



The highly successful Birdquest / Wild Images tour to Galápagos in 2016 was a fantastic wildlife and photographic experience, with beautiful Swallow-tailed Gulls certainly being one of the highlights (David Bishop).

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GALÁPAGOS

19 – 31 MAY 2016

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 off Punta Vicente Roca on Isabela (Andy Swash).

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 any of the sites where the Critically Endangered and declining Mangrove Finch is still known to occur. We also saw most of the endemic mammals and reptiles, and a range of the islands' more notable invertebrates and plant life. Our total bird list was 69 species – a good tally for mid-summer. The views we managed to obtain of virtually all the species, including thirteen of the fourteen 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; excellent views of Floreana (Charles) 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 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 at point-blank range. We also had unprecedented views of Paint-billed Crakes in the highlands of Santa Cruz and San Cristóbal. But perhaps the most significant bird sighting of the tour was the very close and prolonged views of Galápagos Martins at a breeding site on Isabela, allowing some excellent images to be taken of this Endangered and very rarely photographed species.

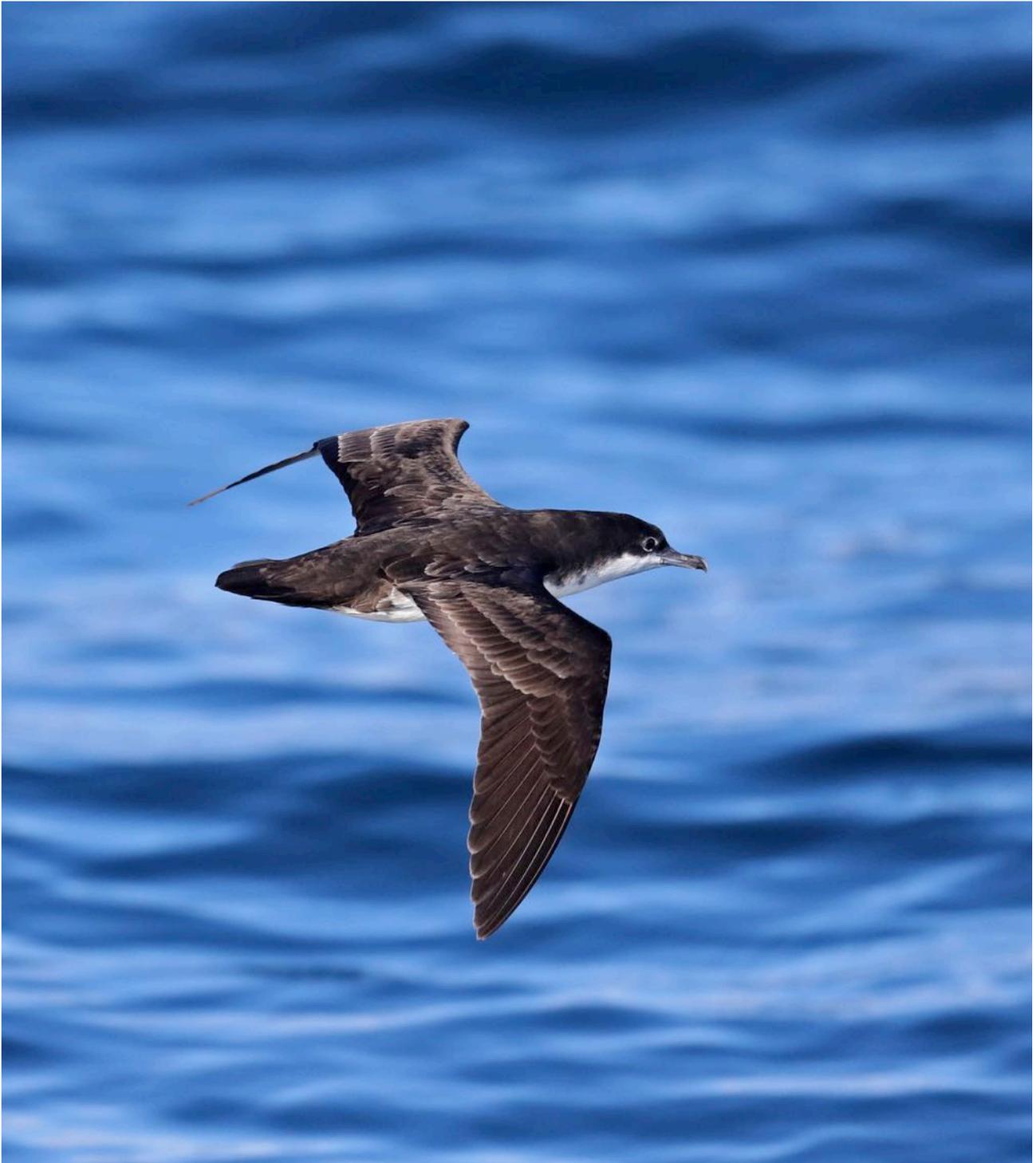
The non-avian highlights included watching Galápagos Giant Tortoises on Santa Cruz; Marine Iguanas feeding on algae in the pounding surf; Land Iguanas on North Seymour; four species of endemic lava lizard and an endemic snake; and, for those who opted to go snorkelling, a bewildering array of marine life, including innumerable colourful fishes and playful Galápagos Sea Lions. But perhaps the most exciting encounters were with cetaceans: we recorded an impressive six species during the cruise, including Blue, Bryde's and (probably) Sei Whales, and pods of Killer Whales (Orcas).

The tour began in Quito, where we spent a night in a very comfortable hotel before being transferred to the airport to catch a morning flight to the island of Baltra, the principal 'gateway' to Galápagos. A brief stop-over in Guayaquil en route provided five bird species, the most notable being a female Pauraque which flushed as the 'plane came in to land! 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. 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 – 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 the first of the Galápagos endemics, 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 rather mysterious bird, since 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.

Mid-afternoon we headed off in the pangas for North Seymour and made our first 'dry' landing. Soon after



Galápagos Shearwaters were a frequent sight during the tour, with rafts sitting on the sea and birds often flying across the bows (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).



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

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 display calls whenever a female came near. 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). We also saw our first Lava Gulls here (a bird that sadly has the ignominious distinction of being the rarest gull in the world). 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. When we awoke next morning, we were anchored in the flooded caldera of Genovesa, home to the world’s



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



Endemic to Galápagos, the Lava Gull is the rarest gull in the world, with an estimated population of just 300–400 pairs; a couple of pairs were seen on North Seymour (John Wilson).



Great and Magnificent Frigatebirds nest in a mixed colony on North Seymour, providing an excellent opportunity to get to grips with these very similar species. The best way to tell them apart is by the female's eye-ring: red on Great; blue on Magnificent (Andy Swash).

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 some white-phase birds sitting precariously on their flimsy nests in the bushes, as well as a few 'intermediate' individuals.



A typical scene on Genovesa – displaying male Great Frigatebirds (Andy Swash).



Genovesa is home to the largest Red-footed Booby colony in Galápagos: two forms occur, brown phase birds (shown here) out-numbering white phase birds by a ratio of about ten to one (Andy Swash).



The subspecies of Galápagos Mockingbird that occurs on Genovesa, baueri, is endemic to the island (Andy Swash).



Galápagos Doves were a frequent sight on Genovesa, including many juveniles such as this bird (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

Darwin's Finches were also much in evidence and we soon found all four of the species present on this island: Large Ground Finch, Large Cactus Finch of the small-billed form *propinqua* that is endemic to Genovesa (and is now considered to have evolved from a different lineage from the Large Cactus Finch on Española, and may therefore warrant treatment as a full endemic species), 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 – and again may be specifically distinct from the other subspecies) and Grey (Dusky) Warbler-Finch (of the subspecies *mentalis* that is endemic to Genovesa).



Compare those bills! The two largest Darwin's finches on Genovesa: Large Cactus Finch subspecies *propinqua* (top: Alec & Catherine Gillespie) and Large Ground Finch (bottom: John Wilson).



The other two Darwin's finches on Genovesa: Sharp-beaked Ground Finch subspecies acutirostris (a proposed split) (TOP: Andy Swash) and Grey (or Dusky) Warbler-Finch subspecies mentalis (BOTTOM: Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

Galápagos Doves, Galápagos Mockingbirds (of the subspecies *bauri* which is endemic to Genovesa and may also warrant treatment as a full species) and Mangrove Warblers were common. We also found a few Yellow-crowned Night-herons and Lava Herons (another of the Galápagos endemics), and a Ruddy Turnstone on the beach. Before lunch, there was the first opportunity for snorkelling for those who wished, and this proved to be a wonderful experience, with excellent views of many colourful fishes. 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 few Lava Herons, another Galápagos endemic, were seen at Darwin's Bay: this is an immature bird (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).



Good numbers of Red-billed Tropicbirds breed along the cliffs on Genovesa (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

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 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 total of at least six Galápagos Short-eared Owls, each 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). As we walked back to 'The Cliff' one of the owls made a successful kill and flew straight towards us and landed nearby, allowing amazing views as it devoured its prey. By early evening we were back on board *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 flying over the breeding colony during the day on Genovesa, photographing one entering its nesting crevice proved to be quite a challenge! (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).



Galápagos Short-eared Owls prey principally upon Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels on Genovesa, and we were lucky to witness a kill: the bird flying off with its unfortunate victim (top: Alec & Catherine Gillespie) to a gully nearby (bottom: Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

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. Having landed on the beach we set off on a trail through the scrubby vegetation just inland. The vegetation was much more reminiscent of savanna than anything we had seen so far, and we immediately started to find a few insects – including Monarch and Queen butterflies. We also saw many Small Ground Finches and Mangrove Warblers and good numbers of Galápagos Mockingbirds (these birds being of the subspecies *personatus*), as well as a few Galápagos Doves. Soon after reaching the rocky shoreline we encountered our first Galápagos Hawk, which proved to be remarkably tolerant of our approach, and 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, Wandering Tattlers, Semipalmated Plovers, Ruddy Turnstones and a few pairs of American Oystercatcher (of the subspecies *galapagensis*, which as its name implies is endemic to Galápagos). We also had excellent views of Lava Herons, as well as singles of Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Heron (of the endemic subspecies *cognata*), Cattle Egret and an unexpected Great White Egret. Basking Galápagos Fur Seals and Galápagos Sea Lions, and innumerable Sally Lightfoot Crabs were also very photogenic. Looking out to sea, we were surprised and delighted to see two or three small pods of Killer Whale (or Orca) passing by quite some distance offshore – probably ten individuals in total. Soon after returning to the boat the snorkelers headed off to a nearby rocky promontory, where many colourful fishes and a reef shark were seen.



A confiding Galápagos Hawk was a highlight of our walk along the rocky shoreline at Puerto Egas (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).



Remarkable numbers of juvenile Mangrove Warblers were feeding along the shoreline at Puerto Egas (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).



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 again regularly seen along the rocky shores (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

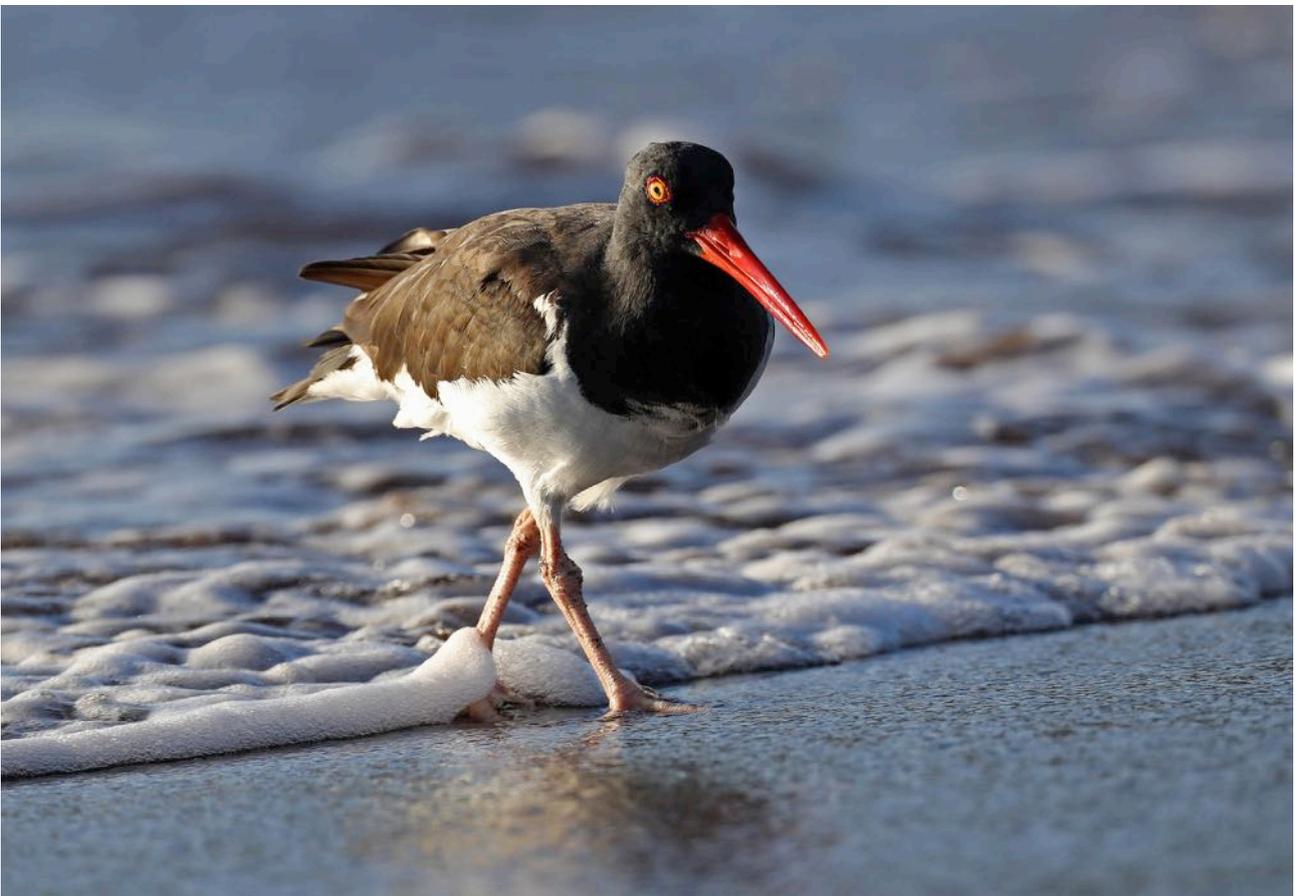
We then cruised the short distance to Espumilla Beach and had lunch while moored off. After landing on the beach in the afternoon we explored the fringing mangroves and scanned the lagoon just inland. The lagoon was dry, but the trail along the back of the mangroves was alive with Darwin's Finches and 'pishing' elicited an amazing reaction, with sometimes dozens of birds flying in to investigate. Most of the finches were Small and Medium Ground Finches, although a Large Ground Finch was also seen, but the highlight was a very confident female Large Tree Finch (a species that always seems to be elusive). Other highlights were our first Galápagos (Large-billed) Flycatcher, which allowed incredibly close views and more *personatus* Galápagos Mockingbirds. 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 – a truly memorable experience.



