on Santa Cruz). As we drove higher through the *Scalesia* zone another male 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatcher was seen, which posed very nicely for the photographers in the group.



Male 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatchers just seem to glow in the forest but unfortunately are becoming increasingly rare (Andy Swash).

By the time we arrived at the parking area below the summit of the Sierra Negra Volcano it had started to drizzle and we donned our rain capes and began our search for the generally skulking and often elusive Galápagos Crake. After about half-an-hour, during which time we heard a couple of crakes calling from dense vegetation, the drizzle stopped briefly and the park guard beckoned us over and pointed out a bird standing in the open! We were able to watch it for about two minutes, stretching its wing and preening – an amazing experience! Soon it started to drizzle again and we headed back to the lowlands and returned to the *Tip Top IV* for lunch.



Often one of the most elusive of the Galápagos endemics, this Galápagos Crake stood in the open, preening, for about two minutes, affording fantastic views (Michel Métayer).

During the early afternoon we returned to Puerto Villamil and spent the first half-an-hour or so overlooking a flooded pit where we found a group of five American Flamingos (the resident birds on Galápagos are sometimes treated as an endemic subspecies *glyphorhynchus*), a couple of Black-necked Stilts, five Common Gallinules, and three White-cheeked Pintails. We then walked a short distance to a breeding centre for the five subspecies of Galápagos Giant Tortoise that are endemic to Isabela and were treated to a fascinating visit. From here we walked back into the town initially through scrub and woodland and then along a boardwalk through the mangroves where we saw a few more White-cheeked Pintails and Black-necked Stilts. As on most of the islands, Mangrove Warblers were very numerous, particularly in the coastal scrub, invariably responding strongly to 'pishing'. A few Galápagos Mockingbirds were also seen here. A quick view across the bay before we were collected by the 'truck-bus' revealed a Lava Heron, and a couple of Lava Gulls and a Hudsonian Whimbrel flew past. Late afternoon we arrived back on the quay and were transferred to the *Tip Top IV*.



Each of the five large volcanoes on Isabela supports an endemic subspecies of Galápagos Giant Tortoise, all of which are maintained in captivity at the tortoise breeding centre in Puerto Villamil. This individual, subspecies *microphyes* from Darwin Volcano, provided a good vantage point for a female Galápagos Lava Lizard! (Colin MacConnachie).



The resident subspecies of White-cheeked Pintail that is endemic to Galápagos, *galapagensis*, is sometimes referred to as the Galápagos Pintail (Andy Swash).

Soon after getting back on board we started navigating towards Floreana, passing the island of Tortuga (or Brattle) and allowing some time for seawatching before it got dark. During this period we saw 12 Galápagos Petrels, hundreds of Galápagos Shearwaters, all three 'resident' storm petrels, including at least ten Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrels and many Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies.



Rafts of hundreds of Galápagos Shearwaters were seen as we left Isabela and headed towards Floreana (Andy Swash).



About a dozen Galápagos Petrels passed across the bow as the light began to fade (Andy Swash).

Late in the evening we arrived at Floreana and spent the night moored in a sheltered bay on the north coast of the island. Soon after dawn we took a panga ride and landed at Punta Cormorán, where five Hudsonian Whimbrels were feeding along the shore. On the lagoon behind the beach we were very surprised and fortunate to find a second-summer Grey-headed Gull (possibly only the second record for Galápagos!), a couple of Black-necked Stilts, a Sanderling and a Semipalmated Plover, not to mention 37 American Flamingos, some of which were feeding at extremely close range apparently completely oblivious to our presence. We then walked through the nearby coastal scrub, where we saw many Small and Medium Ground Finches and a few Galápagos Flycatchers before finding a couple of tree finches, which, on close examination of some quickly taken photographs proved to be Medium Tree Finches – a surprising find at this low altitude (this Critically Endangered species, which is confined to Floreana, is generally found in the highlands). A short walk up and over a rise before descending to an idyllic sandy beach produced Floreana Lava Lizards (endemic to this one island) and on the beach itself was a confiding Great Blue Heron that posed nicely for the photographers.



This superb adult Great Blue Heron was feeding in the rock pools at Punta Cormorán; the birds on Galápagos are an endemic subspecies, cognata (Andy Swash).



American Flamingos were a fantastic sight at such close range on the lagoon at Punta Cormorán (Andy Swash).

As soon as we returned to the *Tip Top IV*, we set sail for the nearby islet of Champion and on arrival boarded the pangas and set off to explore the sheltered side of the island. The main purpose of our visit to Champion was to look for the Critically Endangered Floreana (Charles) Mockingbird, which is now confined to this and the nearby islet of Gardner (on neither of which is landing permitted). We soon found our target bird moving through the *Opuntia* cacti growing along the cliff edge and eventually managed to get excellent views of a couple of birds, one individual flying down onto the rocks close to the shore.



One of the rarest and most threatened birds in the world, the Floreana Mockingbird can only be seen from a panga by visiting tourists. Most of the adults are colour-ringed for research purposes (Andy Swash).



Wandering Tattlers were seen in small numbers on rocky shores throughout the archipelago. The birds present at this time of year are non-breeding individuals yet to make the return journey to the breeding grounds in Alaska and north-west Canada (Andy Swash).

A short navigation brought us to Post Office Bay, where we landed briefly to inspect the postcards in the barrel, take some to deliver for others, and deposit a few of our own. We then returned to the boat for lunch, during which we navigated to Puerto Velasco Ibarra on the west coast of Floreana. Soon after arriving we were back on land, boarded an open-sided 'truck-bus' and were transported the few kilometres up into the highlands. We quickly found one of our target birds, the Medium Tree Finch, two of which were feeding at the edge of the parking area. During our exploration of the area we saw at least 20 individuals of this highly threatened species, including some full-plumaged adult males, as well as about 15 Small Tree Finches and dozens of Small and Medium Ground Finches. We also heard at least three Vegetarian Finches but unfortunately they could not be located. By walking quietly through the tortoise breeding compound and the adjacent forest we also managed to find at least three Paint-billed Crakes, which eventually everyone managed to see well (although this is a widespread species in mainland South America it is extremely difficult to observe and Galápagos undoubtedly provides the best opportunity to see it!). We also had time to visit the caves that had been used as temporary dwellings by some of the early settlers on Floreana.

After descending to the agricultural zone we walked slowly down the road towards the coast for half-an-hour or so. During the walk we saw a few more Medium Tree Finches, a couple of which were feeding in a very similar manner to that of the Woodpecker Finch by foraging amongst hanging mosses and lichens (Woodpecker Finch is absent from Floreana), a couple of Galápagos Flycatchers and many Mangrove Warblers before being picked up by the 'truck-bus' and transported back to the quay and returning to the *Tip Top IV*. After another excellent dinner we departed for Santa Cruz...



Critically Endangered and often difficult to see well, Medium Tree Finches proved to be relatively straightforward to find during this tour, with well over 20 observed in the highlands of Floreana (Colin MacConnachie).

We awoke the next morning to find ourselves moored in the harbour at Puerto Ayora, the main port in the archipelago, and went ashore after an early breakfast. A coach was waiting for us near the quay and quickly transported us to the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) to look at the Galápagos Giant Tortoise enclosures and learn something about the many conservation initiatives undertaken in conjunction with the Galápagos National Park Service. Being the first visitors of the day to the CDRS, we had the place to ourselves for the first hour or so, and during our visit recorded six species of Darwin's Finch – the most important of which was our final officially recognized Darwin's Finch, the impressive Vegetarian Finch of which we saw at least six individuals including a pair building a nest. We also had excellent views of Common Cactus Finches, Small Tree Finch, Large, Medium and Small Ground Finches, Galápagos Flycatchers and Galápagos Mockingbirds.



The Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS) on Santa Cruz is one of the best places to see the Common Cactus Finch and a number of pairs were breeding at the time of our visit; the bird shown here is an adult male (Angie Cederlund).



Galápagos Mockingbirds of the nominate subspecies parvulus were very much in evidence at the CDRS (Andy Swash).



Our final Darwin's Finch! Vegetarian Finches can often be very elusive but we saw at least six individuals, including this superb adult male, at the CDRS on Santa Cruz (Andy Swash).

We left the CDRS mid-morning, boarded the coach and headed up into the humid highlands of Santa Cruz, driving through the agricultural zone as we did so. Western Cattle Egrets were very much in evidence in this area – a species that first colonized Galápagos in 1964 and is now a widespread breeder. Our first stop was at Los Gemelos (The Twins), two impressive pit-craters where we walked through the misty, lichen-festooned *Scalesia* forest. Despite the mist, we saw a few birds here, notably Small Tree Finch and Green (Olive) Warbler-Finch. However, the drizzle became heavier and soon turned to steady rain, so we decided to head back to lower elevations and arrived early at the nearby restaurant where we were to have lunch. This proved to be a very good move, as soon after we arrived the restaurant owners erected a step ladder next to the bar, allowing everyone to climb up and obtain fantastic close views of a pair of Galápagos Barn Owls with their two fairly well-grown chicks – a memorable and somewhat surreal experience! (The rather distinct form that is endemic to Galápagos, subspecies *punctatissima*, is sometimes split from the Western Barn Owl.) After an excellent lunch we were treated to an impromptu talk by the award-winning wildlife photographer and author Tui De Roy, who had kindly joined us. Tui has lived on Galápagos since the age of two and her description of the way of life during her early years, and how things have changed over the past half-century (or so) was fascinating.



Undoubtedly the most bizarre observation of the tour, this pair of Galápagos Barn Owls was nesting above the bar in the restaurant at which we had lunch! Since it was so dark, an 8-second exposure was required to obtain this image! (Andy Swash).

By mid-afternoon it had stopped raining and we drove the short distance to a private Galápagos Giant Tortoise reserve, Rancho Manzanillo, and as we approached a Galápagos Crake ran across the track in front of the coach! Soon after arriving we walked through an area of native forest and secondary vegetation and were rewarded with excellent views of no fewer than seven species of Darwin's Finch: a female Large Tree Finch, two Woodpecker Finches (of the subspecies *pallidus*), two more Vegetarian Finches, at least 15 Small Tree Finches, ten Green (Olive) Warbler-Finches and dozens of Small and Medium Ground Finches. We also saw a few Galápagos Flycatchers and Galápagos Mockingbirds, and one member of the group had good views of a Paint-billed Crake. However, perhaps the most unexpected sighting was the seven Purple Gallinules, including two juveniles, that flushed from a small weedy pond as we approached (this species has previously only been recorded as a vagrant to Galápagos and has certainly never been recorded breeding!). During our visit to the ranch we also saw many Smooth-billed Anis, a species that was introduced into Galápagos some years ago in the belief that the birds would reduce tick infestation on domestic livestock. Unfortunately, they have since spread and become established on many of the islands, now posing a threat to the native birds; as a result, an eradication programme is currently being planned. Late in the afternoon we headed back to Puerto Ayora and returned to the *Tip Top IV* for dinner. That evening we began our navigation towards Española...



