

ENDEMIC BONANZA TOUR

TRIP - REPORT 2015

01/18/15- 02/09/15

Leader and Guide: Juan Carlos Luna

Another very satisfying Colombian Endemics Trip with 55 endemics seen over 22 days.

FIRST SIGHTINGS FOR THE TRIP are highlighted in HIGHER CASE

ENDEMICs are highlighted in **BOLD**

Sites visited include:

Eastern Cordillera and Magdalena Valley -

The Marshes of Bogotá,

Parque Nacional Chingaza,

Dry forests of the Magdalena Valley,

Area around Ibagué.

RNA El Paujíl, Tropical Magdalena Valley,

RNA Reinita Cielo Azul, Subtropical Magdalena Valley

Antioquia, Central and Western Cordilleras -

RNA Arrierito Antioqueño, northern Central Cordillera,

RNA Las Tangaras, El Carmen de Atrato, Chocó,

RNA La M,

RNA Colibrí del Sol,

RNA Loro Orejamarillo, Jardín

Northern Colombia –

Minca,

RNA El Dorado, Sierra Nevad de Santa Marta,

Santuario de Fauna y Flora Los Flamencos, Guajira Peninsula.



White tailed starfrontlet.

We began our trip in Bogotá, which is a good base for visiting both the threatened and declining upland marshes that surround the city and Chingaza National Park in the high Andes. Leaving Bogotá we made some productive stops in dry tropical and subtropical forest of the Magdalena River Valley, near Ibagué, before continuing to the steamy RNA El Paujil. After a couple of days there, we moved on to the higher and cooler RNA Reinita Cielo Azul.

The next part of our itinerary brought us to the northern tip of the Central Cordillera of the Andes, the RNA Arrierito Antioqueño, Department of Antioquia. From there we took a 9-hour drive which took us through the city of Medellín, and we arrived at Carmen de Atrato in the Pacific department of Chocó to visit RNA Las Tángaras. After 2 days of birding in the area we continued to RNA Colibrí del Sol, stopping along the way at La Eme. RNA Colibrí de Sol was one of the highest localities on our itinerary – excellent for high Andean specialties. To arrive more comfortably at the lodge, nestled between high peaks, we rode on horseback. After 2 nights in this memorable place, we made back for the Cauca valley and up to the coffee-growing town of Jardín, our final stop in the Andes. Jardín is one of the most charming and magical towns in the Andes and the shaded plaza with its friendly locals,

multicolored houses and the ever-present smell of coffee make a visit singularly pleasant. With Jardín as a base, we visited RNA Loro Orejiamarillo.

The final leg of our trip saw us on a short flight to Santa Marta. Situated on the Caribbean, Santa Marta is the oldest city, and surely the prettiest bay, on the American continent. We enjoyed a delicious meal of local seafood before catching some more birds at, of all places, a nearby coal port. In the evening we started to make our way to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. After 10 miles we stopped in Minca, a small and picturesque village on the way to the outlying ridge of San Lorenzo. Minca is surprisingly cosmopolitan, with tourists from every continent. We spent a night at the old Hotel Minca. We birded around Minca the following morning before continuing toward San Lorenzo Ridge at midday. There, we stayed for 2 days at ProAves' RNA El Dorado. We had a successful stay at this incredible place and got most of the endemic specialties. To finalize our trip we returned to Santa Marta then on to the dry Guajira Peninsula. We spent our last morning on the Caribbean, birding the beach and adjacent thorn scrub at Los Flamencos Park.

Day 1

19 January, 2015

We first met up with this group of tourists from Canada and USA at Hotel Chico Imperial in the north of Bogotá. We quickly addressed a missing-passport incident, went over our itinerary and got some supper in us to get a little rest before an early start the following day.

Early on the 18th of January, our intrepid visitors began their adventure - a quick coffee and everyone aboard the vehicle and we were off. Our first stop was the rather un-tropical wetland park of La Florida, 35 minutes drive from the hotel on the edge of Bogotá. It was still dark when we got there.

As day began to break we could make out Ruddy duck, masked duck and Blue winged teal, on the pond. As our eyes adjusted and light improved we discovered Pied billed grebe, then spot flanked gallinule, common gallinule and American coot.