Three of the Darwin's Finches seen on Santiago: Small Ground Finch (TOP LEFT: Andy Swash), Medium Ground Finch (TOP RIGHT: Michael and Malcolm Boswell) and the elusive Large Tree Finch (BOTTOM: John Wilson).



Hundreds of Galápagos Petrels were seen off Santiago at dusk before heading inland to their breeding colonies (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 (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

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 before we sailed into a patch of garua (sea mist). The first 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. We also saw a large pod of 150+ Short-beaked Common Dolphins, although rather distant and, frustratingly often obscured by the garua. 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, the highlight was our first Flightless Cormorants of the tour. Travelling some distance offshore provided great views of Ocean Sunfish, and during an excursion along the coast to the south we encountered a crèche of Galápagos Fur Seals practicing their swimming skills. The snorkelers who took to the water later in the morning had fantastic views of Green Turtles underwater.



Elliott's Storm Petrels were a constant presence, feeding off the stern of the Top Top IV while we were at anchor off Punta Vicente Roca. Note the colour-ringed bird on the left (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

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 blowing Bryde's Whale, and many Galápagos Shearwaters and Elliot's, Wedge-rumped and Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrels, and a few Galápagos Petrels being seen. During the afternoon we landed at the only visitor site on Fernandina and walked slowly along the shore, stepping carefully around the Marine Iguanas – the population of which had clearly suffered a recent but inexplicable decline, as there were dead and dying animals everywhere (perhaps an impact of the current El Niño event?). During our walk we also had close views of Flightless Cormorants and Great Blue Herons, and saw a couple of Galápagos Penguins in the distance. We then walked out across the stark landscape of a relatively recent lava flow, where we saw at least four Fernandina (Galápagos) Snakes and admired the many Lava Cacti that had managed to colonize the area. Once back on board 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 overnight in Tagus Cove.

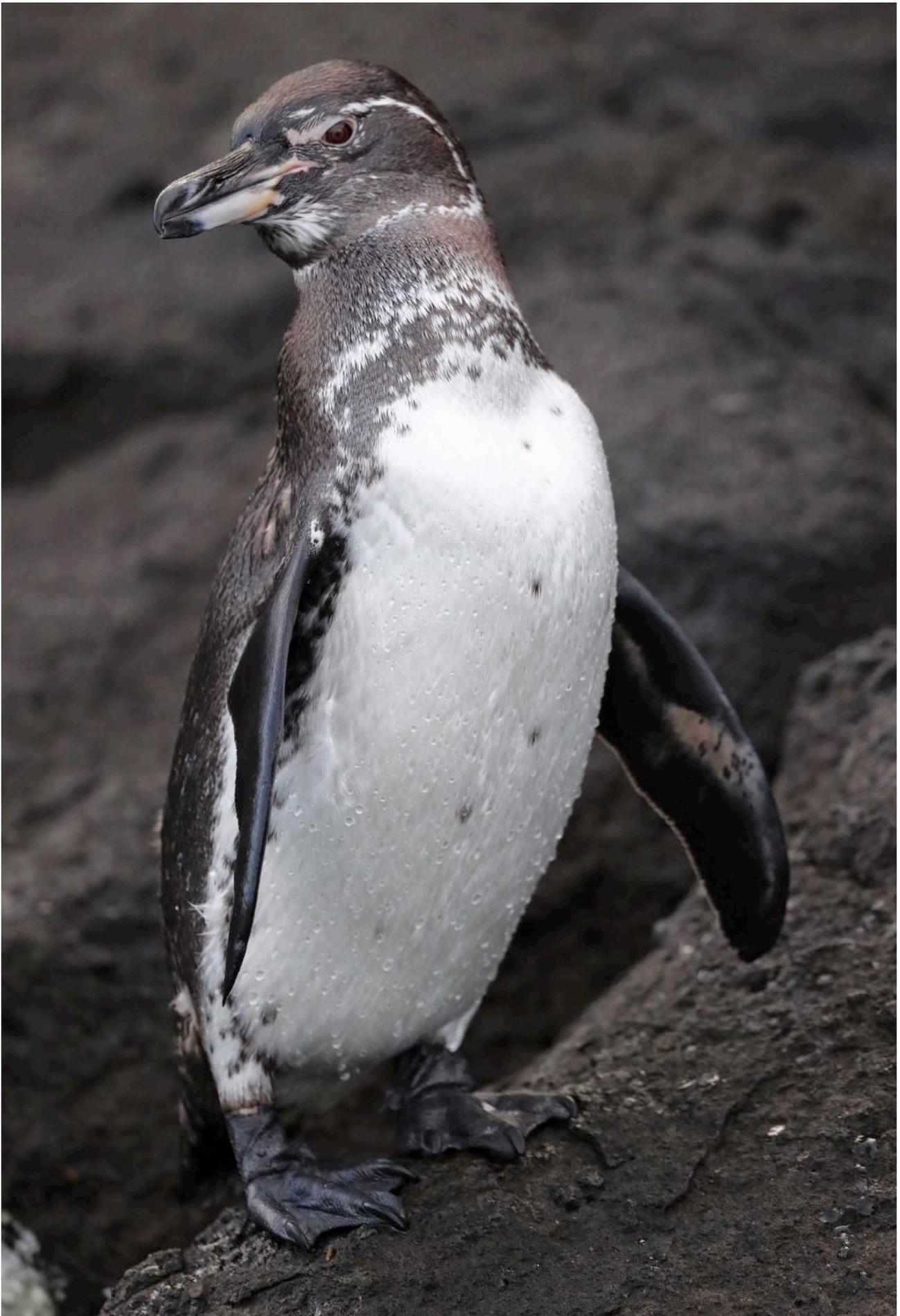


Elliott's Storm Petrel (TOP) and Band-rumped Storm Petrel (БОТТОМ) (both: Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

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 Flightless Cormorants, including birds on the nest, Galápagos Penguins and Striated Herons. Most excitingly, however, was locating a small breeding colony of Galápagos Martins, which were nesting fairly low down on a cliff-face. 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...



Flightless Cormorants (TOP) were breeding along the rocky shore at Tagus Cove, and Striated Herons (BOTTOM) were feeding at the water's edge (both: Alec & Catherine Gillespie).



Galápagos Penguins were seen at close quarters during a panga ride along the shores of Tagus Cove (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).



*One of the highlights of the tour was the opportunity to observe a small breeding colony of Galápagos Martins near Tagus Cove on Isabela. The population of this poorly known species has declined alarmingly in recent years and it was categorized as Endangered in 2012. Very few photographs are known to exist and it was a privilege to be able to spend time watching these birds at such close quarters in good light and calm conditions. The **TOP** photo shows a male (right) singing while perched next to a female; the **BOTTOM** photo shows another pair and highlights the male's bluish plumage (both: Alec & Catherine Gillespie).*

After spending about an hour watching the martins we returned to *Tip Top IV* and immediately began navigating south to Elizabeth Bay, sailing down the centre of the Bolivar Channel in the hope of finding cetaceans in the flat calm conditions. Unfortunately, no cetaceans were seen, although we did have many sightings of large Swordfishes, porpoising Galápagos Sea Lions and rafts of Galápagos Shearwaters, not to mention numerous Elliott's Storm Petrels. Soon after arriving at Elizabeth Bay we took a panga ride through the nearby mangroves, where we saw many Green Turtles in the crystal-clear water, and 'pishing' attracted good numbers of Small and Medium Ground Finches and a single Galápagos (Large-billed) Flycatcher.



Elliott's Storm Petrels (TOP), here showing the distinctive white belly and vent, and Galápagos Shearwater (BOTTOM) were seen in good numbers in the flat calm conditions as we plied south along the Bolivar Channel (both: Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

On our way back to the boat we made a detour to a nearby rocky outcrop, where a few Flightless Cormorants were seen, including one standing in the classic wing-spread pose, and Marine Iguanas were seen swimming.



The appropriately named Flightless Cormorant is the largest cormorant in the world, and endemic to Galápagos (TOP: John Wilson). Marine Iguanas are also endemic, with seven subspecies: this is subspecies albemarlensis restricted to Isabela (BOTTOM: David Bishop).

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. There were many remarkable sightings: two Markham’s Storm Petrels, three Waved Albatrosses (quite some distance from their breeding colony on Española!) and at least 20 Galápagos Petrels, not to mention hundreds of Galápagos Shearwaters and Elliot’s Storm Petrels, and six Wedge-rumped and two Band-rumped (Madeiran) Storm Petrels. But the undoubted highlight was a Bryde’s Whale which we were able to follow for quite some time and which surfaced right next to the boat on a few occasions – and was even watched lunge-feeding. An amazing and, for many, a truly humbling experience.



This wonderful lunge-feeding Bryde's Whale was one of the highlights of the tour (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).



A beautiful sunset at the end of an amazing day.... (David Bishop).

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 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. 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 up the road in an ultimately successful search for the fast-declining 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatcher and more finches! Two species of finch new for the tour were seen: Woodpecker Finches (of the subspecies *productus*) and a few Green (Olive) Warbler-Finches, as well as a few Small Tree Finches. However, the 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatchers certainly stole the show, with a female and a dazzling male giving wonderful views at very close range (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. For unknown reasons it has recently disappeared from its former stronghold on Floreana and has become very rare on Santa Cruz.



For unknown reasons, the 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatcher is becoming increasingly scarce and is now only reliably found in the highlands of Isabela (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

We then drove up to a higher altitude, through the lush *Scalesia* zone, and arrived at the parking area below the summit of the Sierra Negra Volcano. The first bird we saw having disembarked was a very confident Woodpecker Finch, which quickly became the subject of very many photos! One of our target birds here, however, was the skulking and often elusive Galápagos Crake, which was heard calling from dense vegetation on a few occasions. Despite walking to the rim of the Sierra Negra Volcano (and arriving just in time to see the view before the cloud rolled in), and hearing at least six birds, it proved not to be a crake day. Fortunately, though, there would be other opportunities during the tour... After a picnic lunch we began our descent to the lowlands, stopping for a short walk along a side-track, where we saw two more 'Galápagos' Vermilion Flycatchers and had great views of Small Tree Finch.



Woodpecker Finch (subspecies productus) (ТОР) and *Olive Warbler-Finch* (БОТТОМ) were two of the species new for the tour seen in the highlands of Isabela (both: Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

During the afternoon we returned to Puerto Villamil and spent half-an-hour or so overlooking a flooded pit where there was a small flock of American Flamingos (the resident birds on Galápagos are sometimes treated as an endemic subspecies *glyphorhynchus*), a couple of Black-necked Stilts and a few Common Gallinules and White-cheeked Pintails (of the endemic Galápagos subspecies *galapagensis*). A surprise find, however, was a single Pied-billed Grebe, a regular but rare vagrant to Galápagos. 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, some of the group walked back into town, initially through scrub and woodland and then along a boardwalk through the mangroves where we saw a couple of Common Cactus Finches, a few more White-cheeked Pintails and Black-necked Stilts and many more American Flamingos. As on most of the islands, Mangrove Warblers were very numerous, particularly in the coastal scrub, invariably responding strongly to 'pishing', and a few Galápagos Mockingbirds were also seen (here of the subspecies *parvulus*). Late in the afternoon we arrived back on the quay and transferred to the *Tip Top IV*, where we had another excellent meal and the usual daily 'checklist' and evening briefing. Later that evening we set sail for Floreana, arriving in a sheltered bay on the north coast of the island in the early hours.



American Flamingos were a fantastic sight at close range on the lagoons around Puerto Villamil (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

Soon after dawn we took a panga ride and landed at Punta Cormorán, where we spent the early part of the day exploring the shoreline and adjacent scrub, and looking over the large lagoon just inland. We saw a few Nearctic waders on the sandy beach to the east of the lagoon – a single Grey (Black-bellied) Plover, five Semipalmated Plovers, six Ruddy Turnstones and two Sanderlings. During our visit to this beach, which is an important nesting area for Green Turtle, we witnessed a Magnificent Frigatebird circling around before dropping down to pick off an unsuspecting baby turtle that was making its way to the sea – unfortunately it had emerged too late in the day. On the lagoon itself there were 11 American Flamingos and a Black-necked Stilt, and we were lucky to find a first-summer Franklin's Gull (a scarce but regular migrant to Galápagos). In the coastal scrub we saw many Small and Medium Ground Finches and a few Galápagos Flycatchers, and a few Floreana Lava Lizards (an island endemic). 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 shoreline. 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 on a rocky area just inland, and eventually managed to get excellent views of seven birds, including one individual that came particularly close to the shore. 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.