Large Tree Finches seem to be increasingly difficult to find and we only saw two females during the tour (Angie Cederlund).



Small Tree Finch is the commonest of the tree finches and was found on three of the islands; this is a juvenile (Andy Swash).



Green Warbler-Finches proved to be quite common in the highlands of Santa Cruz and Isabela (Andy Swash).



*Only a handful of Woodpecker Finches were seen during the tour; the form on Santa Cruz is subspecies *pallidus* (Andy Swash).*

By sunrise the next morning we were at anchor off the island of Española (Hood), the oldest and southernmost island in the archipelago and also one of the most isolated. This island is particularly famous as it supports over 99% of the world's Waved Albatross population. We made our first landing at Punta Suárez at the western end of the island, and within minutes of stepping ashore had seen all the birds endemic to this island in the low scrub behind the beach: Hood Mockingbird, Large Cactus Finch (here of the large-billed nominate subspecies *conirostris* – very different from the birds we had seen on Genovesa and surely warranting specific status!), and good numbers of Grey (Dusky) Warbler-Finches (here of the island endemic subspecies *cinerascens*). There were also dozens of Galápagos Doves in evidence.



Large Cactus Finch of the endemic subspecies conirostris (LEFT) and Grey (Dusky) Warbler-Finch of the endemic subspecies cinerascens (RIGHT) were both commonly seen on Española (Andy Swash).



An adult Lava Heron was watched hunting in a rock pool at Punta Suárez (Andy Swash).

A short walk along a trail leading to the edge of the main Waved Albatross colony took us past birds sitting on their nests, often within touching distance! We had a wonderful time watching these huge birds sitting on eggs at their nest scrapes and cruising majestically overhead. Pairs were also seen undertaking their elaborate courtship displays and others were seen waddling to the 'take-off' zone and running to the edge of the cliff with wings held out before taking to the air. The photographic opportunities from the cliff-top were outstanding and between us many thousands of images must have been taken of the albatrosses, Swallow-tailed Gulls, Blue-footed and Nazca Boobies, Red-billed Tropicbirds and Magnificent Frigatebirds gliding by.



Our visit to the Waved Albatross colony on Española was undoubtedly one of the highlights of the tour, with many birds incubating their single egg (TOP: Colin MacConnachie) and pairs performing their ritualized display (BOTTOM: Andy Swash).



A lovely study of a displaying Waved Albatross (Johanne Charbonneau).



Spending time on a cliff top watching wonderful Waved Albatrosses gliding effortlessly past was a memorable experience (Andy Swash).



The flight views of Swallow-tailed Gulls from the cliff top on Española were superb (Andy Swash).



Both Nazca (top) and Blue-footed Boobies (bottom) were breeding on Española (Johanne Charbonneau).

On our way back to the boat we walked through another part of the albatross colony where a pair of Galápagos Hawks perched close by surveying the scene. We then walked along the cliffs and back to the shore, passing breeding and displaying Nazca and Blue-footed Boobies, 'messes' of Marine Iguanas (including some brightly coloured red individuals, the subspecies here being an island endemic, *venustissimus*), and many individuals of the large and striking endemic Española Lava Lizard. It was with great reluctance that we finally left the albatrosses and other seabirds and returned to the *Tip Top IV* late in the morning.



The subspecies of Marine Iguana on Española, venustissimus, is the most colourful of all the forms (Johanne Charbonneau).

Back on board, the boat navigated east along the north coast of Española and moored close to the islet of Gardner in Gardner Bay, Elliot's Storm Petrels having been watched feeding in the wake as we travelled. After lunch there was an opportunity for those who wished to go snorkeling. This proved to be an outstanding experience, the highlight being close encounters with playful Galápagos Sea Lions in the deep, clear water.



Close encounters with inquisitive Galápagos Sea Lions while snorkelling were a truly memorable experience (Colin MacConnachie).

Later in the afternoon we crossed the bay in the pangas and made one more landing – on the beach in Gardner Bay. Here we were able to roam freely amongst Galápagos Sea Lions, about 200 of which were hauled out, to watch and admire the antics of the Hood Mockingbirds catching flies attracted to the sea lions, to photograph the Darwin's Finches feeding in the coastal scrub – or to just sit and contemplate this remarkable place. Late in the afternoon we returned to the *Tip Top IV*, where we had another excellent dinner before navigating northwards late in the evening for San Cristóbal.



The antics of the amazingly confiding Hood Mockingbirds on the beach in Gardner Bay on Española were fascinating to watch as they fed on flies attracted to the dozing Galápagos Sea Lions (Andy Swash).

The next morning we awoke to find ourselves moored in the bay at Punta Pitt, the most northerly point of San Cristóbal (Chatham). The fairly steep climb up from the beach into the interior was rewarded by impressive views across the bay, but it took quite some searching before we eventually found our target bird – the increasingly rare Chatham (San Cristóbal) Mockingbird (a species that has seen a serious population decline in recent years and is now categorized as Endangered). We had done it, as this was the final ‘available’ Galápagos endemic! We had seen them all and been fortunate to observe the vast majority of the species at close quarters and to photograph almost every species and subspecies very well. During our walk around Punta Pitt we also saw a few pairs of nesting Red-footed Boobies, which have returned to breed here after a long absence following an intensive predator control programme in recent years. On our way back to the beach we came across a number of San Cristóbal Lava Lizards, another island endemic. Having boarded the pangas, we headed out across the bay to visit Pitt Rock, a small islet just offshore. As we approached it became increasingly clear that we were about to witness an amazing spectacle as clouds of birds, including thousands of Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels, hundreds of Galápagos Shearwaters and dozens of Swallow-tailed Gulls, Common Noddies and Great Frigatebirds swarmed around the islet. We watched in awe for some time before reluctantly returning to the *Tip Top IV*.



The spectacular scenery at Punta Pitt at the northern end of San Cristóbal (Michel Métayer).



The final endemic! The Endangered San Cristóbal Mockingbird was eventually seen very well at Punta Pitt (Colin MacConnachie).

Once back on board we set sail immediately for Cerro Brujo, which was to be our final landing of this memorable tour. The seawatching during the journey along the west coast of San Cristóbal proved to be very interesting: as we passed through rafts of hundreds of Galápagos Shearwaters, a larger shearwater was seen that proved to be a Pink-footed Shearwater, a species only rarely seen in Galápagos waters. Once we arrived at Cerro Brujo we took a panga ride along the spectacular cliffs, where Brown Pelicans, Common Noddies and innumerable Sally Lightfoot crabs were the highlight, and then made for a nearby idyllic sandy beach. Having landed we spent an enjoyable time walking along the shore, searching the dunes and scanning the inland lagoons. It was good to find that our 'back-up' site for the Chatham Mockingbird would have come up trumps had we failed to find the bird at Punta Pitt, as seven birds were seen, including one singing at fairly close quarters in the scrub at the back of the beach. As well as ten White-cheeked (Galápagos) Pintails, including seven recently hatched ducklings, six Black-necked Stilts and two Semipalmated Plovers, there were two other waders (shorebirds) on the lagoons that on close scrutiny proved to be a Lesser and a Greater Yellowlegs (the latter being a very scarce visitor to Galápagos).



Although Brown Pelicans were seen on all the islands we visited, they are always highly photogenic (Andy Swash).

Late in the afternoon we returned to the *Tip Top IV* and travelled the short distance to Kicker Rock, a spectacular eroded tuff cone. Having circumnavigated the rock and obtained some wonderful images of our final sunset in Las Islas Encantadas, we navigated to moor off Cerro Tijeretas (Frigatebird Hill) nearby on the west coast of San Cristóbal. Before dinner we were treated to a farewell drink by the captain and passed on our grateful thanks to the crew and our excellent naturalist guide Eduardo, who had all worked tirelessly to ensure the tour had been successful and enjoyable. Then followed an excellent roast turkey dinner – the last of many superb meals we had had on board. While sitting on deck after dinner a ghostly white shape appeared a number of times off the port side. When it eventually came close enough for any details to be discerned, we realized that it was a Galápagos Barn Owl! Shortly afterwards a second bird appeared and the two glided around the boat for many minutes before departing. Since we were moored quite some distance offshore, the only explanation we could come up with for this remarkable observation is that the owls were hunting storm petrels, which are often attracted to lights at night.

Our final overnight sail returned us to the place we had begun our tour of the archipelago ten days previously, moored off the island of North Seymour. A pre-breakfast panga ride along the cliffs provided very good opportunities to photograph Galápagos Fur Seals, Swallow-tailed Gulls and Brown Pelicans on the rocks, while Common Noddies fed from the water's surface nearby. In the bushes along the cliffs and circling overhead were many frigatebirds – both Great and Magnificent – including some males with their red gular pouches inflated. This was a memorable finale to a fantastic wildlife and photographic experience and during our final breakfast on board the *Tip Top IV*, we navigated to Baltra Harbour, where we disembarked and were transferred to the airport in good time to catch our flight back to Quito.

Once we had retrieved our luggage at Quito Airport and had made our way outside, we were met by our ground agent and were transported back into Quito where we checked in to our comfortable hotel for the final night of the main tour. Here we said farewell to the ten members of the group who were heading home the following day, the other five participants eagerly anticipating the delights the lay ahead during the extension to Yanacocha and the Mindo area on the west slope of the Andes...



Our final sunset in Galápagos was observed at Kicker Rock off the west coast of San Cristóbal (Andy Swash).



The opportunity to watch Waved Albatrosses at close quarters quietly incubating their eggs, displaying and preening was a profoundly moving experience for many of the tour participants (Andy Swash).

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

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

Species that were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

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

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from BirdLife International's website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

CR = Critically Endangered, **EN** = Endangered, **VU** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

BIRDS

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis* Observed on five occasions, with over 38 seen in total.

Galápagos Penguin ◊ *Spheniscus mendiculus* (**EN**) 28 seen, adults and juveniles, on Isabela and Floreana.

Waved Albatross ◊ *Diomedea irrorata* (**CR**) Over 300 seen on Española – one of the highlights of the tour.

Galápagos Petrel ◊ *Pterodroma phaeopygia* (**CR**) 600+ at dusk near Santiago and seen regularly at sea. See note.

Pink-footed Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus creatopus* (**VU**) One off San Cristóbal on 1 June was unexpected; a rare vagrant.

Galápagos Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus subalaris* Very Common, particularly close to land. See note.

Elliot's Storm Petrel ◊ (White-vented S P) *Oceanites gracilis* (**DD**) Very common, especially in inshore waters.

Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel ◊ (Galápagos S P) *Oceanodroma tethys* Very common; 1,000s seen at two colonies.

Band-rumped Storm Petrel ◊ (Madeiran S P) *Oceanodroma castro* Occasional at sea but rarely close inshore.

Markham's Storm Petrel ◊ *Oceanodroma markhami* Two seen off Isabela on 27 May were unexpected; a vagrant.

American Flamingo (Caribbean F) ◊ *Phoenicopterus ruber* 5 near on Isabela and 37 on Floreana. See note.