Further along, at one of the observation hides, the endemic and range-restricted **BOGOTA RAIL** delighted the group with excellent views. Usually a frustratingly hard bird to observe well, this time it came right out into the open, posing, though typically nervous, as are all the rails. And almost before we could take the sight in, subtropical doradito, appeared, again posing just a few feet away from us.

The next bird to show itself was the endemic **APOLINAR'S WREN**, surprisingly just an individual rather than the more usual family group.

At this same site we got bare faced ibis, brown bellied swallow, yellow hooded blackbird, band tailed seedeater, cattle egret, , green violetear, rufous collared sparrow, white tailed kite, mountain elaenia, yellow back oriole, osprey, black vulture, southern lapwing, greater yellowlegs, spotted sanpiper, white bellied woodstar, white throated tyrannulet, white sided flowerpiercer and the abundant GREAT THRUSH.

After getting good views of these specialties we moved a few hundred yards to an area with some taller trees to (hopefully) get a couple of birds we still needed. Judy found endemic **SILVERY-THROATED SPINETAIL**. A few minutes later we were getting ready to go when 4 **RUFOUS-BROWED CONEBILL** appeared about 6 feet away at eye-level in the lower branches of the tree next to us. We got good photographs.

We had our breakfast in the field and started the drive toward Ibagué, stopping at Fusagasugá for lunch. It is a 3-hour drive to Payandé, Tolima, dry tropical forest in the Magdalena Valley. A group of racket-making Scarlet fronted parakeet, caught our attention just before we arrived. 5 minutes after getting out of the vehicle one of our clients found **VELVET-FRONTED EUPHONIA**. Then Janet spotted an inconspicuously-perched PEARL KITE in her scope.

And then more eagle-eyed spotting from Janet gave us endemic **COLOMBIAN CHACHALACA**. Continuing along the dusty dirt-road we caught up with road sided hawk, yellow headed caracara, ruddy ground dove, white tipped dove, spectacled parrotlet, orange chinned parakeet , squirrel cuckoo smooth billed ani, white collared swift, white vented plumeleater, rufous tailed jacamar, red crowned woodpecker, straight billed woodcreeper, olivaceous piculet and black crowned antshrike. With lots of birds now, evening was falling, when I heard a familiar song, that of the White bellied antbird. It came into the open and gave good views. We also got some flycatchers on our list – yellow bellied elaenia, mouse colored tyrannulet, yellow crowned tyrannulet, pale eyed pygmy tyrant, slate headed tody flycatcher, common tody flycatcher, great kiskadee tropical kingbird and fork tailed flycatcher. Further down the track a familiar call betrayed the presence of **APICAL FLYCATCHER**. We also located rufous browed pepershrike, by its distinctive voice. Other birds seen were gray breasted martin, house wren, black bellied wren, tropical gnatcatcher, black billed thrush, gray headed tanager, scrub tanager, bay headed tanager, crimson backed tanager, blue gray tanager, bananaquit, white shouldered tanager, streaked saltator, saffron finch, black striped sparrow, summer tanager, rose breasted grosbeak, tennessee warbler blackburnian warbler, rufous capped warbler, thick billed euphonia, . With a total of 76 species, it wasn't a bad first day. We had 6 endemics and one near-endemic.

We spent the night at the Hotel Ambala in the city of Ibagué, Colombia's music capital.

Day 2

20 January, 2015

We left the hotel at 5:15 and got coffee at a little cafeteria in the town center. Just a short drive and above the city is the reserve of Clarita Botero. What a great view over the city of Ibagué!