One of the rarest and most threatened birds in the world, the Floreana Mockingbird can only be seen from a panga while circumnavigating the small islet of Champion. Most of the adults are colour-ringed for research purposes (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

Soon after arriving at Puerto Velasco Ibarra we were back on land, boarded an open-sided 'truck-bus' and were transported the few kilometres up into the highlands. We quickly found our target bird, the Medium Tree Finch, two of which were feeding in the trees fairly close to the parking area. During our exploration of the area we saw at least eight individuals of this highly threatened species, which is only found on this one island, including a full-plumaged adult male, as well as a Small Tree Finch, dozens of Small Ground Finches, a few Medium Ground Finches and some very confident Galápagos (Large-billed) Flycatchers. We had time to visit the caves that had been used as temporary dwellings by some of the early settlers on Floreana before making our way back to the quay in the 'truck-bus', where we boarded the pangas and returning to the *Tip Top IV* – just in time to watch many Galápagos Petrels flying past, presumably *en route* to their breeding colony in the highlands. 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 a few observed at close range in the highlands of Floreana (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

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 we were soon on our way into the humid highlands of Santa Cruz. The journey took us through the agricultural zone, where Western Cattle Egrets were very much in evidence – a species that first colonized Galápagos in 1964 and is now a widespread breeder. Our first visit was to a private Galápagos Giant Tortoise reserve, Rancho Manzanillo, and as we approached a Galápagos Crake ran across a side-track, unfortunately seen only by a few of the group before the coach could stop! Soon after arriving we walked down to a small lake, passing numerous photogenic tortoises on the way and seeing a Purple Gallinule flying away into the distance (this is a rare bird in Galápagos but may now have a tenuous foothold as a breeding species). There were a few Common Gallinules on the lake, and a walk through the adjacent area of native forest and secondary vegetation proved very productive, as we were rewarded with excellent views of a Paint-billed Crake and many Darwin's Finch: three Woodpecker Finches (of the subspecies *pallidus*), at least ten Small Tree Finches, a Green (Olive) Warbler-Finch, many Small and Medium Ground Finches and a single Large Ground Finch. We also saw a few Galápagos Flycatchers and Galápagos Mockingbirds.



Small Tree Finches were particularly numerous at Rancho Manzanillo – the bird shown is a male (TOP: Michael Miles), but one of the highlights of our visit was this immature Paint-billed Crake, which posed nicely for the cameras! (БОТТОМ: Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

Our route back to the farmstead took us past the lake, where we were delighted to find another Paint-billed Crane (an immature bird) – feeding out in the open, and eventually approaching the assembled very happy photographers! 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! A second ‘round’ of the same circuit was perhaps even more productive, with a Galápagos Crane being seen by a few of the group, two more Paint-billed Crakes and our thirteenth and final species of Darwin’s Finch – the impressive Vegetarian Finch! 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.

A brief stop to investigate some lava tubes as we left the ranch revealed a roosting Galápagos Barn Owl (subspecies *punctatissima*), although unfortunately and frustratingly the bird flew off and disappeared into a hole before everyone in the group was able to see it. However, some consolation was provided by a Dark-billed Cuckoo that flew into a nearby tree and gave good views. After a short drive we arrived at a nearby restaurant, where we relaxed for a while and had an excellent lunch. We then headed back to Puerto Ayora and those who wished spent the rest of the afternoon visiting the Charles Darwin Research Station (CDRS), where we walked around the Galápagos Giant Tortoise enclosures and learnt something about the many conservation initiatives being undertaken in conjunction with the Galápagos National Park Service. During our visit we recorded seven species of Darwin’s Finch – including two Large Tree Finches, four Small Tree Finches, two Common Cactus Finches and another Vegetarian Finch, and had excellent views of Galápagos (Large-billed) Flycatchers and Galápagos Mockingbirds. We left the CDRS late in the afternoon and made our way back to the quay, passing the fish market on the way, where Brown Pelicans, Galápagos Sea Lions and Lava Gulls were gathered waiting to be fed! After a relaxing drink in town we walked over to the quay and returned to the *Tip Top IV* for dinner. That evening we began our navigation towards Española...



This Vegetarian Finch was our thirteenth and final Darwin’s Finch of the tour (MAIN IMAGE: Michael and Malcolm Boswell); (INSET: Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

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. Soon after first light we landed 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: Española 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.



The three endemic birds on Española: the amazingly confiding Española Mockingbird (TOP: Michael and Malcolm Boswell), Large Cactus Finch, subspecies *conirostris* (compare the bill with subspecies *propinqua* on page 8) (BOTTOM LEFT: Andy Swash), and Grey Warbler-Finch, subspecies *cinerascens* (BOTTOM RIGHT: 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 performing 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 past.



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 (Alec & Catherine Gillespie)...



... and others displaying. The display of the Waved Albatross is one of the most remarkable in the bird world, and the opportunity to sit quietly and watch them at close range going through their ritualized courtship was a both a delight and a great privilege (David Bishop).



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



The flight views of Swallow-tailed Gulls from the cliff top on Española were fantastic (Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

On our way back to the boat we walked through another part of the albatross colony, where Galápagos Hawks were seen, and 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. Once back on board, the boat navigated west and out to sea off Punta Suárez, providing an opportunity to sail among the rafts of Waved Albatrosses that had gathered offshore – a wonderful experience.



Rafts of Waved Albatrosses were seen at sea to the west of Española, skittering away at our approach (David Bishop).

We then headed north and, with the agreement of the captain, adjusted our route by navigating the open ocean between Española and San Cristóbal, and travelling along the east coast of San Cristóbal as far as Punta Pitt, the northernmost point of the island, during daylight. This was probably the first time that such a cruise has been undertaken on a charter vessel, and it proved to simply outstanding for seawatching. Soon after leaving Española a whale blow was seen – and despite never coming close, the photos taken appear to show a Sei Whale (a very rare visitor to Galápagos). However, the best was yet to come: about an hour north of Española another whale blow was seen... and another... and soon after a fluke preceding a deep dive – amazingly, this proved to be a Blue Whale, the largest animal that has ever lived, and another great rarity in Galápagos!



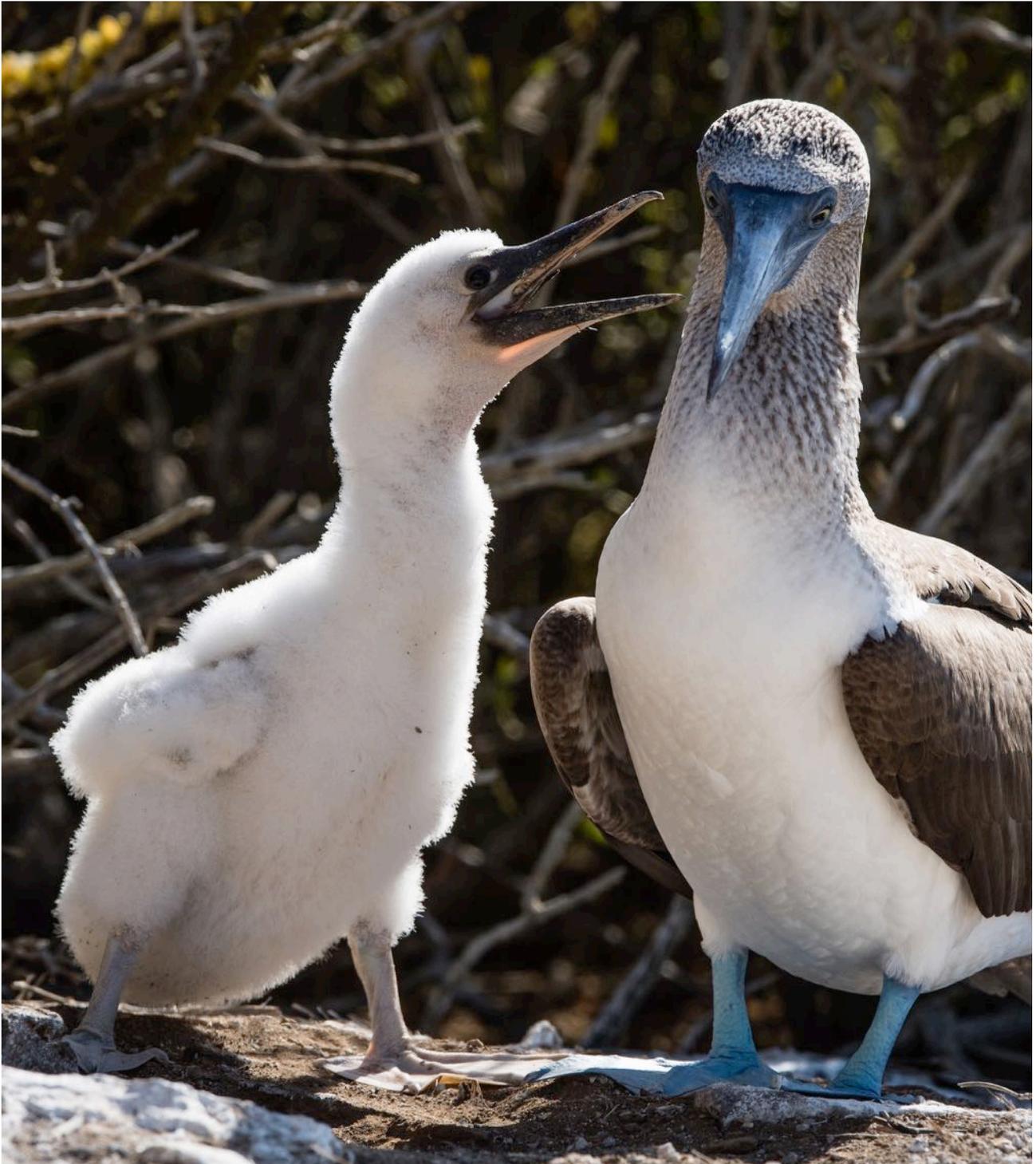
Certainly one of the most unexpected sightings of the tour was this fantastic Blue Whale (both: Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

As we continued to sail north, we encountered increasing numbers of seabirds, most notably dozens of Galápagos Petrels, some of which, unusually, followed the boat for a while, providing some excellent photo opportunities. A few lucky observers on the bows saw two Markham's Storm Petrels, one of which crossed close enough to be photographed by those with quick camera reflexes! Before reaching San Cristóbal a pod of Bottlenose Dolphins was seen heading towards us, and having caught up then spent a considerable time bow-riding – to everyone's great delight, particularly when seen at very close quarters from above through the 'rope holes' towards the front of the bow. The number of seabirds off the spectacular east coast of San Cristóbal was quite remarkable, with literally thousands of Galápagos Shearwaters and hundreds of Elliot's and Wedge-rumped Storm Petrels, and all three boobies being seen. We arrived at Punta Pitt just as the sun was setting, and were treated to a fantastic sunset – a fitting end to an amazing day!



About 50 Galápagos Petrels were seen as we cruised north from Española, some, unusually, coming very close to the boat (TOP LEFT: John Wilson); (TOP RIGHT: Michael and Malcolm Boswell); (BOTTOM LEFT: Alec & Catherine Gillespie). Two Markham's Storm Petrels were also seen, one crossing the bows at fairly close range (BOTTOM RIGHT: Michael and Malcolm Boswell).

Having moored overnight in the bay at Punta Pitt, we left early in the pangas and 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 then headed for the beach and having landed followed the fairly steep trail inland. Here we were rewarded with impressive views across the bay and during a walk around Punta Pitt 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. We also saw a few nesting pairs of blue-footed Boobies here and on our way back to the beach came across a number of San Cristóbal Lava Lizards, another island endemic. Unfortunately we did not see the hoped-for, but increasingly rare, San Cristóbal (or Chatham) Mockingbird at Punta Pitt during our visit (the first time the leaders had failed to find it here), but thankfully this was not our only chance of seeing it... Soon after returning to the *Tip Top IV* we were on the move, this time navigating down the west side of San Cristóbal.



A few pairs of Blue-footed Boobies were nesting at Punta Pitt on San Cristóbal (Alec & Catherine Gillespie) ...



... and following a successful predator control programme, Red-footed Boobies are now breeding again (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

The journey south was rather quieter for seabirds than we had experienced while navigating along the east coast of San Cristóbal the previous day, although there were occasional rafts of Galápagos Shearwaters. However, careful scanning revealed two larger shearwaters, which proved to be Pink-footed Shearwaters – a species that is only irregular in Galápagos waters. Our journey took us past Kicker Rock and mid-afternoon we arrived at Puerto Baquerizo Moreno, the capital of Ecuador’s Galápagos Province. Soon after arriving we took to the pangas and went ashore, boarded a coach and headed off inland. The rest of the day was spent exploring the highlands of San Cristóbal and visiting a tortoise reserve – the Galápaguera de Cerro Colorado. It was here that we eventually found our target bird – the increasingly rare 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. The visit to the highlands and the tortoise reserve did provide other highlights, perhaps most notable being the endemic San Cristóbal subspecies of Woodpecker Finch (*striatipecta*) and Grey Warbler-Finch (*luteola*), although an adult Paint-billed Crake that walked, seemingly unconcerned by our presence, around one of the tortoise ‘wallows’ and posed for the photographers was certainly an added bonus.



The final endemic! The Endangered San Cristóbal Mockingbird was eventually seen very well at Galápaguera de Cerro Colorado (John Wilson).



The island endemic subspecies of Grey Warbler-Finch, luteola (TOP: Alec & Catherine Gillespie), and a beautiful, confident adult Paint-billed Crake (BOTTOM: Michael and Malcolm Boswell) were two of the other highlights of our visit to the highlands of San Cristóbal.

Late in the afternoon we returned to the *Tip Top IV* and enjoyed our final evening aboard. 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 evening meals we had had on board.

Our final overnight sail returned us to the place we had begun our tour of the archipelago ten days previously – Baltra Harbour. After our final breakfast on board *the Tip Top IV*, 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 six members of the group who were heading home or going their own way the following day, the other nine participants and two 'newcomers' eagerly anticipating the delights that lay ahead during the extension to Yanacocha and the Mindo area on the west slope of the Andes...