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* Many sightings, notably on Genovesa where there is a large colony.
Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* 7 on Genovesa (all ages) and singles on 4 other islands.
Lava Heron ◊ (Galápagos H) *Butorides sundevalli* Widely scattered in small numbers on rocky shores. See note.
Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* 3 adults were seen, 1 on Fernandina and 2 on Isabela.
Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Small flocks were observed on 5 islands. See note.
Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* Singles were seen on 5 islands.
Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* Common and widespread and recorded every day.
Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* Common and widespread, sometimes even seen in the highlands.
Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor* Large nesting colonies seen on North Seymour and Genovesa.
Blue-footed Booby ◊ *Sula nebouxii* Much the commonest booby in inshore waters, with thousands seen.
Nazca Booby ◊ *Sula granti* Common; particularly at breeding colonies on Genovesa and Española. See note.
Red-footed Booby ◊ *Sula sula* 1,000s on Genovesa, including white and dark phase birds, and 20 on San Cristóbal,
Flightless Cormorant ◊ (Galápagos C) *Phalacrocorax harrisi* (VU) 37 seen, on Isabela and Fernandina.
Galápagos Hawk ◊ *Buteo galapagoensis* (VU) Seen on 4 dates and often very tame; maximum of 10 on Santiago.
Galápagos Crane ◊ (G Rail) *Laterallus spilonotus* (VU) 1 seen and 2 heard on Isabela and 2 seen on Santa Cruz.
Paint-billed Crane ◊ *Neocrex erythrops* 4 in the highlands of Floreana, and 2 on Santa Cruz.
Purple Gallinule* (American P G) *Porphyrio martinicus* 7, including 2 juveniles, in the highlands of Santa Cruz.
Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata* 5 at Puerto Villamil on Isabela and 6 in the highlands of Santa Cruz. See note.
American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* Seen in small numbers, scattered throughout the islands.
Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* Seen in small numbers on coastal lagoons and wetlands.
Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* 1 on Genovesa, 4 on Santiago, 1 on Floreana, 2 on San Cristóbal.
Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus* 15 recorded, mostly along shorelines. See note.
Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* 1 at Cerro Brujo on San Cristóbal; a rare visitor to Galápagos.
Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* 1 at Cerro Brujo on San Cristóbal; a scarce visitor to Galápagos.
Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incana* 6 seen: 1 on Genovesa, 2 on Santiago, 1 on Fernandina, 1 on Champion.
Sanderling *Calidris alba* 1 was seen on the lagoon at Punta Cormorán on Floreana.
White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis* 1 on Genovesa and 1 at Espumilla Beach on Santiago; a rare vagrant.
Brown Noddy (Common N) *Anous stolidus* Common in inshore waters, but rarely seen far from land.
Sooty Tern *Onychoprion furcatus* 1 off the west coast of Isabela was totally unexpected.
Swallow-tailed Gull ◊ *Creagrus furcatus* Good numbers seen throughout the islands, including 500+ on Genovesa.
Grey-headed Gull *Chroicocephalus cirrocephalus* A 2nd-year bird on Floreana may be the 2nd Galápagos record.
Lava Gull ◊ *Leucophaeus fuliginosus* (VU) Seen throughout the islands and recorded on six dates; 15 birds seen.
Galápagos Dove ◊ *Zenaida galapagoensis* Common, particularly on the smaller islands, and seen on eight dates.
Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* (introduced) Common on Isabela and Santa Cruz and a few on other islands.
Dark-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus melacoryphus* 1 on Santiago, 7 on Isabela.
Galápagos Barn Owl ◊ *Tyto punctatissima* Pair & 2 young on Santa Cruz, 2 at sea off San Cristóbal. See note.
Galápagos Short-eared Owl ◊ *Asio [flammeus] galapagoensis* 2 on Genovesa. See note.
Galápagos Vermilion Flycatcher ◊ *Pyrocephalus rubinus nanus* 5 on Isabela. See note.
Galápagos Flycatcher ◊ (Large-billed F) *Myiarchus magnirostris* Small numbers seen on many occasions.
Galápagos Martin ◊ *Progne modesta* (EN) About 20 at a breeding colony on the west coast of Isabela. See note.
Galápagos Mockingbird ◊ *Mimus parvulus* The most widespread of the mockingbirds, seen in good numbers.
Floreana Mockingbird ◊ (Charles M) *Mimus trifasciatus* (CR) Very good views of at least 5 birds on Champion.
Hood Mockingbird ◊ (Española M) *Mimus macdonaldi* (VU) Exceptionally close views of 12+ on Española.
San Cristóbal Mockingbird ◊ (Chatham M) *Mimus melanotis* (EN) Very good views of 10 birds on San Cristóbal.
Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia* By far the commonest and most widespread landbird in Galápagos.
Large Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza magnirostris* Seen well on Genovesa and on Santiago, with singles elsewhere.
Medium Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza fortis* Common and widespread on most of the 'central' islands.
Small Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza fuliginosa* Much the commonest and most widespread of the Darwin's Finches.
Sharp-beaked Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza difficilis* Excellent views of 12 birds on Genovesa.
Common Cactus Finch ◊ *Geospiza scandens* 7 on Isabela, 10 on Santa Cruz and 1 on Baltra.
Large Cactus Finch ◊ *Geospiza conirostris* 3 of ssp. *propinqua* on Genovesa, and 10 of nominate ssp. on Española.
Vegetarian Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus crassirostris* 3 heard on Floreana and 8 seen on Santa Cruz.
Large Tree Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus psittacula* 2 females seen, one on Isabela and one on Santa Cruz.
Medium Tree Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus pauper* (CR) 26 seen on Floreana, mostly in the highlands.
Small Tree Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus parvulus* The commonest *Camarhynchus* sp.: 40+ seen on three of the islands.
Woodpecker Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus pallidus* 2 on Isabela and 2 on Santa Cruz, all in the highlands.

Green Warbler-Finch ◊ (**Olive W-F**) *Certhidea olivacea* 8 in the Isabela highlands and 10 on Santa Cruz. See note.
Grey Warbler-Finch ◊ (**Dusky W-F**) *Certhidea fusca* 8 on Genovesa and 0 on Española. See note.

MAMMALS

Galápagos Fur Seal ◊ *Arctocephalus galapagoensis* (EN) 4 Genovesa, 12 Santiago, 8 Isabela, 10 North Seymour.
Galápagos Sea Lion ◊ *Zalophus wollebaeki* (EN) Common and conspicuous, often in large concentrations.
Sperm Whale *Physeter macrocephalus* (VU) 1 seen blowing and fluking in the Bolivar Channel off Fernendina.
Bryde's Whale (Tropical W) *Balaenoptera edeni* (= *brydei*) (DD) 3 off the west coast of Isabela.
Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* Pods of up to 100 seen on 4 dates.



A male San Cristóbal Lava Lizard photographed at Punta Pitt on San Cristóbal. In total, 12 species of reptile, including four lava lizards, were recorded during the tour (Andy Swash).

REPTILES

Galápagos Giant Tortoise ◊ *Chelonoidis nigra* 4 (ssp. *vandenburghi*) on Isabela, 20+ (ssp. *porteri*) on Santa Cruz.
Hawksbill Turtle ◊ *Eretmochelys imbricata* (CR) One was seen by the snorkellers off Puerto Egas on Santiago.
Green Turtle ◊ (**Pacific G T/Black T**) *Chelonia mydas* (EN) Many sightings, including fantastic views underwater.
Galápagos Lava Lizard ◊ *Tropidurus albemarlensis* Locally common; the most widespread of the lava lizards.
Floreana Lava Lizard ◊ *Tropidurus grayi* At least 3 were seen on Floreana.
Española Lava Lizard ◊ *Tropidurus delanonis* The largest of the lava lizards; very common on Española.
San Cristóbal Lava Lizard ◊ *Tropidurus bivittatus* At least 20 were seen on San Cristóbal.
Land Iguana ◊ *Conolophus subcristatus* 7 on North Seymour and 2 large individuals on Isabela.
Marine Iguana ◊ *Amblyrhynchus cristatus* Ubiquitous along rocky coastlines, with 6 of the 7 subspecies recorded.
Galápagos Snake ◊ *Alophis dorsalis dorsalis* 1 was seen on North Seymour.
Fernandina Snake ◊ *Alophis dorsalis occidentalis* 2 were seen near Punta Espinoza on Fernandina.
San Cristóbal Snake ◊ *Pseudalsophis biserialis eibli* One was seen briefly at Punta Pitt on San Cristóbal.

FISHES

Black-striped Salema <i>Xenocys jessiae</i>	Mexican (or Streamer) Hogfish <i>Bodianus diplotaenia</i>
Blue-chin Parrotfish <i>Scarus ghobban</i>	Moorish Idol <i>Zanclus cornutus</i>
Bullseye (Concentric) Puffer <i>Sphoeroides annulatus</i>	Ocean Sunfish <i>Mola mola</i>
Dusky Sargeant Major <i>Petaca rebozada</i>	Pacific Mobula <i>Ocyurus chrysurus</i>
Eagle Ray (or Spotted Eagle Ray) <i>Aetobatus narinari</i>	Rainbow Wrasse <i>Thalassoma lucasanum</i>
Stingray <i>Dasyatis</i> sp.	Spinster Wrasse <i>Halichoeres nicholsi</i>
Galápagos Shark <i>Carcharhynchus galapagoensis</i>	Triggerfish (Balistidae)
Giant (or Hieroglyphic) Hawkfish <i>Cirrhites rivulatus</i>	White-tipped Reef Shark <i>Triaenodon obesus</i>
Guineafowl Puffer <i>Arothron meleagris</i>	Yellow Tailed Surgeonfish <i>Prionurus laticlavus</i>
Hammerhead Shark <i>Sphyrna</i> sp.	Yellowfin Tuna <i>Thunnus albacares</i>
Manta Ray <i>Manta hamiltonii</i>	

NOTABLE INVERTEBRATES

Crustaceans

- Sally Lightfoot Crab ◊ *Grapsus grapsus* Ubiquitous on the coasts.
- Red Ghost Crab *Ocypode gaudichaudii* One of the more brightly coloured ghost crabs, seen on several beaches.
- Semi-terrestrial Hermit Crab *Coenobita compressus* The common semi-terrestrial hermit crab.
- Hermit Crab *Calcinus explorator* The small hermit crab commonly encountered in tidal pools.
- Fiddler Crab *Uca helleri* A few were seen on Isabela.

Lepidoptera

- Galápagos Sulphur Butterfly *Phoebis sennae marcellina* A few on Isabela, Floreana, Santa Cruz and Baltra.
- Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* A few on Santiago, Isabela, the highlands of Floreana and on Santa Cruz.
- Queen Butterfly *Danaus gilippus* Many were seen on Santiago and a few were recorded on Baltra.
- Galápagos Blue Butterfly ◊ *Leptodes parrhasioides* Seen on most of the main islands.
- Large-tailed Skipper *Urbanus dorantes galapagensis* A few were seen on Santiago, Isabela and Española.

Odonata

- Amazon Darner *Anax amazili* Two were seen at Puerto Villamil on Isabela.
- Spot-winged Glider *Pantala hymenaea* Good numbers on North Seymour, Fernandina, Isabela and San Cristóbal.

Other notable insects

- Large Painted Locust ◊ *Schistocerca melanocera* A very fancy locust, observed on many of the islands.
- Small Painted Locust ◊ *Schistocerca literosa* A few were recorded on San Cristóbal.
- Yellow Paper Wasp *Polistes versicolor* Seen on a few occasions.
- Galápagos Carpenter Bee ◊ *Xylocopa darwini* This large endemic bee was seen on many occasions.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up-to-date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2014. IOC World Bird List (v4.2). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org> (accessed 18 June 2014).

Galápagos Petrel *Pterodroma phaeopygia*

Some authors lump Hawaiian Petrel *P. sandwichensis* (Breeding in the Hawaiian Islands) in this species, using the name Dark-rumped Petrel for the enlarged species.

Galápagos Shearwater *Puffinus subalaris*

Some authors lump this form in Audubon's Shearwater *P. lherminieri*, but recent genetic studies show that it is not at all closely related.

American (or Caribbean) Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber*

Some authors lump the Old World Greater Flamingo *P. roseus* in this species, using the name Greater Flamingo for the enlarged species.

Lava (or Galápagos) Heron *Butorides sundevalli*

This form was formerly sometimes lumped in Striated Heron *B. striatus*.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Ridgely & Greenfield and other authors use the name Cattle Egret for this species, but it has been renamed following the splitting off of the eastern (Asian) form *coromandus* under the name Eastern Cattle Egret.

Nazca Booby *Sula granti*

This form was formerly lumped in Masked Booby *S. dactylatra*.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

This species was formerly lumped in Common Moorhen *G. chloropus* of the Old World, with either the name Common Gallinule (in the New World) of Common Moorhen (in the Old World) being used for the enlarged species.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

This species was formerly lumped in Black-winged Stilt *H. himantopus*.

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus*

The dark-rumped forms of Whimbrel that occur in the Americas are often treated as a separate species, Hudsonian Whimbrel *N. hudsonicus*.

Galápagos Barn Owl *Tyto punctatissima*

The IOC lump this form in Western Barn Owl *T. alba*. Various forms in the Barn Owl complex have been split off in recent years by various author, but a thorough review of the whole complex is surely necessary to identify the number of species involved in the original Barn Owl.

Galápagos Short-eared Owl *Asio [flammeus] galapagoensis*:

The IOC lump this form in Short-eared Owl *A. flammeus*. We have treated it as a distinct allospecies. Short-eared Owl is a widespread species with noticeable variation between the forms. Further study may reveal that it actually consists of several species.

Galápagos Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus nanus*

The IOC lump this form in (Common) Vermilion Flycatcher *P. rubinus*. The island form on Galápagos differs from the mainland form in both song and female plumage. The smaller and paler subspecies *dubius* on San Cristóbal (San Cristóbal Vermilion Flycatcher) is occasionally treated as a separate distinct from *nanus*, though this form is now feared to be extinct. species.

Galápagos Martin *Progne modesta*

Southern Martin *P. elegans* and Peruvian Martin *P. murphyi* were sometimes lumped in this form with the name Southern Martin being used for the enlarged species.

Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia*

The IOC lump the *erithachorides* (Mangrove Warbler) group (of which the Galápagos form *aureola* is a part) and the North American *aestiva* (Yellow Warbler) group in the *petechia* (Golden Warbler) group, using the name Yellow Warbler for the enlarged species.

Green (or Olive) Warbler-Finch *Certhidea olivacea*

and **Grey (or Dusky) Warbler-Finch** *Certhidea fusca*

Some authors lump Grey Warbler-Finch in Green Warbler-Finch using the name Warbler Finch for the enlarged species.



The mainland Ecuador extension to the Birdquest / Wild Images tour to Galápagos in 2014 focussed on birds and a total of 240 species was recorded. Our visit to an Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek was a memorable highlight (Andy Swash).

All the images in this report were taken during the tour and are strictly copyright protected

MAINLAND ECUADOR EXTENSION

3–8 JUNE 2014

GUIDES: JUAN CARLOS CALVACHI AND ANDY SWASH

GROUP MEMBERS: LEW BROWN, BARBARA CROSS, BURT SLOTNICK, ALBIE SMITH AND PAUL SMITH

For those members of the group who had opted to go on the Andes extension, this part of the tour began with a journey from Quito to the lower slopes of nearby Pichincha Volcano. We were met at our hotel by Juan Carlos Calvachi, our Ecuadorian guide for the remainder of the trip, who welcomed us all on board a spacious minibus, driven by Klever, which made easy work of the steep road up to the Jocotoco Foundation Yanacocha Reserve. The morning was spent walking along the winding but flat trail running along the mountainside, giving us an opportunity to experience birding in lush, montane temperate forest. Many of the special birds of the forest at this high altitude (3,400m) were seen along the way, the highlights including Purple-backed Thornbill, Smoky Bush-tyrant, Rufous Wren, Spectacled Whitestart, Rufous-naped Brush Finch, Golden-crowned Tanager, many Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers, Cinereous Conebill, Glossy and Masked Flowerpiercers, and the wonderfully named Superciliaried Hemispingus. We were also fortunate to see a White-rumped Hawk circling in the distance.

At the end of the trail the hummingbird feeders provided a wonderful spectacle, and the next hour or so seemed to pass very quickly, with everyone engrossed in watching or photographing up to eight hummingbird species feeding at very close range or sitting on low branches nearby. The species seen were the bizarre Sword-billed Hummingbird (the only bird that has a bill longer than its body), Great Sapphirewing (the second largest hummingbird after Giant Hummingbird). Sapphire-vented and Golden-breasted Pufflegs, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Tyrian Metaltail, Sparkling Violetear and Mountain Velvetbreast. A few Masked Flowerpiercers also put in an appearance.



Four of the eight hummingbird species seen at the feeders at Yanacocha: Tyrian Metaltail (TOP LEFT), Buff-winged Starfrontlet (female) (TOP RIGHT), Great Sapphirewing (bottom left) and Green Violetear (BOTTOM RIGHT) (Andy Swash).



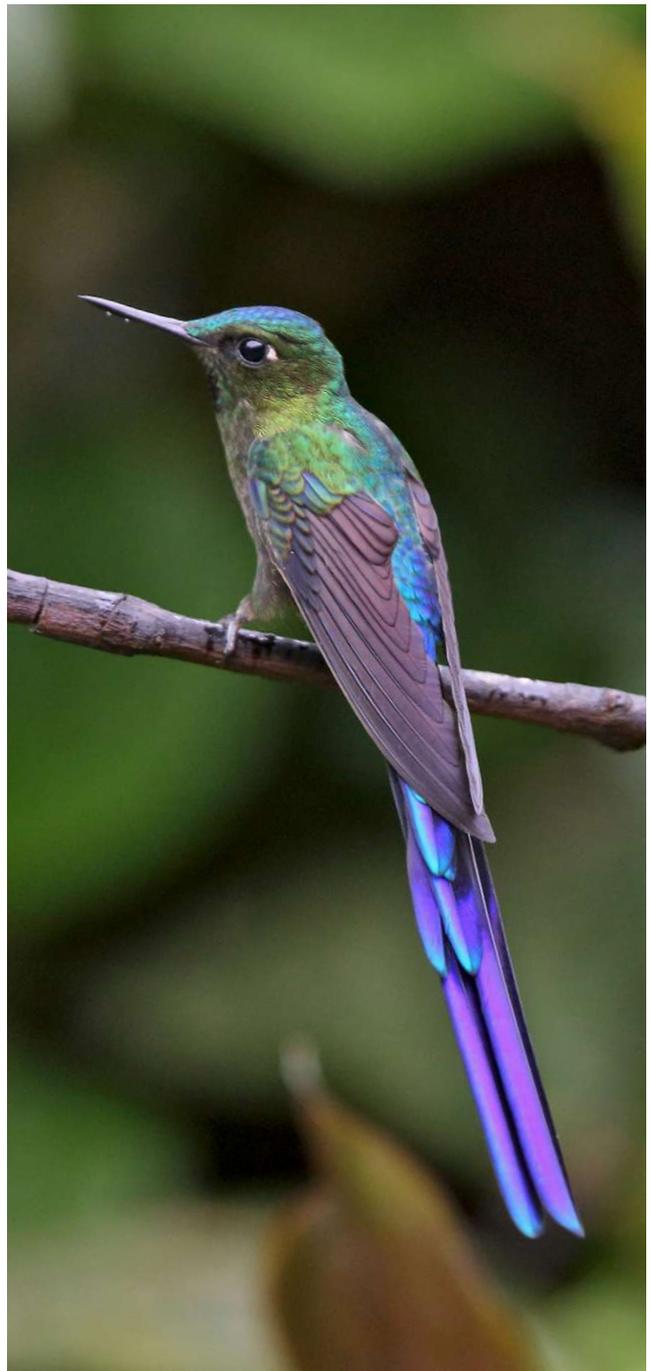
This bizarre Sword-billed Hummingbird put on a fantastic show at Yanacocha; this bird is a female (Andy Swash).

After our picnic lunch we were invited to go with the park ranger to look for a Tawny Antpitta – and we were not disappointed as a bird was ‘whistled-in’ from the dense undergrowth and hopped about in the open for about ten minutes, giving amazing views.



This Tawny Antpitta gave fantastic views in the cloud forest at Yanacocha (Andy Swash).

The rest of the afternoon was spent driving slowly down from Yanacocha into the Tandayapa Valley and along the old Nono to Mindo road, stopping whenever we heard a mixed flock in the moss-festooned forest alongside the road. We gradually dropped about 1,000 metres down the western slope of the Andes, mostly travelling through pristine cloudforest. Mid-afternoon we arrived at the Alambi Reserve, where we were faced with the almost overwhelming sight of hundreds of hummingbirds visiting the dozen or feeders positioned strategically in a small garden. Over the next couple of hours we saw 15 species of hummingbirds, all of which were different from those we had seen at Yanacocha: White-whiskered and Tawny-bellied Hermits, White-necked Jacobin. Brown Violetear, Crowned Woodnymph, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Fawn-breasted and Green-crowned Brilliants, Buff-tailed Coronet, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Booted Racket-tail, the stunning Violet-tailed Sylph, Purple-throated Woodstar and a single male Western Emerald. There were also many colourful species visiting the fruit feeders, including Orange-bellied and Thick-billed Euphonias, Golden, White-lined, Lemon-rumped, Blue-grey and Palm Tanagers, Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers, a female Red-headed Barbet and White-winged Brush-finches. Late in the afternoon we reached our very comfortable lodge near the town of Mindo, where we were to be based for the next four nights. Having completed the checklist that evening, we realized that we had recorded a very respectable 25 species of hummingbirds during the day!



Three of the hummingbird species seen during our visit to Alambi Reserve: Fawn-breasted Brilliant (TOP LEFT), the stunning Violet-tailed Sylph (RIGHT) and the striking White-necked Jacobin (BOTTOM LEFT) (Andy Swash).