Displaying Blue-footed Boobies always seem to be rather comical (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

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; or 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 three occasions, with 27 seen in total.

Galápagos Penguin ◊ *Spheniscus mendiculus* (**EN**) 2 Fernandina; 6 Tagus Cove and 35 Puerto Villamil, Isabela.

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

Waved Albatross ◊ *Diomedea irrorata* (**CR**) 3 off SW Isabela; 400+ Española (a tour highlight); 1 off W San Cristóbal.

Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel ◊ *Oceanodroma tethys* Very common, 1,000s at two colonies and frequent at sea.

Band-rumped Storm Petrel ◊ (Madeiran S P) *Oceanodroma castro* 5, on two dates, well offshore.

Markham's Storm Petrel ◊ *Oceanodroma markhami* (**DD**) 2 off Isabela on 24th; 2 off San Cristóbal on 28th.

Galápagos Petrel ◊ *Pterodroma phaeopygia* (**CR**) 200+ at dusk near Santiago; >100 others over 5 dates. See note.

Pink-footed Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus creatopus* (**VU**) Two off San Cristóbal on 29th were unexpected; a vagrant.

Galápagos Shearwater ◊ *Puffinus subalaris* Very common, some rafts of 100s, particularly close to land. See note.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* 1 Puerto Villamil, Isabela on 25th: a vagrant.

American Flamingo (Caribbean F) ◊ *Phoenicopterus ruber* 35 Puerto Villamil, Isabela; 11 Floreana. See note.

Red-billed Tropicbird *Phaethon aethereus* Regular sightings, notably on Genovesa where there is a large colony.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* 3 on Genovesa, and 1–2 on five other islands.
Lava Heron ◊ (Galápagos H) *Butorides sundevalli* Widely scattered in small numbers on rocky shores. See note.
Striated Heron *Butorides striatus* 6 adults were seen on Isabela, in mangroves and along rocky shores.
Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Small flocks were observed on six islands. See note.
Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* 11 were seen, on four islands.
Great Egret *Ardea alba* 1 was seen on Santiago.
Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis urinator* Common and widespread, and recorded every day.
Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* Common and widespread, occasionally seen in the highlands.
Great Frigatebird *Fregata minor* Large nesting colonies on North Seymour and Genovesa.
Blue-footed Booby ◊ *Sula nebouxii* By far the commonest booby in inshore waters, with hundreds seen.
Nazca Booby ◊ *Sula granti* Common, particularly at breeding colonies on Genovesa and Española. See note.
Red-footed Booby ◊ *Sula sula* 1,000+ on Genovesa, including white and dark phase birds; 150+ on San Cristóbal.
Flightless Cormorant ◊ *Phalacrocorax harrisi* (VU) 28 recorded: 18 on Isabela and 10 on Fernandina, some nesting.
Galápagos Hawk ◊ *Buteo galapagoensis* (VU) 12 seen: 7 Santiago; 1 Fernandina; 1 Isabela and 3 Española.
Galápagos Crane ◊ (G Rail) *Laterallus spilonotus* (VU) 2 seen briefly in the highlands of Santa Cruz.
Paint-billed Crane ◊ *Neocrex erythrops* 4+ immatures in the highlands of Santa Cruz; 1 adult on San Cristóbal.
Purple Gallinule (American P G) *Porphyrio martinicus* 2 in the highlands of Santa Cruz.
Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata* 16 on Isabela; 19 Santa Cruz highlands; 3 San Cristóbal highlands. See note.
American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus galapagensis* Small numbers, scattered throughout the islands.
Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* Small numbers on coastal lagoons and wetlands. See note.
Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* 1 on Floreana.
Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* 2 on Santiago; 5 on Floreana.
Whimbrel (Hudsonian Whimbrel) *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus* 8: shorelines and in the highlands. See note.
Wandering Tattler *Heteroscelus incana* 15 seen on five islands, maximum of 6 on Santiago.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* 12 seen on four islands, maximum of 6 on Floreana.
Sanderling *Calidris alba* 2 on Floreana.
Brown Noddy (Common N) *Anous stolidus galapagensis* Common in inshore waters, but rarely seen far from land.
Swallow-tailed Gull ◊ *Creagrus furcatus* Good numbers seen throughout the islands, including 400+ on Genovesa.
Lava Gull ◊ *Leucophaeus fuliginosus* (VU) Recorded on four islands: 13 birds seen, maximum 6 on Genovesa.
Franklin's Gull *Leucophaeus pipixcan* A first-summer bird on Floreana was unexpected; a vagrant.
Galápagos Dove ◊ *Zenaida galapagoensis* Common, particularly on the outlying island; seen on six dates.
Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* (introduced) Common Isabela, Santa Cruz, San Cristóbal; few on other islands.
Dark-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus melacoryphus* 1 on Isabela and 1 seen well on Santa Cruz.
Western Barn Owl ◊ (Galápagos B O) *Tyto [alba] punctatissima* 1 in a lava tube, Santa Cruz highlands. See note.
Short-eared Owl ◊ (Galápagos S E O) *Asio [flammeus] galapagoensis* 6+ on Genovesa, one very close. See note.
Vermilion Flycatcher ◊ (Galápagos V F) *Pyrocephalus [rubinus] nanus* 7 (including 4 males) on Isabela. See note.
Galápagos Flycatcher ◊ (Large-billed F) *Myiarchus magnirostris* 27 seen, on five dates: max. 20 on Santa Cruz.
Galápagos Martin ◊ *Progne modesta* (EN) 25 at a breeding colony on the west coast of Isabela. See note.
Galápagos Mockingbird ◊ *Mimus parvulus* 100+ Genovesa (*bauri*); 50+ Santiago (*personatus*); 40+ others (*parvulus*).
Floreana Mockingbird ◊ (Charles M) *Mimus trifasciatus* (CR) 7 seen on Champion, 1 giving very good views.
Española Mockingbird ◊ (Hood M) *Mimus macdonaldi* (VU) 40+ on Española, some exceptionally close.
San Cristóbal Mockingbird ◊ (Chatham M) *Mimus melanotis* (EN) 10 on San Cristóbal, most in the highlands.
Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia* By far the commonest and most widespread landbird in Galápagos.
Large Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza magnirostris* Excellent views on Genovesa and Santa Cruz; singles elsewhere.
Medium Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza fortis* Fairly common and widespread on the 'larger' islands.
Small Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza fuliginosa* Over 100 seen on Genovesa, many giving excellent views.
Sharp-beaked Ground Finch ◊ *Geospiza difficilis* Excellent views of 12 birds on Genovesa.
Common Cactus Finch ◊ *Geospiza scandens* 1 on Santiago; 2 on Isabela; 2 on Floreana; and 2 on Santa Cruz.
Large Cactus Finch ◊ *Geospiza conirostris* 10 on Genovesa (*propinqua*); 15 on Española (*conirostris*).
Vegetarian Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus crassirostris* 1 fly-by on Isabela and 3 female/immatures on Santa Cruz.
Large Tree Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus psittacula* (VU) Great views of a female/immature on Santiago; 2 on Santa Cruz.
Medium Tree Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus pauper* (CR) 8 in the highlands of Floreana.
Small Tree Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus parvulus* The most numerous *Camarhynchus* sp.: 35 seen on five of the islands.
Woodpecker Finch ◊ *Camarhynchus pallidus* (VU) 7 Isabela (*productus*), 3 S. Cruz (*pallidus*), 2 S. Cristóbal (*striatipectus*).
Green Warbler-Finch ◊ (Olive W-F) *Certhidea olivacea* 30+ in the highlands of Isabela; 1 on Santa Cruz. See note.
Grey Warbler-Finch ◊ *Certhidea fusca* 6 Genovesa (*mentalis*), 20 Española (*cinerascens*). 10 S. Cristóbal (*luteola*). See note.

BIRDS RECORDED AT GUAYAQUIL AIRPORT EN ROUTE TO GALÁPAGOS

Ruddy Ground Dove *Columbina talpacoti* 1 at Guayaquil Airport.

Pauraque (Common P) *Nyctidromus albicollis* (NL) A female flushed as we landed at Guayaquil Airport.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* 3 at Guayaquil Airport.

Grey-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea* 6 at Guayaquil Airport, probably breeding.

Blue-and-white Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca* 1 at Guayaquil Airport.

MAMMALS

House Rat (Black R) *Rattus rattus* One in the highlands of San Cristóbal.

Galápagos Fur Seal ◊ *Arctocephalus galapagoensis* (EN) Seen on five islands: maximum 20+ Isabela.

Galápagos Sea Lion ◊ *Zalophus wollebaeki* (EN) Seen daily in good numbers, including some out to sea. See note.

Bryde's Whale (Tropical W) *Balaenoptera edeni* (DD) 1 en route to Fernandina; 1 giving amazing views off Isabela.

Blue Whale *Balaenoptera musculus* (EN) 1 between Española and San Cristóbal on 28th. Rarely recorded.

Sei Whale *Balaenoptera borealis* (EN) 1 probably this species off Española on 28th. Rarely recorded.

Killer Whale (Orca) *Orcinus orca* (DD) Two, possibly three, pods totalling 10+ off Santiago on 22nd.

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis* 150+ off N coast Isabela; 6 off E coast San Cristóbal. See note.

Common Bottlenose Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus* 20+, some bow-riding, off E coast of San Cristóbal. See note.



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

REPTILES

Galápagos Giant Tortoise ◊ *Chelonoidis nigra* (VU) 50+ (ssp. *porteri*) on Santa Cruz.

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; 50+ seen on Española.

San Cristóbal Lava Lizard ◊ *Tropidurus bivattatus* At least 20 were seen on San Cristóbal.

Land Iguana ◊ *Conolophus subcristatus* (VU) 15 on North Seymour.

Marine Iguana ◊ *Amblyrhynchus cristatus* Frequent 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* 4 were seen near Punta Espinoza on Fernandina.

NOTABLE VERTEBRATES

Crustaceans

Sally Lightfoot Crab ◊ *Grapsus grapsus* Ubiquitous on the coasts.

Hermit Crab *Calcinus explorator* The small hermit crab commonly encountered in tidal pools.

Lepidoptera

Galápagos Sulphur Butterfly *Phoebis sennae marcellina* A few on Isabela and Santa Cruz.

Monarch Butterfly *Danaus plexippus* A few Santa Cruz.

Queen Butterfly *Danaus gilippus* A few were seen on Santiago and Isabela.

Galápagos Blue Butterfly ◊ *Leptodes parrhasioides* A few were seen on Santa Cruz.

Large-tailed Skipper *Urbanus dorantes galapagensis* A few were seen on Isabela.

Odonata

Amazon Darner *Anax amazili* Two were seen at Puerto Villamil on Isabela.

Spot-winged Glider *Pantala hymenaea* Good numbers on Isabela, Santa Cruz and San Cristóbal.

Other notable insects

Large Painted Locust ◊ *Schistocerca melanocera* A very fancy locust, observed on many of the islands.

Yellow Paper Wasp *Polistes versicolor* Seen on a many occasions; very common on Santiago.

Galápagos Carpenter Bee ◊ *Xylocopa darwini* This large endemic bee was seen on a few 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). 2016. IOC World Bird List (v6.3). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org> (accessed 18 September 2016).

BIRDS

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 is lumped by some authors in Striated Heron *B. striatus*.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Some authors lump Eastern Cattle Egret *B. coromandus* in this species, using the name Cattle Egret for the enlarged species.

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) or Common Moorhen (in the Old World) being used for the enlarged species.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus*

This form is lumped by some authors in Black-winged Stilt *H. himantopus*.

(Hudsonian) Whimbrel *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus*

The IOC World List has a proposal to split off this form. The residual *N. phaeopus* would then be renamed Eurasian Whimbrel.

Western (Galapagos) Barn Owl *Tyto [alba] punctatissima*

The IOC include this form in Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba*. Various forms in the Barn Owl complex have been split off in recent years, by various authors, but a thorough review of the whole complex is surely necessary to identify the number of species involved in the original Barn Owl. The IOC currently recognise just two.

(Galápagos) Short-eared Owl *Asio [flammeus] galapagoensis*

The IOC include 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 forms. Further study may reveal that it actually consists of several species.

(Galápagos) Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus [rubinus] nanus*

The IOC include this form in (Common) Vermilion Flycatcher *P. rubinus*. The island form differs from the mainland form in both song and female plumage. The smaller and paler race *dubius* (San Cristóbal Vermilion Flycatcher) found on San Cristóbal, is occasionally treated as a species distinct from *nanus*, although this form is now extinct.

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*

Some authors lump American Yellow Warbler *S. aestiva* in Mangrove Warbler, 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.

MAMMALS

Galápagos Sea Lion *Zolophus wollebacki*

This form has been split from California Sea Lion *Z. californianus*

Short-beaked Common Dolphin *Delphinus delphis*

This species was formerly known as Common Dolphin but has been renamed following the splitting off of Long-beaked Common Dolphin *D. capensis*.

Common Bottle-nosed Dolphin *Tursiops truncatus*

This species was formerly known as Bottle-nosed Dolphin but has been renamed following the splitting off of Indo-Pacific Bottle-nosed Dolphin *T. aduncus*.



The mainland Ecuador extension to the Birdquest / Wild Images tour to Galápagos in 2016 focussed on birds, and a total of 277 species was recorded. Our visit to Refugio Paz de los Aves was a wonderful experience, with Giant Antpitta a memorable highlight (Andy Swash).

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

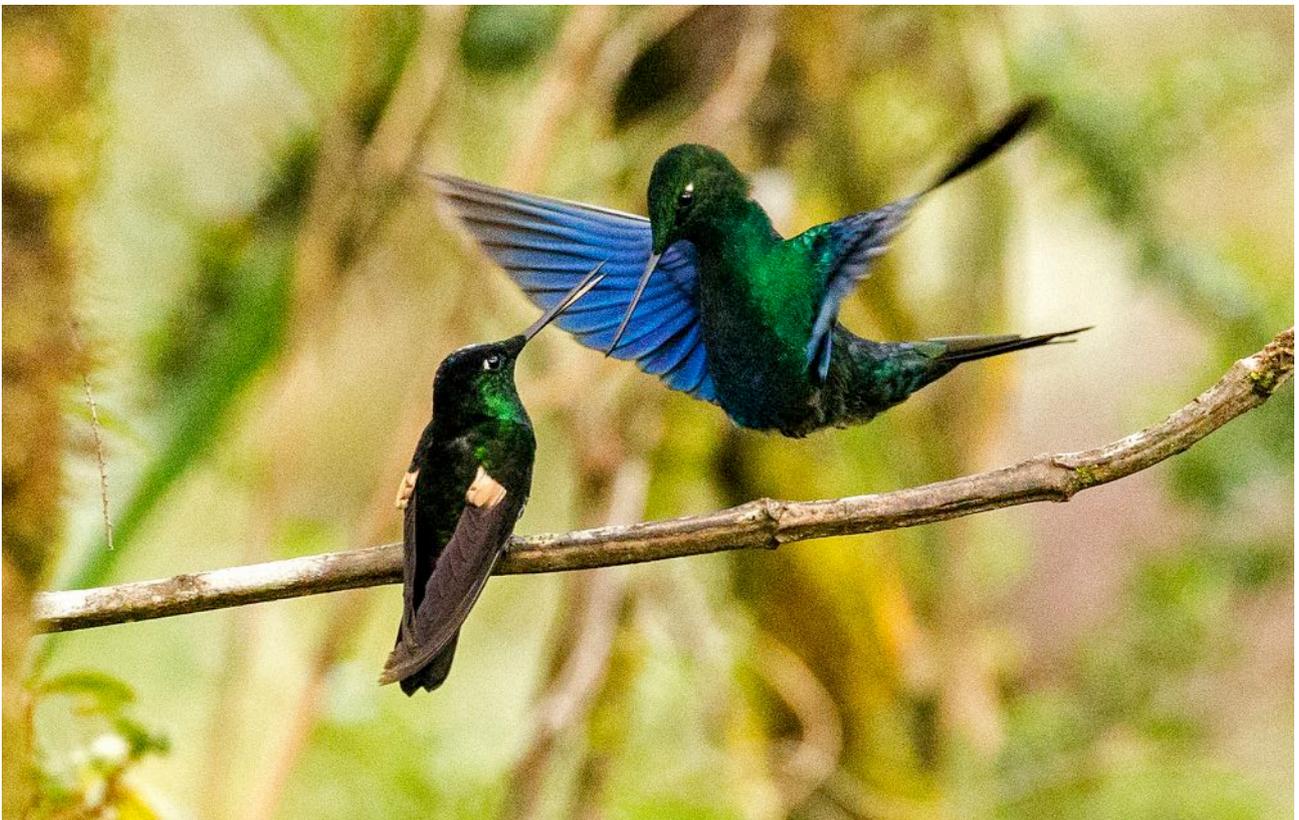
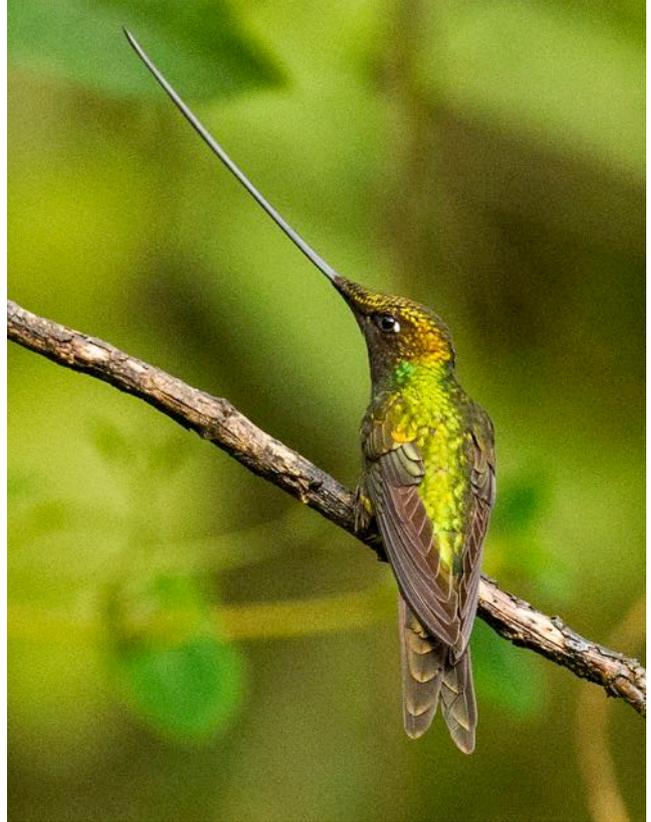
MAINLAND ECUADOR EXTENSION

31st MAY – 4th JUNE 2016

GUIDES: JUAN CARLOS CALVACHI AND ANDY SWASH

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 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 bus, driven by Edgar, 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 (3,400 m) were seen along the way, the highlights including Purple-backed and Rainbow-bearded Thornbills, Rufous Wren, Spectacled Whitestart, Yellow-breasted Brush Finch, Hooded, Black-chested and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers, Glossy and Masked Flowerpiercers, Bar-bellied Woodpecker and Andean Guan.

At the end of the trail the hummingbird feeders provided a wonderful spectacle, and the next couple of hours seemed to pass very quickly, with everyone engrossed in watching or photographing up to seven 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 and Sparkling Violetear. A few Masked Flowerpiercers also put in an appearance.



Four of the ten hummingbird species seen at Yanacocha: Purple-backed Thornbill (TOP LEFT: Alec & Catherine Gillespie), Sword-billed Hummingbird (TOP RIGHT: Boo Baker), and sparring Buff-winged Starfrontlet and Great Sapphirewing (BOTTOM: Boo Baker).

By the time we had finished our picnic lunch the mist had rolled in and it started to drizzle – so we left Yanacocha and spent the rest of the afternoon driving slowly down into the Tandayapa Valley and along the old Nono to Mindo 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 so feeders positioned strategically in a small garden. Over the next couple of hours we saw 14 species of hummingbirds, all bar one of which were different from the ten species we had seen at Yanacocha: White-whiskered and Tawny-bellied Hermits, White-necked Jacobin. Brown and Sparkling Violetears, Crowned Woodnymph, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Fawn-breasted and Green-crowned Brilliants, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Booted Racket-tail and Purple-throated Woodstar and a single male Western Emerald. There were also many colourful birds visiting the fruit feeders, including Orange-bellied and Thick-billed Euphonias, White-lined, Lemon-rumped and Blue-grey Tanagers and Chocó Brush Finch. 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 24 species of hummingbirds during the day!



Four of the 14 hummingbird species seen at Alambi Reserve: Andean Emerald (TOP LEFT: Boo Baker), Purple-bibbed Whitetip (TOP RIGHT: Boo Baker), Brown Violet-ear (BOTTOM LEFT: Alec & Catherine Gillespie) and Crowned Woodnymph (BOTTOM RIGHT: John Wilson).

After an early start the next morning, and following a packed breakfast, 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. The birding was fantastic and there was virtually no 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). The highlights included a good number of the Chocó specialties, including Orange-breasted Fruiteater, Chocó Toucan, Chocó Trogon, Esmeraldas Antbird, Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Moss-backed, Ochre-breasted, and Glistening-green Tanagers, Black Solitaire and Chocó Warbler, not to mention Velvet-purple Coronet, Empress Brilliant, Barred Puffbird, Golden-collared Honeycreeper and Rose-faced Parrot. Once the bird activity had slowed during the afternoon we made our way back to the lodge, arriving in time to enjoy the hummingbirds on the feeders and other birds in the grounds. Our meal that evening was interrupted when we were all invited into the kitchen to see a habituated Kinkajou that occasionally pays a visit in the hope of being fed a banana!



Two of the highlights from our walk along the Mashpi Road: Rose-faced Parrot (top) and Orange-breasted Fruiteater (bottom) (both: Alec & Catherine Gillespie).



Black-chinned Mountain Tanager (TOP: Alec & Catherine Gillespie) and Golden-collared Honeycreeper (BOTTOM: Boo Baker) were two of the highlights at the feeders we visited along the Mashpi Road.



Another highlight was this beautiful Empress Brilliant feeding on a Strelitzia (bird-of-paradise flower) (Boo Baker).

The next morning proved to be another of the many highlights of our time in the Mindo area. At dawn we met the legendary Angel Paz at his private refugio in the mountains above Mindo, and after a short walk were soon standing in a shelter overlooking an area of forest. We could hear the incredible pig-like squeals made by lekking Andean Cock-of-the-rocks and after waiting patiently for a few minutes a couple of birds showed in the open, their stunning glowing orange plumage 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. Angel then 'attracted' a small covey of Dark-backed Wood Quail to feed on bananas, and we were privileged to be able to watch five of these usually extremely shy birds at very close range feeding in the open – amazing! We then walked back to the coach and drove a short distance downhill. We had only disembarked for a few minutes when a Giant Antpitta hopped into view on a trail running from the road, shortly followed by a second bird (probably a well-grown juvenile) – unbelievable views of this near-mythical bird which was virtually unknown until Angel developed his now well-tryed technique of attracting the birds to a ready source of food, namely worms! With our heads swimming we headed off farther up the trail and after a short walk were soon standing in a huddle while Angel 'called in' a Rufous-breasted Antthrush – another species that is very shy and normally extremely difficult to see! But the show was not yet over... Having headed back to the road and walked down to a nearby river, Angel 'called in' a Yellow-breasted Antpitta, which fed briefly on a mossy branch close to the water's edge before disappearing back into the forest. As we walked back to the coach, two female or immature male Lyre-tailed Nightjars were found roosting below a cliff overhang and a Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant was seen feeding at the edge of the forest. We then headed off again, this time to Angel's family homestead and walked a short way along a narrow trail into the forest. Here we were rewarded with excellent views of Ochre-breasted Antpitta and an unexpected Olivaceous Piha. Suffice to say that it had been an incredible morning's birding, during which we had enjoyed fantastic views of so many species that are usually extremely hard to see!



One of the most memorable highlights of our visit to Refugio Paz was visiting an Andean Cock-of-the-rock lek – and what an amazing show they put on for us! (Andy Swash).



Dark-backed Wood Quail (TOP: Andy Swash) and Rufous-breasted Antthrush (BOTTOM: Boo Baker) were two of the many highlights of our morning with Angel Paz ...



... as were a roosting Lyre-tailed Nightjar (TOP: Alec & Catherine Gillespie),
and a wonderful Yellow-breasted Antpitta (BOTTOM: Andy Swash) ...



... before a rather unexpected Olivaceous Piha (top: Boo Baker) and an Ochre-breasted Antpitta (bottom: Alec & Catherine Gillespie) put in an appearance.

Our visit finished with an excellent traditional breakfast at Angel's family homestead, after which we spent quite some time watching the nearby fruit feeders, where Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Toucan Barbet, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Flame-faced, Golden-naped, Golden, Blue-grey and Lemon-rumped Tanagers were seen and photographed at close quarters. The nectar feeders were also very productive and we were rewarded with excellent views of 15 species of hummingbird, four of which were new for our list: Green Violetear, Speckled Hummingbird, Buff-tailed Coronet and Brown Inca. Later in the morning we drove back to the lodge, arriving in time for an excellent light lunch – a short walk along the entrance track producing Chocó Toucan and our first Lineated Foliage-gleaner, Strong-billed Woodcreeper and Dusky Bush Tanager.



This striking image shows two of the fifteen hummingbird species that were visiting the feeders at Refugio Paz: Green Violet-ear (LEFT) and Fawn-breasted Brilliant (RIGHT) (Michael Miles).



Flame-faced Tanagers (TOP: John Wilson) and Toucan Barbets (BOTTOM: Andy Swash) were seen at very close quarters at Refugio Paz.

In the afternoon we drove down into Mindo, where we found Slaty Spinetail, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Yellow-bellied Elaenia and Pacific Antwren in some secondary growth on the edge of town. On a tip-off, we made a detour down a side-road where we were extremely fortunate to see a Common Potoo with a youngster sitting on a fencepost at eye-level only a few metres away – an amazing sight, and the subject of hundreds, if not thousands, of photographs! The supporting cast of Red-faced Spinetail, Fawn-breasted Tanager and Yellow Tyrannulet should not go without mention, however. Our final stop of the day was at the River Nambillo, a short distance from Mindo town, where we saw a good number of new species for the tour including Pacific Hornero, Torrent Tyrannulet, White-capped Dipper, Masked Water Tyrant (for most), Giant Cowbird and Scrub Blackbird.