After an early start the following morning, we travelled some distance down the western slope of the Andes to reach the foothill forests of the Silanche Reserve (at about 350 metres altitude) not long after dawn. Here we spent until mid-morning at the top of a sturdy tower looking out across the forest canopy. There was a considerable amount of activity, with many of the birds seen flying over or passing through the treetops being lower altitude specialities, some of which were Chocó endemics. (The Chocó is a geographical zone shared between north-west Ecuador and south-west Colombia that supports the largest number of restricted-range birds of any Endemic Bird Area on the Americas, including over 50 endemic species). The birds seen included flocks of Bronze-winged Parrots, Lineated, Black-cheeked and Cinnamon Woodpeckers, White-collared, Grey-rumped and Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts, Purple-crowned Fairy, Red-headed Barbet, Dusky and Ruddy Pigeons, Plain-brown, Spotted and Black-striped Woodcreepers, White-flanked and Dot-winged Antwrens, Chocó Tyrannulet, Olive-striped Flycatcher, Masked Tityra, White-bearded Manakin, Lesser Greenlet, Green and Purple Honeycreepers, Yellow-tufted Dacnis (the latter is now split from Black-faced Dacnis), Orange-bellied and Thick-billed Euphonias, Scarlet-browed, Guira, White-shouldered, Bay-headed, Blue-grey, Palm, Blue-necked and Lemon-rumped Tanagers, and Slate-coloured Grosbeak.

As the heat increased and the bird activity slowed, we descended to the forest floor and walked slowly along a shady trail. Here we saw a Purple-chested Hummingbird, a Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Squirrel Cuckoos, Chocó and Western White-tailed Trogons, two Chestnut-mandibled and four Chocó Toucans, two Pale-mandibled Aracaris, two Bay Wrens, two Black-crowned Antshrike, four Scarlet-rumped Caciques and many Purple-throated Fruitcrows. A particularly dense column of Leaf-cutter Ants streaming back and forth along the trail and up the trunk of a large tree and into the canopy was also an impressive sight. As we walked back to the minibus, a slight movement in the forest revealed the presence of a perched Plumbeous Hawk – a scarce, very local and rarely seen species.

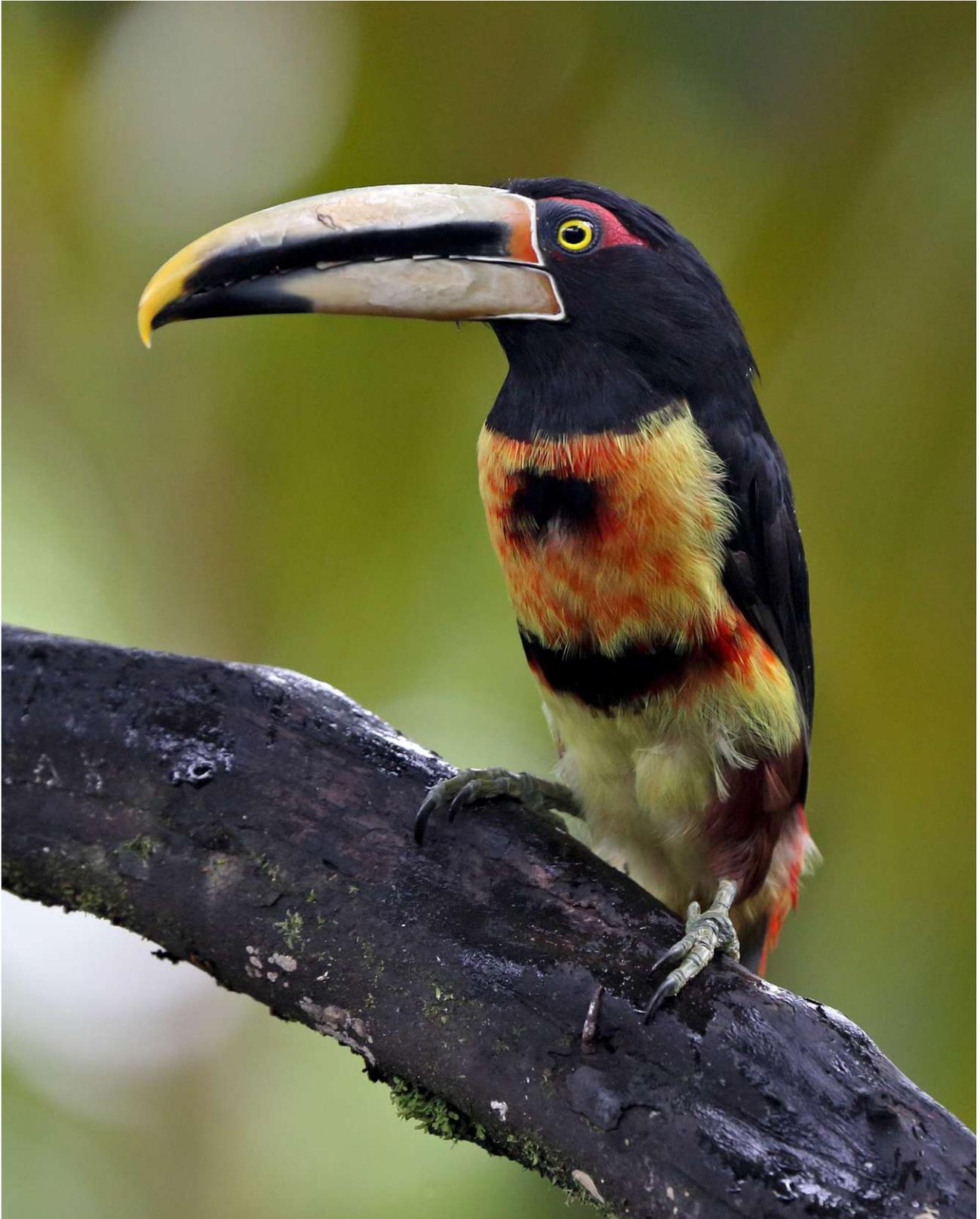


Three of the many species seen at Silanche Reserve: Lineated Woodpecker (TOP LEFT), Rufous-ailed Jacamar (RIGHT), and Chocó Tyrannulet (BOTTOM LEFT) (Andy Swash).



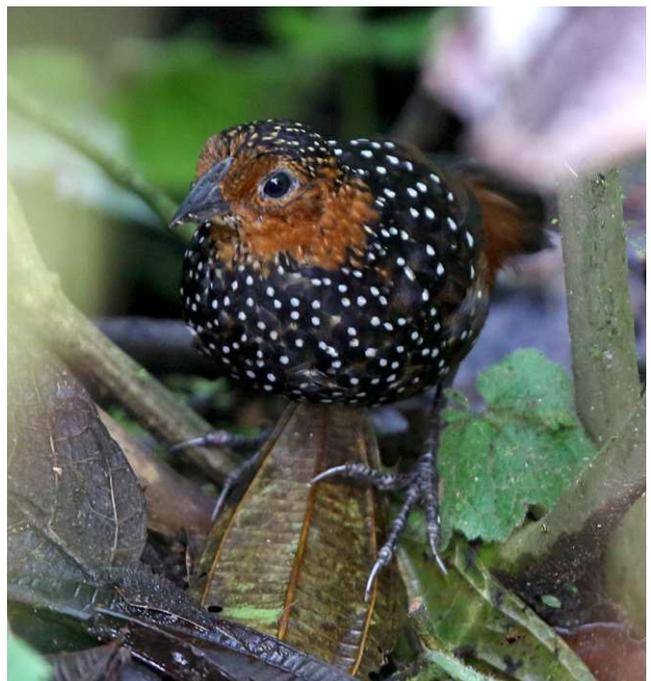
Undoubtedly the highlight of our visit to Silanche Reserve was finding this Plumbeous Hawk, a rarely seen and even more rarely photographed species (Andy Swash).

After a picnic lunch we left Silanche and drove back towards Mindo, stopping at the Mirador Rio Blanco, where stunning American Swallow-tailed Kites glided past close by. The hummingbird feeders here attracted many Green Thorntails, and at the fruit-feeders we saw Ecuadorian Thrush, Rufous-throated, Silver-throated, Golden, White-lined, Blue-grey and Lemon-rumped Tanagers, both Thick-billed and Orange-breasted Euphonias, Buff-throated Saltator, Orange-billed Sparrow, Black-cheeked Woodpecker and a pair of Pale-mandibled Aracaris. Back at the lodge, and after another excellent evening meal, some of the group went 'owling' in the grounds. Unfortunately the sky was clear and although a Common Potoo was seen in the distance and two Colombian Screech Owls were heard, they could not be enticed into view.



Pale-mandibled Aracaris were a delightful feature of the feeders at the Mirador Rio Blanco (Andy Swash).

The next morning proved to be another of the many highlights of our time in the Mindo area. At dawn we met Angel Paz at his private refugio in the mountains above Mindo and after a short walk were standing in a shelter overlooking an area of forest. From here we could hear the incredible noise made by many lekking Andean Cock-of-the-rocks and after waiting patiently a few birds showed in the open, their stunning glowing orange plumage being a sight to behold! For over half-an-hour we were treated to an amazing display before the birds gradually began to disperse into the forest to feed. As we walked back to the minibus a pair of Rufous-bellied Nighthawks were found roosting on a mossy branch in the distance. We then drove to a nearby river where an immature male Lyre-tailed Nightjar was found roosting below a cliff overhang and Angel then 'called out' a Yellow-breasted Antpitta, which fed briefly on the rocks at the water's edge before disappearing back into the forest. A little further along the road we stopped again and followed Angel along a trail into the forest. During the next hour or so we were fortunate to have point-blank views of Ochre-breasted Antpitta and Rufous-breasted Antthrush. We then made our way back to the minibus where a Sickle-winged Guan was seen feeding on a fruiting date palm. After another short drive we made our final stop of the morning, which yielded amazing views of a Chestnut crowned Antpitta and an Ocellated Tapaculo! It had been an incredible morning's birding, during which we had fantastic views of so many species that are usually extremely hard to see!



Four of the more elusive species of the forests around Mindo: Yellow-breasted Antpitta (TOP LEFT), Ochre-breasted Antpitta (TOP RIGHT), Chestnut-capped Antpitta (BOTTOM LEFT) and the amazing Ocellated Tapaculo (BOTTOM RIGHT) (Andy Swash).

Our visit finished with an excellent traditional breakfast at Angel's family farmstead, after which we spent quite some time watching some nearby feeders where Crimson-rumped Toucanets, Toucan Barbets, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Flame-faced Golden-naped, Golden, Silver-throated, Blue-grey and Lemon-rumped Tanagers could be seen and photographed at close quarters. Before heading back to Mindo for lunch, we spent a short while watching the hummingbirds coming to Angel's feeders and were rewarded with excellent views of 11 species, four of which were new for our list: Green Violetear, Speckled Hummingbird, Empress Brilliant and Velvet-purple Coronet. After the rain had started to ease in the afternoon we drove into Mindo, where we found Pacific Hornero, Slaty and Red-faced Spinetails, Bran-coloured Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Elaenia and Dull and Blue-black Grassquits, and then on to the River Nambillo. Although the cloudforest was living up to its name, a good number of new species for the tour were seen, including Fawn-breasted Tanager, Torrent Tyrannulet, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Masked Water Tyrant, Cinnamon Becard and Scrub Blackbird.