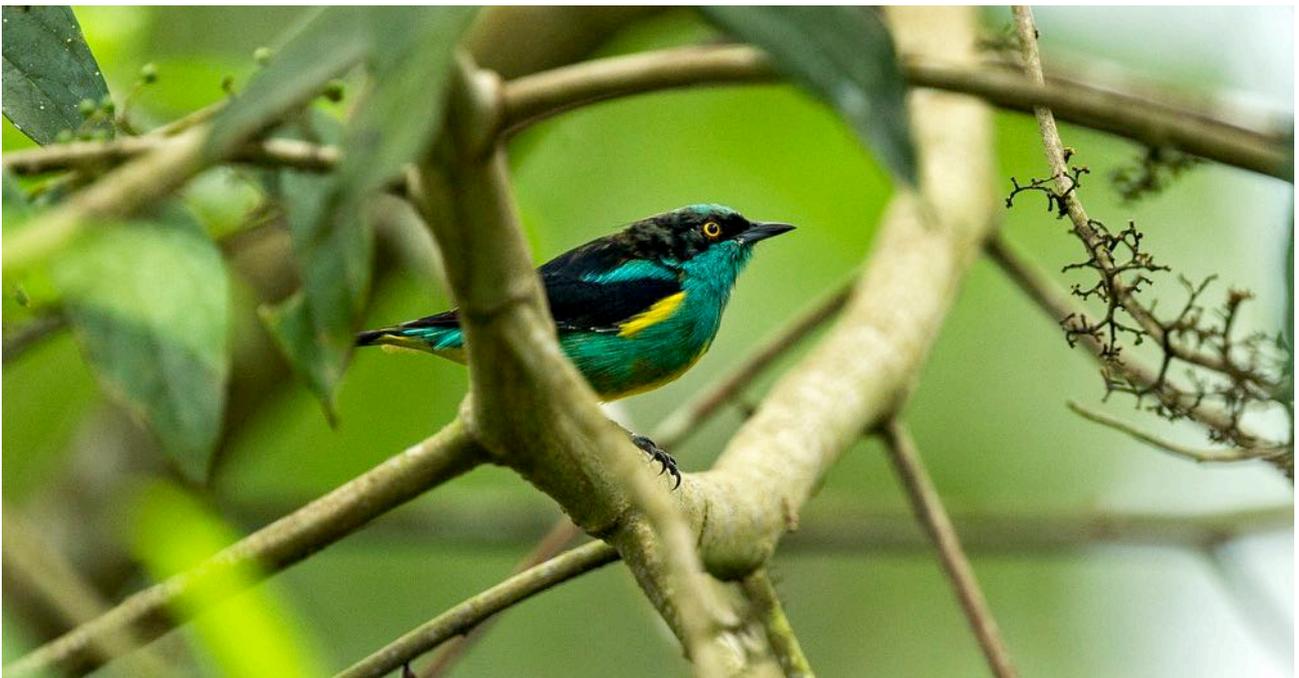
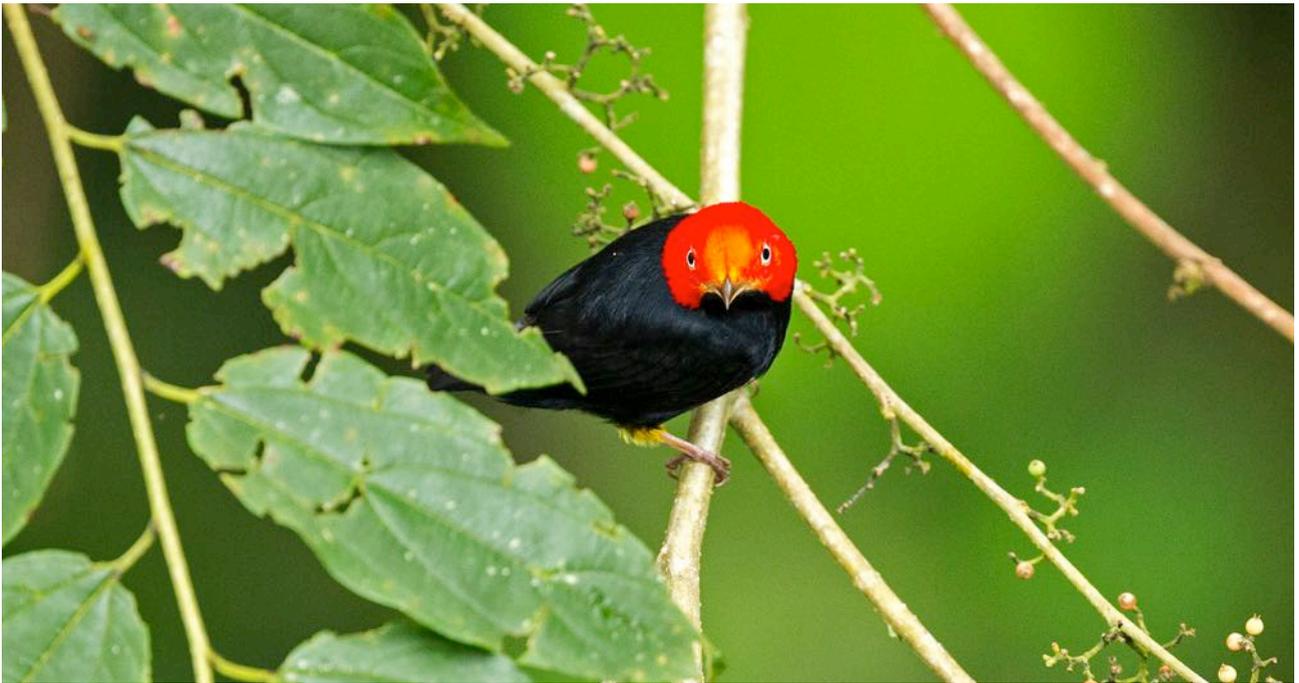
Certainly one of the most memorable sightings of the tour was this Common Potoo with its chick, sitting on a fencepost right next to the road (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

After another excellent dinner at the lodge we spent a short while 'owling' in the grounds – and true to form our luck held, with point-blank views of a wonderful Mottled Owl (probably the same bird we had flushed as we drove out of the lodge grounds that very morning) – the first and last bird of an unforgettable day!



The first and last bird of an amazing day in the Mindo area – this Mottled Owl was sitting on a low branch near the entrance of the lodge (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 an amazing amount of activity, with many species seen in the nearby treetops or flying over, including many 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 in the Americas, including over 50 endemic species). The birds seen included flocks of Bronze-winged Parrots and Maroon-tailed Parakeets, Black-cheeked, Cinnamon and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, White-collared, Grey-rumped and Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts, Hook-billed Kite, Orange-fronted Barbet, Dusky and Ruddy Pigeons, Spotted and Black-striped Woodcreepers, White-flanked and Dot-winged Antwrens, Chocó Tyrannulet and Slate-throated Gnatcatcher (two Chocó specialities), Olive-striped Flycatcher, Grey Elaenia, Masked Tityra, Purple-throated Fruitcrow, White-bearded and Red-capped Manakins, Cinnamon Becard, Lesser Greenlet, Green and Purple Honeycreepers, Scarlet-thighed and Yellow-tufted Dacnis (the latter now split from Black-faced Dacnis), Thick-billed Euphonia, White-shouldered, Tawny-crested, Blue-grey, Palm, Blue-necked and Lemon-rumped Tanagers, and Slate-colored Grosbeak.



*Two of the exciting birds seen from the canopy tower at Silanche Reserve, feeding in a nearby fruiting tree:
Red-capped Manakin (TOP) and Yellow-tufted Dacnis (BOTTOM) (both: Boo Baker).*

At around midday we left Silanche and drove back towards Mindo, stopping briefly to watch a Western Osprey (very unexpected at this location), before reaching the Mirador Rio Blanco, where we had an excellent lunch. Here, we admired the stunning American Swallow-tailed Kites gliding past close by and enjoyed watching and photographing the hummingbirds (mostly Green Thorntails), Bananaquits and Black-cheeked Woodpeckers (!) at the nectar feeders. The fruit-feeders were also very busy, attracting Rufous-throated, Silver-throated, Golden, White-lined, Blue-grey, Palm and Lemon-rumped Tanagers, Thick-billed and Orange-breasted Euphonias, Green Honeycreeper, Buff-throated Saltator, Pale-mandibled Aracari and Crimson-rumped Toucanet. Orange-billed Sparrow and Ecuadorian Thrush fed on the ground below the feeders and a Laughing Falcon was also seen here, albeit at some distance in the 'scope.

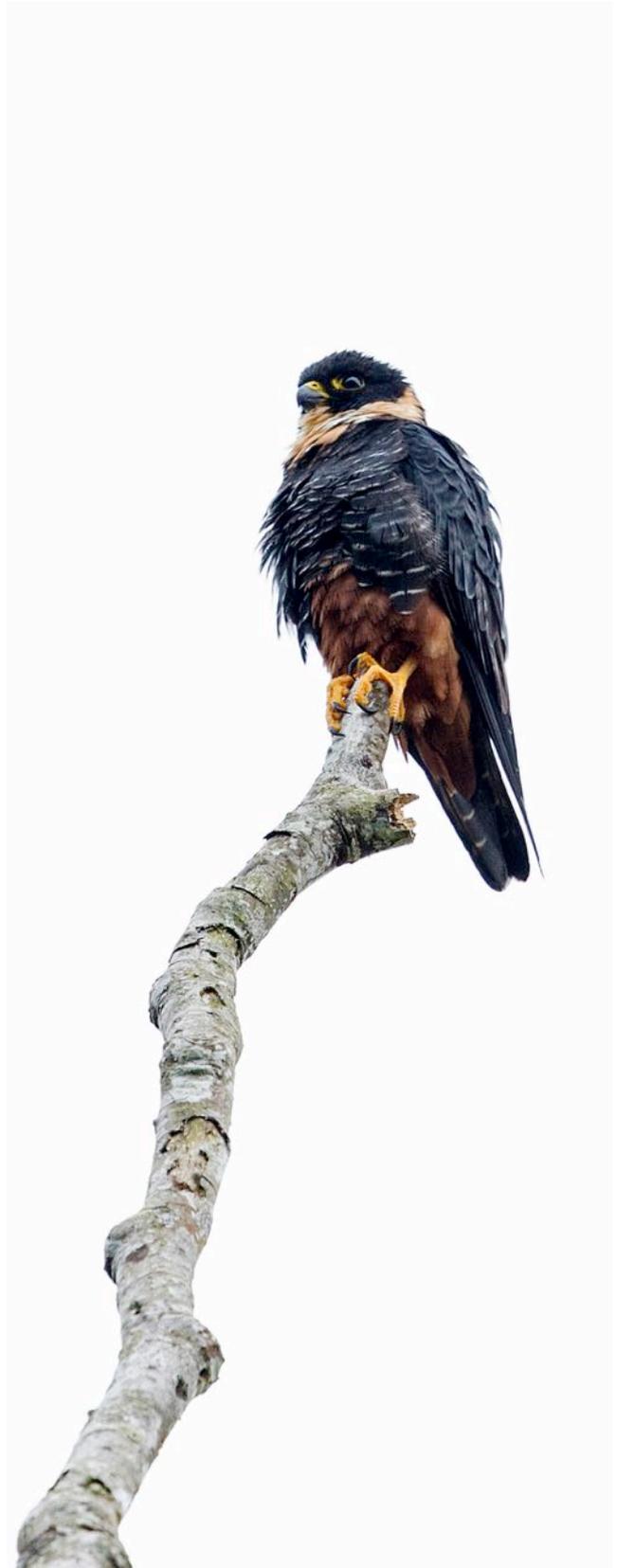


Pale-mandibled Aracaris were a delightful feature of the feeders at Mirador Rio Blanco (Andy Swash).



Green Thorntail (top) and Rufous-throated Tanager (bottom) (both: Alec & Catherine Gillespie) were two of the other highlights at Mirador Rio Blanco.

We left the mirador during the middle of the afternoon and headed back towards our lodge. At a hunch we decided to make another visit to the Mindo area, which certainly paid off with even more amazing views of the Common Potoos than on the previous occasion and, late in the afternoon, wonderful views of a stunning male Golden-headed Quetzal. Our journey back to the lodge was not without incident either, as a Bat Falcon was noticed sitting on a dead snag; it seemed to be oblivious to our presence and allowed a fairly close approach, much to the delight of the photographers among the group. After another excellent evening meal, some of the group decided to have another attempt at 'owling' in the grounds. Unfortunately, no birds were calling.



We had fantastic views of Golden-headed Quetzal (LEFT) and Bat Falcon (RIGHT) in the Mindo area (both: Andy Swash).

Most of the group were out again before breakfast the following morning – but although two Colombian Screech Owls were heard, they could not be enticed into view despite considerable effort. Soon after breakfast we drove to the Nono-Mindo road, where we walked slowly uphill, seeing a good number of new species in the process, perhaps most notable of which was a juvenile White-rumped Hawk. Other new birds seen here (and on the way back down later in the morning) included Collared Inca, Gorgeted Sunangel, Masked Trogon, Pearled Treerunner, Streaked Tuftedcheek and Striped Treehunter (both very briefly), Montane Woodcreeper, Spillman's Tapaculo (also very briefly), Streak-necked and Cinnamon Flycatchers, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Black-crested and Russet-crowned Warblers and Blue-capped and Grass-green Tanagers. Many Dusky Bush Tanagers were also seen. We eventually ended up at the Bellavista Lodge (at 2,400 metres), where, due to unexpected windy conditions, very few birds were moving. However we did see two Plate-billed Mountain Toucans, two Turquoise Jays, a White-throated Quail-Dove (for some) and two Metallic-green Tanagers. The nectar feeders were also remarkably quiet but we did see a few Buff-tailed Coronets, a Speckled Hummingbird, a Fawn-breasted Brilliant and a Green Violetear.



A pair of Masked Trogons was seen as we walked up the road towards Bellavista; this is the male (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).



Plate-billed Mountain Toucans feeding in the trees around Bellavista were a highlight of our visit (Alec & Catherine Gillespie).

We eventually had to tear ourselves away and return to our lodge for lunch. Mid-afternoon we loaded the coach 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 new birds of the tour – Variable Hawk, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Aplomado Falcon (most unexpectedly) and our 35th hummingbird, a Black-tailed Trainbearer (for a few – although another was later seen in Quito). The final evening of the tour was spent at a quiet hosteria in the suburbs of Quito, where the last few new birds were seen – the aforementioned trainbearer, Saffron Finch and Golden Grosbeak – and we said our farewells before going our separate ways the following morning.



An array of beautiful tanagers was seen during the extension to the Mindo area: Black-chinned Mountain Tanager, Flame-faced, Golden and Glistening-green Tanagers (LEFT TO RIGHT) being just four of the species attracted to one of the feeders (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) 1 heard at Silanche.

Andean Guan *Penelope montagnii* 3 at Yanacocha.

Sickle-winged Guan *Chamaepetes goudotii* 1 on the Mashpi Road; 1 at Bellavista.

Rufous-fronted Wood Quail ◊ *Odontophorus erythrops* 1 seen briefly at Silanche.

Dark-backed Wood Quail ◊ *Odontophorus melanonotus* 5 giving fantastic views at Refugio Paz.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* 30+ near Mindo. See note.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* (LO) 1 near Mindo.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* Small numbers seen each day. See note.

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* Small numbers seen each day; 100s at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Western Osprey *Pandion haliaetus* 1 en route near Silanche was unexpected.

Hook-billed Kite *Chondrohierax uncinatus* 2 circling over Silanche.

Swallow-tailed Kite (American S-t K) *Elanoides forficatus* Up to 10 seen each day.

Barred Hawk (Black-chested H) *Morphnarchus princeps* 1 seen circling in the distance from the Mashpi Road.

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris* Seen most days, maximum 4 Mashpi Road.

White-rumped Hawk *Parabuteo leucorrhous* An immature from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Variable Hawk (Gurney's H) *Geranoaetus polyosoma* 2 at Calacali. See note.

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (B-c Eagle, B-c E-B) *Geranoaetus melanoleucus* 1 at Calacali.

Sunbittern *Eurypyga helias* (LO) 1 briefly in flight near Mindo

White-throated Crake *Laterallus albigularis* (H) 1 calling in Mindo.

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon) *Columba livia* A few in towns and villages.

Band-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas fasciata* 20 between Yanacocha and Tandayapa; 20 Mashpi Road.

Plumbeous Pigeon *Patagioenas plumbea* 2 between Yanacocha and Tandayapa; 2 flying over near Mindo.

Ruddy Pigeon *Patagioenas subvinacea* 1 at Silanche.

Dusky Pigeon ◊ *Patagioenas goodsoni* 4 at Silanche.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* About 30 in Quito on 2 dates.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi* 2 between Yanacocha and Tandayapa; 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Pallid Dove ◊ *Leptotila pallida* (H) 1 heard at Silanche.

White-throated Quail-Dove ◊ *Zentrygon frenata* 1 seen briefly near the composting area at Bellavista.

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* About 50 in Quito; 20 at Calacali.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* About 20 seen en route to the Mashpi Road.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana* 4 Mashpi Road; 1 near Mindo; 1 at Silanche.

Colombian Screech Owl ◊ *Megascops colombianus* (NT) (H) 2 heard Septimo Paraiso, but unresponsive. See note.

Mottled Owl *Strix virgata* 1 seen at very close quarters at Septimo Paraiso

Cloud-forest Pygmy Owl ◊ *Glaucidium nubicola* (H) 1 heard Mashpi Road

Common Potoo (Grey P) *Nyctibius griseus* An adult with chick near Mindo was one of the tour highlights. See note.

Lyre-tailed Nightjar *Uropsalis lyra* 2 female/immatures seen at daytime roost at Refugio Paz.

Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutila* 1 at Refugio Paz.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris* 100+ Mashpi Rd; 50+ Refugio Paz; 10+ Silanche; 100+ Mirador Rio Blanco.

Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris* About 10 from the canopy tower at Silanche.

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis* 2 Mashpi Road; 6 from the canopy tower at Silanche.

White-whiskered Hermit ◊ *Phaethornis yaruqui* 1 at Alambi; 1 at Refugio Paz; 1 at Silanche.

Tawny-bellied Hermit ◊ *Phaethornis syrmatorphorus* 1 at Alambi; 1 Mashpi Road.

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga mellivora* 6 at Alambi; up to 6 Septimo Paraiso; 2 Mirador Rio Blanco.

Brown Violetear *Colibri delphinae* 6 at Alambi; 2 Septimo Paraiso; 1 Mashpi Road; 2 at Silanche, 1 at Refugio Paz.

Green Violetear *Colibri thalassinus* 2 at Refugio Paz; 1 at Bellavista. See note.

Sparkling Violetear *Colibri coruscans* 1 at Yanacocha; 1 at Alambi; 3 in Quito.

Green Thorntail *Discosura conversii* 4 Mashpi Road; about 10 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Western Emerald ◊ (West Andean E) *Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus* 1 male at Alambi; 1 female in Quito.

Crowned Woodnymph *Thalurania colombica* 6 at Alambi; 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco. See note.

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird *Amazilia tzacatl* Up to 30 at Alambi Reserve; 10 Septimo Paraiso and others elsewhere.

Andean Emerald ◊ *Amazilia franciae* About 20 at Alambi; up to 3 at Septimo Paraiso; 1 at Refugio Paz.

Purple-chested Hummingbird ◊ *Amazilia rosenbergi* 6 at Silanche.

Speckled Hummingbird *Adelomyia melanogenys* 1 at Refugio Paz; 1 at Bellavista.

Fawn-breasted Brilliant ◊ *Heliodoxa rubinoides* 2 at Alambi, 2 at Septimo Paraiso; 3 at Refugio Paz; 1 at Bellavista.

Green-crowned Brilliant *Heliodoxa jacula* 10 at Alambi; 1 at Refugio Paz; 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Empress Brilliant ◊ *Heliodoxa imperatrix* 3 Mashpi Road; 1 at Refugio Paz.

Buff-tailed Coronet ◊ *Boissonneaua flavescens* 4 at Refugio Paz; 10 at Bellavista.

Velvet-purple Coronet ◊ *Boissonneaua jardini* 3 Mashpi Road; 2 at Refugio Paz; 1 at Septimo Paraiso.

Mountain Velvetbreast *Lafresnaya lafresnayi* (LO) 1 female at Yanacocha.

Collared Inca *Coeligena torquata* 1 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Buff-winged Starfrontlet *Coeligena lutetiae* About 100 at Yanacocha.

Sword-billed Hummingbird *Ensifera ensifera* 1 male and 1 female at Yanacocha.

Great Sapphirewing *Pterophanes cyanopterus* 5 at Yanacocha.

Gorgeted Sunangel ◊ *Helianthus strophianus* 2 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Sapphire-vented Puffleg *Eriocnemis luciani* About 20 at Yanacocha.

Golden-breasted Puffleg ◊ *Eriocnemis mosquera* 2 at Yanacocha.

Purple-bibbed Whitetip ◊ *Urosticte benjamini* 3 at Septimo Paraiso; 1 Mashpi Road; 1 at Refugio Paz. See note.

Booted Racket-tail *Ocreatus underwoodii* ('white-booted') 10 Alambi; 3 Septimo Paraiso; 1 Mashpi Road; 6 Refugio Paz.

Black-tailed Trainbearer *Lesbia victoriae* 1 at Calacali; 1 in Quito.

Purple-backed Thornbill *Ramphomicron microrhynchum* 3 at Yanacocha.

Tyrian Metaltail *Metallura tyrianthina* About 10 at Yanacocha.

Rainbow-bearded Thornbill ◊ *Chalcostigma herrani* 10 at Yanacocha.

Violet-tailed Sylph ◊ *Aglaiocercus coelestis* 4 at Septimo Paraiso; 6 Mashpi Road; 2 at Refugio Paz.

Purple-throated Woodstar ◊ *Calliphlox mitchellii* Small numbers seen most days: maximum of 30 at Alambi.

Golden-headed Quetzal *Pharomachrus auriceps* Prolonged views of a male in Mindo.

Crested Quetzal *Pharomachrus antisianus* (H) 1 heard from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Chocó Trogon ◊ (White-eyed T, Blue-tailed T) *Trogon comptus* 1 seen and 1 heard Mashpi Road.

White-tailed Trogon (Western W-t T) *Trogon chionurus* 1 male at Silanche.

Masked Trogon *Trogon personatus* A male and female from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Rufous Motmot *Baryphthengus martii* 2 Mashpi Road. See note.

Broad-billed Motmot *Electron platyrhynchum* 1 Mashpi Road.

Barred Puffbird *Nystalus radiatus* 1 Mashpi Road.

Orange-fronted Barbet ◊ *Capito squamatus* 2 at Silanche.

Red-headed Barbet ◊ *Eubucco bourcierii* 3 Mashpi Road; 1 heard at Silanche; 1 at Septimo Paraiso.
 Toucan Barbet ◊ *Semnornis ramphastinus* (NT) 1 Mashpi Road; 4 at Refugio Paz; 6 Bellavista; 1 Septimo Paraiso.
 Crimson-rumped Toucanet ◊ *Aulacorhynchus haematopygus* 2 Mashpi Road; 3 Refugio Paz; 20 Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Pale-mandibled Aracari ◊ *Pteroglossus erythropygius* 6 Mashpi Road; 6 at Mirador Rio Blanco. See note.
 Plate-billed Mountain Toucan ◊ *Andigena laminirostris* 1 heard at Yanacochoa; 2 at Bellavista.
 Chocó Toucan ◊ *Ramphastos brevis* 5 Mashpi Road; 2 at Septimo Paraiso; 4 at Silanche; 1 at Mindo.
 Yellow-throated Toucan *Ramphastos ambiguus* Heard Mashpi Road and Septimo Paraiso; 1 seen at Silanche.
 Black-cheeked Woodpecker *Melanerpes pucherani* Heard Mashpi Road; 2 seen Silanche; 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Bar-bellied Woodpecker ◊ *Veniliornis nigriceps* 2 at Yanacochoa.
 Red-rumped Woodpecker *Veniliornis kirkii* 1 female Mashpi Road.
 Golden-olive Woodpecker *Colaptes rubiginosus* 2 at Silanche.
 Cinnamon Woodpecker *Celeus loricatus* 1 heard Mashpi Road; 2 seen at Silanche.
 Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus* 1 female at Silanche.
 Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans* 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* 1 at Refugio Paz; 2 at Calacali.
 Bat Falcon *Falco ruficularis* 1 near Mindo.
 Aplomado Falcon *Falco femoralis* 1 perched in the distance at Calacali was most unexpected.
 Blue-fronted Parrotlet *Touit dilectissimus* (H) Heard from the Mashpi Road.
 Rose-faced Parrot ◊ *Pyrilia pulchra* 4 Mashpi Road.
 Red-billed Parrot *Pionus sordidus* Up to 10 flying over near Mindo.
 Bronze-winged Parrot *Pionus chalcopterus* 12 flying over Mashpi Road; 4 flying over near Mindo; 12 at Silanche.
 Maroon-tailed Parakeet ◊ *Pyrrhura melanura* 12 distant Mashpi Road; 8 feeding very close at Silanche. See note.
 Pacific Hornero ◊ *Furnarius cinnamomeus* 2 in Mindo. See note.
 Rufous Spinetail *Synallaxis unirufa* (H) Heard at Bellavista.
 Azara's Spinetail *Synallaxis azarae* (H) Heard at Bellavista. See note.
 Slaty Spinetail *Synallaxis brachyura* 3 in Mindo.
 White-browed Spinetail *Hellmayrea gularis* (H) 1 heard at Yanacochoa.
 Red-faced Spinetail *Cranioleuca erythrops* 2 in Mindo.
 Spotted Barbtail *Premnoplex brunnescens* 1 Mashpi Road.
 Pearled Treerunner *Margarornis squamiger* 1 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
 Streaked Tuftedcheek *Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii* 1 very briefly from the old Nono-Mindo Road near Bellavista.
 Lineated Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla subalaris* 1 at Septimo Paraiso; 3 at Bellavista.
 Western Woodhaunter (W Striped W) *Hylocisthes virgatus* (H) 1 heard at Silanche. See note.
 Streak-capped Treehunter ◊ *Thripadectes virgaticeps* 1 Mashpi Road.
 Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus* 2 at a nest hole at Silanche.
 Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa* (NL) 1 at Silanche.
 Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spirurus* 1 at Silanche.
 Black-striped Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus* 1 Mashpi Road; 2 at Silanche; 1 at Septimo Paraiso.
 Spotted Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus erythropygius* 1 Mashpi Road; 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Montane Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger* 1 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
 Great Antshrike *Taraba major* (H) 1 heard near Mindo.
 Black-crowned Antshrike (Western Slaty A) *Thamnophilus atrinucha* 1 female at Silanche.
 Russet Antshrike *Thamnistes anabatinus* 3 Mashpi Road.
 Checker-throated Antwren *Epinecrophylla fulviventris* 1 male Mashpi Road.
 Pacific Antwren *Myrmotherula pacifica* A male and a female in Mindo.
 White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherulxa axillaris* (NL) A male at Silanche.
 Dot-winged Antwren *Microrhopias quixensis* 2 at Silanche.
 Streak-headed Antbird ◊ *Drymophila striaticeps* (H) 1 heard from the old Nono-Mindo Road. See note.
 Rufous-rumped Antwren *Terenura callinota* 2, visiting nest, Mashpi Road.
 Chestnut-backed Antbird *Myrmeciza exsul* 1 seen and 3 heard at Silanche.
 Esmeraldas Antbird ◊ *Myrmeciza nigricauda* 1 male Mashpi Road.
 Rufous-breasted Antthrush ◊ *Formicarius rufipectus* Very good views of one coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
 Giant Antpitta ◊ *Grallaria gigantea* (VU) Superb views of two birds coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
 Yellow-breasted Antpitta ◊ *Grallaria flavotincta* Very good views of a bird coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
 Rufous Antpitta *Grallaria rufula* (H) (LO) 1 heard at Yanacochoa.
 Tawny Antpitta ◊ *Grallaria quitensis* (H) 2 heard at Yanacochoa.
 Ochre-breasted Antpitta *Grallaricula flavirostris* (NT) 1 seen at close range coming to worms at Refugio Paz.
 Ocellated Tapaculo *Acropternis orthonyx* (H) (LO) 1 heard distantly at Yanacochoa.
 Nariño Tapaculo ◊ *Scytalopus vicinior* (H) Heard from Mashpi Road and at Refugio Paz. See note.
 Spillmann's Tapaculo ◊ *Scytalopus spillmanni* 1 seen briefly from the old Nono-Mindo Road near Bellavista. See note.