Four of the attractive tanager species that were visiting the feeders at Refugio Paz: Flame-faced Tanager (TOP LEFT), Golden-naped Tanager (TOP RIGHT), Blue-winged Mountain Tanager (BOTTOM LEFT) and Golden Tanager (BOTTOM RIGHT) (Andy Swash).



The beautiful Toucan Barbet was seen at very close quarters at Refugio Paz (Andy Swash).

Soon after first light the following morning we started birding in wonderful cloudforest situated on a ridge at 1,600 metres to the north-west of Mindo, and spent the morning walking slowly down the Mashpi Road. One of the first birds we saw was a beautiful male Scaled Fruiteater perched in a tree close to the road. There was very little traffic to contend with as we gradually worked our way down to lower altitudes on this remote mountain road (eventually descending to about 950 metres), and we saw many new species for the tour. These included a good number of the Chocó specialties, including Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Blue-fronted Parrotlet, Esmeraldas Antbird, Bronze-olive Pgymy-tyrant, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Moss-backed, Ochre-breasted, Glistening-green and Emerald Tanagers, Indigo Flowerpiercer and Chocó Warbler. As the bird activity slowed during the afternoon we made our way back to the lodge, making a couple of roadside stops *en route*, the highlight of which was finding an out-of-range Zone-tailed Hawk perched close to the road.



Two of the highlights from our walk along the Mashpi Road: Orange-breasted Fruiteater (TOP) and Emerald Tanager (BELOW) (Andy Swash).

The following day we headed off after breakfast and drove to the Nono-Mindo road, where we walked slowly up hill, seeing a good number of new species in the process. We eventually ended up at the Bellavista Lodge at 2,400 metres, where we were fortunate to see both White-throated and Barred Hawks circling overhead and spent some time enjoying the Turquoise Jays in the grounds and watching the hummingbirds visiting the feeders – Collared Inca and Gorgeted Sunangel being added to our hummingbird list.

After leaving Bellavista we continued along the Nono-Mindo road and down to the Alambi Reserve for a second visit, and during the journey a White-faced Nunbird was seen frustratingly briefly sitting on a roadside wire. The hummingbirds at Alambi were much the same as on our previous visit, though the light was much better for photography. A short walk along the river here provided excellent views of a White-capped Dipper, a female Andean Cock-of-the-rock on her nest under a road bridge and a stunning male Golden-headed Quetzal and a female Crested Quetzal. We eventually had to tear ourselves away and return to the lodge for lunch. Mid-afternoon we loaded the minibus for the final time and headed back to Quito. A brief stop at Calacali, the highest point on the pass before descending into the Central Valley, provided the last few new birds of the tour – Variable Hawk, American Kestrel, Common Ground Dove, Ash-breasted Sierra Finch, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Southern Yellow Grosbeak, the rare White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant and our 37th hummingbird of the tour, a Giant Hummingbird! The final evening of the tour was spent at a quiet hosteria in the suburbs of Quito, where we said our farewells before going our separate ways the following morning.



The Turquoise Jays visiting the feeders at Bellavista were certainly a sight to behold (Andy Swash).



The beautiful Crimson-rumped Toucanet was seen on a few occasions during the extension to the Mindo area (Andy Swash).

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE MAINLAND ECUADOR EXTENSION

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

Species that were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

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

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from BirdLife International's website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

VU = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened.

BIRDS

Little Tinamou *Crypturellus soui* (H) 2 heard from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.

Wattled Guan ◊ *Aburria aburri* (NT) (H) 2 heard at Septimo Paraiso.

Rufous-fronted Wood Quail ◊ *Odontophorus erythrops* (H) A group heard at the Silanche Reserve.

Sickle-winged Guan *Chamaepetes goudotii* 1 at Refugio Paz

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 4 near the Silanche Reserve. See note.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* Small numbers seen most days. See note.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* Small numbers seen most days.

Swallow-tailed Kite (American S-t K) *Elanoides forficatus* 1 at Silanche, 6 at Mirador Rio Blanco, 8 Refugio Paz.

Barred Hawk (Black-chested H) *Morphnarchus princeps* 1 circling over Bellavista.

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris* 1 from the Mashpi Road.

Plumbeous Hawk ◊ *Cryptoleucopteryx plumbea* 1 at the Silanche Reserve and 1 from the Mashpi Road.

White-rumped Hawk *Parabuteo leucorrhous* 1 at Yanacocha.

Variable Hawk (Gurney's H) *Geranoaetus polyosoma* 1 at Calacali. See note.

White-throated Hawk *Buteo albigula* 1 circling overhead at Bellavista.

Zone-tailed Hawk *Buteo albonotatus* 1 on the lower slopes of the Mashpi Road was unexpected.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* 1 at Calacali.

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* 6 at Calacali.
 Plumbeous Pigeon *Patagioenas plumbea* 1 heard on the Mashpi Road and 4 at Bellavista.
 Ruddy Pigeon *Patagioenas subvinacea* 2 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
 Dusky Pigeon ◊ *Patagioenas goodsoni* 2 at the Silanche Reserve.
 Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* About 30 in Quito on 2 dates.
 Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina* 1 at Calacali.
 White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* 1 at Refugio Paz and 1 at Bellavista.
 Blue-fronted Parrotlet *Touit dilectissimus* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
 Rose-faced Parrot ◊ *Pyrilia pulchra* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
 Bronze-winged Parrot *Pionus chalcopterus* About 20 at the Silanche Reserve and at Mindo and a few elsewhere.
 Scaly-naped Amazon *Amazona mercenarius* About 20 along the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
 Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana* 2 at the Silanche Reserve 1 at Alambi Reserve.
 Colombian Screech Owl ◊ *Megascops colombianus* (NT) (H) Heard Septimo Paraiso but unresponsive. See note.
 Andean Pygmy Owl ◊ *Glaucidium jardiinii* (H) Heard at Yanacocha.
 Common Potoo (Grey P) *Nyctibius griseus* 1 at night at Septimo Paraiso. See note.
 Rufous-bellied Nighthawk ◊ *Lurocalis rufiventris* 2 seen at daytime roost at Refugio Paz. See note.
 Lyre-tailed Nightjar *Uropsalis lyra* 1 immature male seen at daytime roost at Refugio Paz.
 White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris* 1 at the Silanche Reserve and 2 from the Mashpi Road.
 Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris* About 4 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
 Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis* 1 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
 White-tipped Sicklebill *Eutoxeres aquila* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
 White-whiskered Hermit ◊ *Phaethornis yaruqui* 2 at the Alambi Reserve and 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Tawny-bellied Hermit ◊ *Phaethornis syrmatorophorus* 1 at the Alambi Reserve.
 White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* 4 Alambi Reserve, 4 Septimo Paraiso, 1 Silanche, 2 Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae* Up to 6 at Alambi Reserve, 4 at Septimo Paraiso, 2 at Silanche, 2 at Refugio Paz.
 Green Violetear *Colibri thalassinus* 4 at Refugio Paz and 4 at Bellavista. See note.
 Sparkling Violetear *Colibri coruscans* 1 at Yanacocha and 1 heard on the outskirts of Quito.
 Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii* About 20 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Western Emerald ◊ (West Andean E) *Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus* 1 male at the Alambi Reserve.
 Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica* Up to 4 at the Alambi Reserve. See note.
 Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl* Up to 30 at Alambi Reserve, 6 Septimo Paraiso and others elsewhere.
 Andean Emerald ◊ *Amazilia franciae* Up to 12 at Alambi Reserve, 5 at Septimo Paraiso and 4 at Refugio Paz.
 Purple-chested Hummingbird ◊ *Amazilia rosenbergi* 1 at the Silanche Reserve.
 Speckled Hummingbird *Adelomyia melanogenys* 2 at Refugio Paz and 4 at Bellavista.
 Fawn-breasted Brilliant ◊ *Heliodoxa rubinoides* 6 at the Alambi Reserve, 3 at Refugio Paz and 2 at Bellavista.
 Green-crowned Brilliant *Heliodoxa jacula* 6 at the Alambi Reserve and 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Empress Brilliant ◊ *Heliodoxa imperatrix* A male at Refugio Paz.
 Buff-tailed Coronet ◊ *Boissonneaua flavescens* 4 at the Alambi Reserve, 5 at Refugio Paz and 20 at Bellavista.
 Velvet-purple Coronet ◊ *Boissonneaua jardini* 2 at Refugio Paz and 1 from the Mashpi Road.
 Mountain Velvetbreast *Lafresnaya lafresnayi* 1 female at Yanacocha.
 Collared Inca *Coeligena torquata* 3 at Bellavista.
 Buff-winged Starfrontlet *Coeligena lutetiae* About 10 at Yanacocha.
 Sword-billed Hummingbird *Ensifera ensifera* A male and 2 females at Yanacocha.
 Great Sapphirewing *Pterophanes cyanopterus* 4 at Yanacocha.
 Giant Hummingbird *Patagona gigas* 1 at Calacali.
 Gorgeted Sunangel ◊ *Helianthus strophianus* 6 at Bellavista.
 Sapphire-vented Puffleg *Eriocnemis luciani* About 6 at Yanacocha.
 Golden-breasted Puffleg ◊ *Eriocnemis mosquera* 1 at Yanacocha.
 Purple-bibbed Whitetip ◊ *Urosticte benjamini* 4 at the Alambi Reserve. See note.
 Booted Racket-tail *Ocreatus underwoodii* 4 Alambi, 7 Septimo Paraiso, 3 Refugio Paz, 4 Bellavista ('white-booted').
 Black-tailed Trainbearer *Lesbia victoriae* 1 at Yanacocha and 2 at Calacali.
 Purple-backed Thornbill *Ramphomicron microrhynchum* 1 at Yanacocha.
 Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina* About 5 at Yanacocha.
 Violet-tailed Sylph ◊ *Aglaiocercus coelestis* Singles Alambi, Septimo Paraiso, Refugio Paz, Mashpi and Bellavista.
 Wedge-billed Hummingbird *Schistes geoffroyi* 1 from the Mashpi Road.
 Purple-crowned Fairy *Heliothryx barroti* 1 female from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.