Blackish Tapaculo *Scytalopus latrans* 1 seen briefly and 2 heard at Yanacocha. See note.
 Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus* (H) Heard at Silanche.
 Grey Elaenia *Myiopagis caniceps* 1 female at Silanche.
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster* 2 in Mindo
 Brown-capped Tyrannulet *Ornithion brunneicapillus* 1 at Silanche.
 White-throated Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus leucophrys* 1 at Yanacocha.
 White-tailed Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus poecilocercus* 1 Refugio Paz; 1 from the old Nono-Mindo Road near Bellavista.
 Torrent Tyrannulet *Serpophaga cinerea* 1 on the River Nambillo near Mindo.
 Yellow Tyrannulet *Capsiempis flaveola* 1 in Mindo.
 Chocó Tyrannulet *Zimmerius albigularis* 5 at Silanche; 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco. See note.
 Streak-necked Flycatcher *Mionectes striaticollis* 1 from the Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
 Olive-striped Flycatcher *Mionectes olivaceus* 1 at Silanche.
 Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleaginous* 1 at Silanche.
 Slaty-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon superciliaris* 2 at Silanche.
 Flavescent Flycatcher *Myiophobus flavicans* (H) Heard at Refugio Paz.
 Bran-colored Flycatcher *Myiophobus fasciatus* 1 in Mindo.
 Ornate Flycatcher *Myiotriccus ornatus* 10 along the Mashpi Road; 1 at Septimo Paraiso.
 Black-capped Pygmy Tyrant *Myiornis atricapillus* 1 at Silanche.
 Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant *Lophotriccus pileatus* (H) 2 heard along the Mashpi Road and 1 at Silanche.
 Black-headed Tody-flycatcher *Todirostrum nigriceps* (H) 1 heard along the Mashpi Road.
 Yellow-olive Flatbill *Tolmomyias sulphurescens* 1 at Silanche.
 Yellow-margined Flatbill *Tolmomyias flavotectus* (LO) 1 at Silanche.
 Cinnamon Flycatcher *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea* 2 from the Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
 Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* 1 Alambi; 1 Refugio Paz; 1 Mindo; 1 on the River Nambillo near Mindo. See note.
 Smoke-colored Pewee *Contopus fumigatus* 1 near Alambi; 1 Mashpi Road.
 Smoky Bush Tyrant *Myiotheretes fumigatus* 1 at Yanacocha.
 Masked Water Tyrant *Fluvicola nengeta* 1 near Alambi; 1 close to the River Nambillo near Mindo.
 Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant *Silvicultrix diadema* 1 from the Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
 Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant *Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris* 1 at Refugio Paz.
 Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis* 2 Mashpi Road; 2 at Silanche.
 Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis* 6 Mashpi Road; 2 Refugio Paz; 6 in Mindo; 4 at Silanche.
 Golden-crowned Flycatcher *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus* 1 near Alambi; 1 at Refugio Paz.
 Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* Commonly seen in open areas at lower elevations.
 Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* (NL) 1 at Septimo Paraiso.
 Barred Fruiteater *Pipreola arcuata* (H) 1 heard at Yanacocha.
 Orange-breasted Fruiteater *Pipreola jucunda* A male and a female Mashpi Road.
 Andean Cock-of-the-rock *Rupicola peruviana* 8+ males at lek at Refugio Paz; 1 female River Nambillo near Mindo.
 Olivaceous Piha *Snowornis cryptolophus* Very close views of one at Refugio Paz.
 Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata* 1 heard from the Mashpi Road; 1 plus others heard at Silanche.
 Golden-winged Manakin *Masius chrysopterus* 1 Mashpi Road.
 White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus* 2 at Silanche. See note.
 Red-capped Manakin *Ceratopipra mentalis* 3 at Silanche.
 Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata* A male at Silanche.
 Barred Becard *Pachyramphus versicolor* 1 Mashpi Road.
 Cinnamon Becard *Pachyramphus cinnamomeus* 1 Mashpi Road; 1 at Silanche; 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
 Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* 2 Mashpi Road.
 Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo *Vireolanius leucotis* 2 Mashpi Road.
 Brown-capped Vireo *Vireo leucophrys* 1 Mashpi Road; 1 Refugio Paz; 1 Mindo.
 Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* 6 at Silanche. See note.
 Lesser Greenlet *Hylophilus decurtatus* 2 at Silanche.
 Turquoise Jay *Cyanolyca turcosa* 1 Yanacocha; 2 from the old Nono-Mindo Road near Bellavista.
 Blue-and-white Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca* About 10 at Refugio Paz; 6 Bellavista; 4 Quito.
 Brown-bellied Swallow *Notiochelidon murina* About 15 at Yanacocha.
 White-thighed Swallow *Neochelidon tibialis* About 10 at Silanche
 Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx reuficollis* 10 Mashpi Road; 10 at Silanche.
 Rufous Wren *Cinnycerthia unirufa* 3 at Yanacocha.
 Bay Wren *Thryothorus nigricapillus* 4 Mashpi Road; 4 at Silanche.
 House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* 2 in Mindo; 1 or 2 seen or heard every day. 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.
 Tawny-faced Gnatwren *Microbates cinereiventris* 2 at Silanche.

Slate-throated Gnatcatcher *Polioptila schistaceigula* 1 at Silanche.

Andean Solitaire *Myadestes ralloides* (H) 2 heard from the Mashpi Road.

Black Solitaire ◊ *Entomodestes coracinus* 2 Mashpi Road.

Great Thrush *Turdus fuscater* Common at high altitudes, with about 50 seen on journey to Yanacocha.

Ecuadorian Thrush ◊ *Turdus maculirostris* 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco; 1 at Septimo Paraiso. See note.

White-capped Dipper *Cinclus leucocephalus* 1 on the River Nambillo near Mindo.

Hooded Siskin *Spinus magellanicus* 2 in Quito.

Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia laniirostris* 2 at Alambi; 1 at Septimo Paraiso; 1 in Mindo; 2 at Silanche.

Golden-rumped Euphonia *Euphonia cyanocephala* 2 in Mindo. See note.

Orange-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia xanthogaster* Seen daily in small numbers: maximum 6 at Refugio Paz.

Tropical Parula *Setophaga pitaiyumi* 1 or 2 recorded most days.

Chocó Warbler ◊ *Myiothlypis chlorophrys* 5 Mashpi Road. See note.

Russet-crowned Warbler *Myiothlypis coronatus* 1 along the old Nono-Mindo Road; 1 at Bellavista.

Three-striped Warbler *Basileuterus tristriatus* 6 Mashpi Road.

Slate-throated Whitestart (S-t Redstart) *Myioborus miniatus* 1 or 2 recorded most days.

Spectacled Whitestart (S Redstart) *Myioborus melanocephalus* 2 at Yanacocha; 1 at Bellavista.

Scarlet-rumped Cacique *Cacicus microrhynchus* 4 Mashpi Road; 4 at Silanche. See note.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus* 2 in Mindo; 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* 1 en route to the Mashpi Road; 6 in Mindo.

Scrub Blackbird *Dives warszewiczi* 4 near the River Nambillo near Mindo.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola* 1 Mashpi Road; 1 at Refugio Paz; 4 in Mindo; about 20 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis* Common at high altitudes and recorded every day.

Orange-billed Sparrow *Arremon aurantirostris* 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Chocó Brush Finch (Dusky B F) ◊ *Atlapetes crassus* 1 at Alambi; 1 at Septimo Paraiso; 1 at Bellavista. See note.

Yellow-breasted Brush Finch ++ (Northsepti
ern R-n B F) *Atlapetes latinuchus* 8 at Yanacocha. See note.

Dusky Bush Tanager ◊ (D-bellied B T) *Chlorospingus semifuscus* 1 at Septimo Paraiso; 40 at Bellavista.

Yellow-throated Bush Tanager *Chlorospingus flavigularis* 6 Mashpi Road; 1 at Septimo Paraiso.

White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus* 2 Mashpi Road; 2 at Silanche.

Tawny-crested Tanager *Tachyphonus delatrii* 6 at Silanche.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus* 2 at Alambi; 1 in Mindo; 1 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Lemon-rumped Tanager (Yellow-r T) *Ramphocelus icteronotus* Common, seen daily: maximum of 20. See note.

Blue-grey Tanager *Thraupis episcopus* Common, recorded daily, with a maximum of 30 at Silanche.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum* 20 at Silanche; 6 at Mirador Rio Blanco; 2 in Mindo.

Blue-capped Tanager *Thraupis cyanocephala* 1 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Moss-backed Tanager ◊ *Bangsia edwardsi* 5 Mashpi Road.

Hooded Mountain Tanager *Buthraupis montana* 3 at Yanacocha; 4 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Black-chested Mountain Tanager *Buthraupis eximia* 1 at Yanacocha.

Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus igniventris* 5 at Yanacocha.

Blue-winged Mountain Tanager *Anisognathus somptuosus* 1 Mashpi Road; 6 at Refugio Paz; 10 near Bellavista.

Black-chinned Mountain Tanager ◊ *Anisognathus notabilis* 6 Mashpi Road.

Grass-green Tanager *Chlorornis riefferii* 6 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Fawn-breasted Tanager *Pipraeidea melanonota* 1 near Mindo; 1 in Quito (unexpectedly).

Glistening-green Tanager ◊ *Chlorochrysa phoenicotis* 4 Mashpi Road.

Grey-and-gold Tanager *Tangara palmeri* 4 Mashpi Road; 2 at Silanche.

Golden Tanager *Tangara arthus* Recorded daily: maximum of 30 Mashpi Road.

Silver-throated Tanager *Tangara icterocephala* 4 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Flame-faced Tanager *Tangara parzudakii* 10 Mashpi Road; 2 at Refugio Paz; 1 near Bellavista.

Rufous-throated Tanager ◊ *Tangara rufigula* 6 Mashpi Road; 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola* 1 Mashpi Road; 2 in Mindo; 2 at Silanche.

Golden-naped Tanager *Tangara ruficervix* 4 Mashpi Road; 2 at Refugio Paz; 1 near Bellavista; 1 at Septimo Paraiso.

Blue-necked Tanager *Tangara cyanicollis* Singles at Mashpi Road; Silanche and Septimo Paraiso.

Beryl-spangled Tanager *Tangara nigroviridis* 2 Septimo Paraiso; 4 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Blue-and-black Tanager *Tangara vassorii* 6 at Yanacocha; 6 from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.

Yellow-tufted Dacnis ◊ *Dacnis egregia* 4 at Silanche. See note.

Scarlet-thighed Dacnis *Dacnis venusta* 2 females at Silanche.

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana* 3 at Silanche.

Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus* A male at Silanche.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza* 10 at Silanche; 2 at Mirador Rio Blanco.

Scarlet-browed Tanager *Heterospingus xanthopygius* 3 at Silanche.

Golden-collared Honeycreeper *Iridophanes pulcherrimus* 4 Mashpi Road
Guira Tanager *Hemithraupis guira* A female at Silanche.
Glossy Flowerpiercer *Diglossa lafresnayii* About 20 at Yanacochoa.
White-sided Flowerpiercer *Diglossa albilatera* (H) 1 heard from the old Nono-Mindo Road below Bellavista.
Indigo Flowerpiercer ◊ *Diglossa indigotica* (H) 1 heard from the Mashpi Road.
Masked Flowerpiercer *Diglossopsis cyanea* 40 at Yanacochoa; 2 at Bellavista.
Saffron Finch *Sicalis flaveola* 2 in Quito.
Variable Seedeater *Sporophila corvina* 1 from the Mashpi Road; 2 along the old Nono-Mindo Road. See note.
Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis* 2 Mashpi Road.
White-winged Tanager *Piranga leucoptera* 1 male Mashpi Road.
Ochre-breasted Tanager ◊ *Chlorothraupis stolzmanni* 4 Mashpi Road.
Golden Grosbeak ++ (Golden-bellied G, Southern Yellow G) *Pheucticus chrysogaster* 2 in Quito. See note.
Slate-colored Grosbeak *Saltator grossus* 1 at Silanche.
Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus* 2 Mashpi Road; 2 at Silanche; 4 at Mirador Rio Blanco.
Black-winged Saltator ◊ *Saltator atripennis* 4 Mashpi Road.

MAMMALS

Kinkajou *Potos flavus* 1 at Septimo Paraiso.
Red-tailed Squirrel (Tropical Red S) *Sciurus granatensis* A few, at various locations.

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). 2016. IOC World Bird List (v6.3). Available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org> (accessed 18 September 2016).

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.

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 *Urosticte benjamini* and **Rufous-vented Whitetip** *Urosticte 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 erythrogygius*

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

Maroon-tailed Parakeet *Pyrrhura melanura*

The subspecies *pacifica*, inhabiting the western lowlands and foothills, may represent a distinct species, the Chocó Parakeet.

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*.

Western Woodhaunter (W Striped W) *Hyloctistes virgatus*

This species was formerly lumped in Eastern Woodhaunter *H. subulatus*, with the name Striped Woodhaunter (or Striped Foliage-gleaner) being used for the enlarged species.

Streak-headed Antbird *Drymophila lacrymiger*

The former Long-tailed Antbird *D. caudata* has recently been split into four species, namely East Andean Antbird *D. caudata* (East Colombia, on the western slope of the Eastern Andes and the Upper Magdalena Valley); Klage's Antbird *D. klagesi* (Venezuela and Northeast Colombia); Santa Marta Antbird *D. hellmayri* (Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta) and Streak-headed Antbird *D. striaticeps* (West and Central Colombia, Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia along the main Andean cordillera).

Nariño Tapaculo *Scytalopus viciniior*

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 Unicolored 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.

Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus*

Races breeding in South America have sometimes been split off as a separate species under the name Chivi Vireo *V. chivi*.

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 Colombia 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. chrysopleplus*, with the name Yellow Grosbeak being used for the enlarged species.