Purple-throated Woodstar ◊ *Calliphlox mitchellii* 12 at Alambi Reserve, 6 at Septimo Paraiso and 2 at Bellavista.
Golden-headed Quetzal *Pharomachrus auriceps* A male at the Alambi Reserve.
Crested Quetzal *Pharomachrus antisianus* 2 at the Alambi Reserve.
Chocó Trogon ◊ (White-eyed T, Blue-tailed T) *Trogon comptus* 2 at the Silanche Reserve.
White-tailed Trogon (Western W-t T) *Trogon chionurus* 2 at the Silanche Reserve.
Masked Trogon *Trogon personatus* 1 male from the Mashpi Road.
Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus martii* (H) 1 heard at the Silanche Reserve. See note.
Rufous-tailed Jacamar *Galbula ruficauda* 1 at the Silanche Reserve.
White-faced Nunbird ◊ *Hapaloptila castanea* 1 on roadside wires near Bellavista.
Red-headed Barbet ◊ *Eubucco bourcierii* 1 female 4 at the Alambi Reserve and 1 heard along the Mashpi Road.
Toucan Barbet ◊ *Semnornis ramphastinus* (NT) 2 at Refugio Paz, 4 from the Mashpi Road and 2 at Bellavista.
Crimson-rumped Toucanet ◊ *Aulacorhynchus haematopygus* 2 Alambi Reserve, 2 at Refugio Paz, 2 Mashpi Road.
Pale-mandibled Aracari ◊ *Pteroglossus erythropygius* 2 at Silanche Reserve, 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco. See note.
Plate-billed Mountain Toucan ◊ *Andigena laminirostris* 2 from the road near the Alambi Reserve.
Chocó Toucan ◊ *Ramphastos brevis* 4 at the Silanche Reserve and heard from the Mashpi Road.
Black-mandibled Toucan *Ramphastos ambiguus* 2 at the Silanche Reserve.
Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani* 1 at Silanche Reserve and 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Smoky-brown Woodpecker *Picoides fumigatus* 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus* 1 heard at the Silanche Reserve, 1 seen from the Mashpi Road.
Cinnamon Woodpecker *Celeus loricatus* 1 at the Silanche Reserve.
Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* 2 at the Silanche Reserve.
Pacific Hornero ◊ *Furnarius cinnamomeus* 3 in Mindo. 1 at the bottom of Mashpi Road. 1 near Alambi. See note.
Azara's Spinetail *Synallaxis azarae* (H) Heard from the old Nono-Mindo Road. See note.
Slaty Spinetail *Synallaxis brachyura* 1 in Mindo.
White-browed Spinetail *Hellmayrea gularis* (H) 1 was heard at Yanacocha.
Red-faced Spinetail *Cranioleuca erythroptera* 1 in Mindo.
Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens* (H) 1 heard from the Mashpi Road.
Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner ◊ (S-breasted/Spectacled F-g) *Anabacerthia variegaticeps* 1 Mashpi Rd. See note.
Uniform Treehunter ◊ *Thripadectes ignobilis* 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Streak-capped Treehunter ◊ *Thripadectes virgaticeps* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* 1 at the Silanche Reserve.
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spirurus* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
Black-striped Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus* 2 at the Silanche Reserve.
Spotted Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius* 1 at Silanche Reserve, 1 Mirador Rio Blanco. 1 Mashpi Road.
Montane Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger* 1 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista. See note.
Black-crowned Antshrike (Western Slaty A) *Thamnophilus atrinucha* 2 at Silanche Reserve and 1 Mashpi Road.
White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherulxa axillaris* A male at the Silanche Reserve.
Dot-winged Antwren *Microrhopias quixensis* A female at the Silanche Reserve.
Chestnut-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza exsul* (H) 1 was heard at the Silanche Reserve.
Esmeraldas Antbird ◊ *Myrmeciza nigricauda* 1 was seen and another heard along the Mashpi Road.
Rufous-breasted Antthrush ◊ *Formicarius rufipectus* Excellent views of one coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
Giant Antpitta ◊ *Grallaria gigantea* (VU) (H) 1 heard at Refugio Paz.
Chestnut-crowned Antpitta *Grallaria ruficapilla* Superb views of one coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
Yellow-breasted Antpitta ◊ *Grallaria flavotincta* Great views of a bird coming to at Refugio Paz.
Rufous Antpitta *Grallaria rufula* (H) 1 was heard at Yanacocha.
Tawny Antpitta ◊ *Grallaria quitensis* Wonderful views of a bird coming to worms at Yanacocha.
Ochre-breasted Antpitta *Grallaricula flavirostris* (NT) 1 seen at close range coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
Ocellated Tapaculo *Acropternis orthonyx* 2 heard at Yanacocha and 1 seen coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
Ash-coloured Tapaculo *Myornis senilis* (H) 1 was heard at Yanacocha.
Nariño Tapaculo ◊ *Scytalopus vicinior* (H) 1 heard at Refugio Paz. See note.
Spillmann's Tapaculo ◊ *Scytalopus spillmanni* 1 seen and at least 3 heard near Bellavista. See note.
Blackish Tapaculo ◊ *Scytalopus latrans* (H) 2 were heard at Yanacocha. See note.
Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster* 2 in Mindo
Brown-capped Tyrannulet *Ornithion brunneicapillus* (H) 1 was heard at the Silanche Reserve.
Tufted Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes parulus* (H) 1 was heard at Calacali.
Torrent Tyrannulet *Serpophaga cinerea* 2 on the River Nambillo near Mindo.

Bronze-olive Pygmy Tyrant ◊ *Pseudotriccus pelzelni* 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Rufous-headed Pygmy Tyrant *Pseudotriccus ruficeps* (H) 1 was heard near Bellavista.
Chocó Tyrannulet ◊ *Zimmerius albigularis* 2 from canopy tower at Silanche Reserve and 1 Mashpi Road. See note.
Streak-necked Flycatcher *Mionectes striaticollis* 1 near Bellavista.
Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus* 1 from canopy tower at Silanche Reserve.
Flavescent Flycatcher ◊ *Myiophobus flavicans* 2 from the Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
Bran-coloured Flycatcher ◊ *Myiophobus fasciatus* 2 in Mindo.
Ornate Flycatcher *Myiotriccus ornatus* 10 along the Mashpi Road.
Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant *Lophotriccus pileatus* (H) 2 heard along the Mashpi Road.
Black-headed Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps* (H) 1 heard along the Mashpi Road.
Cinnamon Flycatcher *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea* 2 near Bellavista.
Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* 1 at the Alambi Reserve, 6 in Mindo and on the River Nambillo. See note.
White-tailed Shrike-Tyrant ◊ *Agriornis albicauda* (VU) 1 at Calacali.
Smoky Bush Tyrant *Myiotheretes fumigatus* 1 at Yanacochoa
Masked Water Tyrant *Fluvicola nengeta* 1 at Silanche Reserve and 2 close to the River Nambillo near Mindo.
Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant ◊ *Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris* (H) 2 heard at Yanacochoa.
Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis* 2 in Mindo.
White-ringed Flycatcher ◊ *Conopias albobittatus* (H) 1 was heard along the Mashpi Road.
Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua* 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* Commonly seen in open areas at lower elevations.
Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (H) 3 were heard at the Silanche Reserve.
Green-and-black Fruiteater *Pipreola riefferii* 2 were seen from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
Orange-breasted Fruiteater ◊ *Pipreola jucunda* A total of 4 were seen along the Mashpi Road.
Scaled Fruiteater *Ampelioides tschudii* A male was seen along the Mashpi Road.
Andean Cock-of-the-rock *Rupicola peruviana* 10+ males at lek near Refugio Paz and a female on nest at Amambi.
Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata* At least 10 at the Silanche Reserve.
White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus* A male and a female at the Silanche Reserve. See note.
Tawny-breasted Myiobius ◊ *Myiobius villosus* 1 was seen from the Mashpi Road.
Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata* A female at the Silanche Reserve and a male from the Mashpi Road.
Barred Becard *Pachyramphus versicolor* 2 were seen from the Mashpi Road.
Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus* 1 near River Nambillo at Mindo and 1 heard along Mashpi Road.
Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus* 4 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
Turquoise Jay ◊ *Cyanolyca turcosa* 8 from the old Nono-Mindo Road and near Bellavista.
Blue-and-white Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca* Common, with up to about 10 seen on most days.
Brown-bellied Swallow *Notiochelidon murina* About 10 at Yanacochoa and 2 at Calacali.
Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis* 1 at the Silanche Reserve and 1 near Mindo.
Rufous Wren *Cinnycerthia unirufa* 4 were seen well at Yanacochoa.
Sepia-brown Wren (Sharpe's W) *Cinnycerthia olivascens* (H) 1 was heard near Bellavista. See note.
Bay Wren *Thryothorus nigricapillus* 2 at the Silanche Reserve and two heard along the Mashpi Road.
House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* 2 in Mindo; others heard along the Mashpi Road and at Alambi Reserve. See note.
Grey-breasted Wood Wren *Henicorhina leucophrys* 1 or 2 recorded daily but only seen at Septimo Paraiso.
Southern Nightingale-Wren (Scaly-breasted W) *Microcerculus marginatus* (H) 1 heard at Silanche. See note.
Andean Solitaire *Myadestes ralloides* Heard on two dates and seen briefly from the Mashpi Road.
Great Thrush *Turdus fuscater* Common at high altitudes, with a maximum of 6 at Yanacochoa.
Ecuadorian Thrush ◊ *Turdus maculirostris* 1 at the Alambi Reserve and 5 at Mirador Rio Blanco. See note.
White-capped Dipper *Cinclus leucocephalus* 1 on the river at the Alambi Reserve.
Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia lanirostris* 4 at the Alambi Reserve, 2 at Silanche and 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Golden-rumped Euphonia *Euphonia cyanocephala* 2 males at Calacali. See note.
Orange-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia xanthogaster* 4 Alambi, 2 Silanche, 4 Mirador Rio Blanco. 2 Mindo, 2 Mashpi.
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat *Geothlypis semiflava* (H) 1 was heard from the Mashpi Road.
Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitaiyumi* Recorded daily in small numbers; seen in Mindo and from the Mashpi Road.
Chocó Warbler ◊ *Myiothlypis chlorophrys* 2 from the Mashpi Road and 2 from the old Nono-Mindo Road. See note.
Russet-crowned Warbler *Myiothlypis coronatus* 2 were seen and heard singing along the old Nono-Mindo Road.
Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus* 6 from the Mashpi Road.
Slate-throated Whitestart (S-t Redstart) *Myioborus miniatus* 4 Mashpi Road and 2 near Bellavista.
Spectacled Whitestart (S Redstart) *Myioborus melanocephalus* 2 heard at Yanacochoa and 2 seen at Bellavista.

Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela* (H) 1 heard at the Silanche Reserve.
Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus microrhynchus* 4 at the Silanche Reserve. See note.
Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco and 6 in Mindo.
Scrub Blackbird *Dives warszewiczi* 2 at the Silanche Reserve at 2 close to the River Nambillo near Mindo.
Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* 1 at Silanche Reserve, 10 at Mirador Rio Blanco, 1 in Mindo, 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis* Common at high altitudes and recorded every day.
Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantirostris* 1 at the Silanche Reserve and 2 juveniles at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Chocó Brush Finch (Dusky B F) ◇ *Atlapetes crassus* 1 at the Alambi Reserve. See note.
Rufous-naped Brush Finch (Northern R-n B F) *Atlapetes latinuchus* 5 at Yanacocha, including juveniles. See note.
White-winged Brush Finch *Atlapetes leucopterus* 2 at the Alambi Reserve.
Dusky Bush Tanager ◇ (D-bellied B T) *Chlorospingus semifuscus* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
Yellow-throated Bush Tanager *Chlorospingus flavigularis* 2 from the Mashpi Road.
Dusky-faced Tanager *Mitrospingus cassinii* 4 from the Mashpi Road.
Superciliaried Hemispingus *Hemispingus superciliaris* 2 at Yanacocha.
White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus* 2 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* 2 at the Alambi Reserve and a juvenile male at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Lemon-rumped Tanager (Yellow-r T) *Ramphocelus icteronotus* Common; daily maximum of 20. See note.
Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* Common, recorded daily, with a maximum of 20 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* 1 Alambi Reserve, 2 Silanche Reserve, 20 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Moss-backed Tanager ◇ *Bangsia edwardsi* 2 were seen from the Mashpi Road.
Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus igniventris* At least 30 were seen at Yanacocha.
Blue-winged Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus somptuosus* 10 recorded from 4 localities; max. of 4 at Refugio Paz.
Black-chinned Mountain Tanager ◇ *Anisognathus notabilis* 4 from the Mashpi Road.
Golden-crowned Tanager *Iridosornis rufivertex* Close views of 1 at Yanacocha.
Fawn-breasted Tanager *Pipraeidea melanonota* 1 at the River Nambillo near Mindo.
Glistening-green Tanager ◇ *Chlorochrysa phoenicotis* 1 along the Mashpi Road.
Emerald Tanager *Tangara florida* 3 along the Mashpi Road.
Golden Tanager *Tangara arthus* Recorded most days, including up to 6 at at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala* Recorded daily, max, 4 at Mirador Rio Blanco, Refugio Paz, Mashpi.
Flame-faced Tanager *Tangara parzudakii* 2 at Refugio Paz and 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Rufous-throated Tanager ◇ *Tangara rufigula* 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco and 6 from the Mashpi Road.
Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola* 2 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve and 2 from the Mashpi Road.
Golden-naped Tanager *Tangara ruficervix* 4 at Refugio Paz and 2 along the old Nono-Mindo Road near Bellavista.
Blue-necked Tanager *Tangara cyanicollis* 4 at the Silanche Reserve, 1 in Mindo and 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Beryl-spangled Tanager *Tangara nigroviridis* 1 from the Mashpi Road.
Blue-and-black Tanager *Tangara vassorii* 6 at Yanacocha.
Yellow-tufted Dacnis ◇ *Dacnis egregia* 2 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve. See note.
Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana* A female from the Mashpi Road.
Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus* A female from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza* 6 from canopy tower at Silanche Reserve and 1 along the Mashpi Road.
Scarlet-browed Tanager *Heterospingus xanthopygius* A male from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
Guira Tanager *Hemithraupis guira* A male from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
Cinereous Conebill *Conirostrum cinereum* 1 at Yanacocha.
Glossy Flowerpiercer *Diglossa lafresnayii* About 6 at Yanacocha.
Indigo Flowerpiercer ◇ *Diglossa indigotica* 1 along the Mashpi Road.
Masked Flowerpiercer *Diglossopsis cyanea* 10 at Yanacocha and 2 at Bellavista.
Ash-breasted Sierra Finch *Phrygilus plebejus* 1 at Calacali.
Saffron Finch *Sicalis flaveola* 1 from the road on the lower part of the Mashpi Road
Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina* 1 in Mindo.
Dull-coloured Grassquit *Tiaris obscurus* 1 in Mindo.
Variable Seedeater *Sporophila corvina* 1 from the Mashpi Road, 2 along the old Nono-Mindo Road. See note.
Ochre-breasted Tanager ◇ *Chlorothraupis stolzmanni* 6 were seen from the Mashpi Road.
Southern Yellow Grosbeak (Golden-bellied G) *Pheucticus chrysogaster* 1 at Calacali. See note.
Slate-coloured Grosbeak *Saltator grossus* 1 from the canopy tower at the Silanche Reserve.
Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus* 1 at the Alambi Reserve and 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Black-winged Saltator ◇ *Saltator atripennis* 1 from the Mashpi Road.

MAMMALS

Brown Capuchin *Cebus apella* 1 at the Silanche Reserve.

Kinkajou *Potos flavus* 1 at Septimo Paraiso.

Red-tailed Squirrel (Tropical Red S) *Sciurus granatensis* 1 at Septimo Paraiso.

Central American Agouti *Dasyprocta punctata* 1 near Mindo.

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

The most up-to-date referenced taxonomic list referred to in the Tour Report is that of the IOC World Bird Names. Gill, F and Donsker, D (Eds). 2013. IOC World Bird List (v3.4). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org> (accessed 20 June 2014).

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Ridgely & Greenfield and other authors use the name Cattle Egret for this species, but it has been renamed following the splitting off of the eastern (Asian) form *coromandus* under the name Eastern Cattle Egret.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

More than one species may be involved.

Variable Hawk *Geranoaetus polyosoma*

The form concerned is often split off as a separate species: Puna Hawk *G. poecilochrous*. The residual *G. polyosoma* is then renamed Red-backed Hawk.

Colombian Screech Owl *Otus colombianus*

Ridgely & Greenfield lump this form in Rufescent Screech Owl *O. ingens*.

Common (or Grey) Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*

The Northern Potoo *N. jamaicensis* of northern Central America and the Caribbean has been split off as a separate species. Confusingly, *N. jamaicensis* is sometimes still called Common Potoo.

Rufous-bellied Nighthawk *Lurocalis rufiventris*

This form was formerly lumped in Short-tailed (or Semi-collared) Nighthawk *L. semitorquatus*.

Green Violetear *Colibri thalassinus*

The form concerned has occasionally been split off as a separate species: Mountain Violetear *C. cyanotus*.

Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica*

Green-crowned Woodnymph *T. fannyi* was formerly treated as a separate species but IOC now lump it with Violet-crowned Woodnymph *T. colombica*, with the name Crowned Woodnymph being used for the enlarged species.

Purple-bibbed Whitetip *Urostroke benjamini* and **Rufous-vented Whitetip** *Urostroke ruficrissa*

Some authors lump Rufous-vented Whitetip in Purple-bibbed Whitetip, using the name Whitetip for the enlarged species.

Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus martii*

This form was formerly lumped in Rufous-capped Motmot *B. ruficapillus*, with the name Rufous Motmot being used for the enlarged species.

Pale-mandibled Aracari *Pteroglossus erythropygius*

This form is sometimes lumped in Collared Aracari *P. torquatus*.

Pacific Hornero *Furnarius cinnamomeus*

This form was formerly lumped in Pale-legged Hornero *F. leucopus*.

Azara's Spinetail *Synallaxis azarae*

The form concerned is sometimes split off as a separate species: Elegant Spinetail *S. elegantior*.

Scaly-throated (or Scaly-breasted or Spectacled) Foliage-gleaner *Anabacerthia variegaticeps*

The form concerned, *temporalis*, has sometimes been regarded as a subspecies of Montane Foliage-gleaner *A. striaticollis*. Alternatively, it may represent a distinct species: Spot-breasted Foliage-gleaner.

Montane Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*

This form was formerly lumped in Spot-crowned Woodcreeper *L. affinis*.

Nariño Tapaculo *Scytalopus vicini*

This form was formerly lumped in Pale-throated (or Tacarcuna) Tapaculo *S. panamensis*.

Spillmann's Tapaculo *Scytalopus spillmanni*

This form was formerly lumped in Brown-rumped Tapaculo *S. latebricola*.

Blackish Tapaculo *Scytalopus latrans*

Ridgely & Greenfield lump this form in Unicoloured Tapaculo *S. unicolor*.

Chocó Tyrannulet *Zimmerius albigularis*

This form was formerly lumped in Golden-faced Tyrannulet *Z. chrysops*, which in turn was lumped in Peruvian Tyrannulet *Z. viridiflavus*, with the name Golden-faced Tyrannulet being used for the enlarged species.

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*

The form concerned is sometimes split off as a separate species: White-winged Phoebe *S. latirostris*.

White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus*

Some authors lump White-collared *M. candei*, Orange-collared *M. aurantiacus* and Golden-collared Manakins *M. vitellinus* in this species, using the name Bearded Manakin for the enlarged species.

Sepia-brown (or Sharpe's) Wren *Cinnycerthia olivascens*

This species was formerly (with Fulvous Wren *C. fulva*) lumped in Peruvian Wren *C. peruanum*, with the name Sepia-brown Wren being used for the enlarged species.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

The southern forms are treated by some authors as a separate species Southern House Wren *T. musculus*.

Southern Nightingale-Wren (or Scaly-breasted W) *Microcerculus marginatus*

Northern Nightingale-Wren (sometimes just called Nightingale Wren) *M. philomela* (which does not occur in Ecuador) was formerly lumped in this form, with the name Nightingale Wren being used for the enlarged species. The taxonomy of *Microcerculus* wrens is probably even more complex and *M. marginatus* itself may consist of 2 or more biological species.

Ecuadorian Thrush *Turdus maculirostris*

This species was formerly lumped in Bare-eyed (or Yellow-eyed) Thrush *T. nudigenis*.

Golden-rumped Euphonia *Euphonia cyanocephala*

This form (together with Blue-hooded or Elegant Euphonia *E. elegantissima*) is sometimes lumped in Antillean Euphonia *E. musica*, with the name Blue-hooded Euphonia being used for the enlarged species.

Chocó Warbler *Myiothlypis chlorophrys*

This form was formerly lumped in Golden-bellied Warbler *B. chrysogaster*.

Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus microrhynchus*

This form is sometimes lumped in Subtropical Cacique *C. uropygialis*, with the name Scarlet-rumped Cacique being used for the enlarged species.

Chocó Brush Finch (Dusky B F) *Atlapetes crassus*

Ridgely & Greenfield lump this form (found on the west slope of the Andes in Columbia and Ecuador) in Tricoloured Brush Finch *A. tricolor* (found on the east slope of the Andes in Peru).

Rufous-naped Brush Finch (Northern R-n B F) *Atlapetes latinuchus*

This form (along with several others) was formerly lumped in Bolivian Rufous-naped Brush Finch (or Bolivian B-F) *A. rufinucha*, with the name Rufous-naped Brush Finch being used for the enlarged species.

Lemon-rumped Tanager (Yellow-r T) *Ramphocelus icteronotus*

This form is sometimes lumped in Flame-rumped Tanager *R. flammigerus*.

Yellow-tufted Dacnis *Dacnis egregia*

This form has been split from Black-faced Dacnis *D. lineata*.

Variable Seedeater *Sporophila corvina*

This form is often lumped in Wing-barred Seedeater *S. americana*, with the name Variable Seedeater being used for the enlarged species. *S. corvina* was formerly known by the invalid name *S. aurita*.

Southern Yellow Grosbeak (Golden-bellied G) *Pheucticus chrysogaster*

This form is often lumped in Mexican Yellow Grosbeak *P. chrysopleus*, with the name Yellow Grosbeak being used for the enlarged species.