The day's first bird was yellow faced grassquit, followed by Saffron Finch and Rufous-collared Sparrow. Then TED discovered one of the mornings target birds, a family group of **YELLOW-HEADED BRUSH FINCH**. We got decent views of that. We also saw golden tanager, saffron crowned tanager, blue necked tanager, black winged saltator, black capped tanager, swainson's thrush, Black billed thrush, Andean solitaire, whiskered wren, gray breasted wood wren, barred becard, brown capped vireo, rufous naped greenlet, blue and white swallow, slaty capped flycatcher, Acadian flycatcher, vermilion flycatcher, tropical pewee, and, best of all, the very elusive endemic **STILES'S TAPACULO**. Later in the morning we had plain antvireo, chestnut crowned antpitta that was calling nearby, montane foliage gleaner, bar crested antshrike, uniform antshrike, red rumped woodpecker, emerald toucanet highland motmot, rufous tailed hummingbird, crowned woodnymph and green hermit. We heard a pair of **TOLIMA DOVE** nearby and spent a few minutes waiting for them but with no luck. It is always a tricky bird. Coming off that slight disappointment we had broad winged hawk turkey vulture, rusty flowerpiercer, slate throated whitestar, black and white warbler, blackburnian warbler, buff rumped warbler, Canada warbler, and orange billed sparrow. Happy with how the morning had gone, we had some breakfast in the field, just some fruit and cereal. It is a long drive to our next stop, ProAves' RNA El Paujil. We had some typically Colombian grill for lunch at Donde Pedro in Mariquita, then continued 150 miles northward in the Magdalena Valley to Puerto Boyacá and then, on a bumpier road, to Puerto Pinzón. Between these 2 towns we made a few stops for birding, first for northern screamer, in wetland just by the road. In that same area we found rufescent tiger heron, great egret, cattle egret, striated heron, pied water tyrant, white headed marsh tyrant, yellow chinned spinetail, carib grackle, lined woodpecker and, at a second site, **Colombian Chachalaca**, lesser yellow headed vulture, turkey vulture, black vulture, savanna hawk, roadsided hawk, crane hawk, Saffron Finch, wattled jacana, Common Gallinule, crested caracara, Yellow-headed Caracara, Southern Lapwing, pale vented pigeon, ruddy ground dove, chestnut fronted macaw, Spectacled Parrolet, White-tipped Dove, yellow crowned parrot, greater ani, pale legged hornero, pale breasted spinetail, palm tanager,

yellow oriole and red breasted blackbird. We arrived at Puerto Pinzon as night was falling. A more robust vehicle took us the final 15 minutes to the lodge at RNA El Paujil, where we spent the night.

Today we had 71 species with 4 endemics.



Blue Billed Curassow.

Day 3

21 January, 2015

We awoke in RNA El Paujil to an early breakfast in the lodge. We could already hear the calls of the tropical birds of the mid Magdalena.

First bird of the day was Buff-rumped Warbler, foraging by the restaurant. Then more: greenish elaenia, cinnamon becard, Slate-headed Tody-flycatcher, Common Tody-Flycatcher and chestnut back antbird. We began a 3-mile hike after breakfast. We quickly got black antshrike, Thick-billed Euphonia, black billed flycatcher, white necked jacobin and fulvous vented euphonia. Along the road we heard the nasal mourning call of the black crowned antshrike. Which Judy again spotted perched near the canopy. We viewed it through the scope. More great spotting, this time from TED, gave us a king vulture high in the sky above us, alongside swallow tailed kite, plumbeous kite, turkey vulture, black vulture, lesser yellow headed vulture, and black hawk eagle. It was a good day for raptors.

Along the trail, we saw Orange-chinned Parakeet, chestnut fronted macaw, blue and yellow macaw, mealy parrot, gray rumped swift, common pouraque, white tailed trogon, gartered trogon, ringed kingfisher, broad billed motmot, rufous motmot, channel billed toucan, collared aracari, cinnamon woodpecker, crimson crested woodpecker, black banded woodcreeper, streak headed woodcreeper, brown capped tyrannulet, ochre bellied flycatcher, black headed tody flycatcher, and olivaceous flatbill. Back inside dense forest we added ruddy tailed flycatcher, streaked flycatcher, white bearded manakin, russet winged schiffornis, black chested jay, scaly breasted wren, Black-bellied Wren and white breasted wood wren. After a fun morning we returned to the lodge for lunch and a rest. We started looking for birds again early in the afternoon. By the lodge we found one of our big targets, **SOOTY ANT-TANAGER**. On one of the paths that flank the river we observed the rare and very elusive **BLUE-BILLED CURASSOW**, one of the most threatened birds in Colombia, just walking along the path. As evening approached we settled at the observation tower to inspect the hummingbird feeders, tanagers and birds returning to roost. New records were yellow back tanager, plain colored tanager, swallow tanager, blue dacnis, golden hooded tanager, buff throated saltator and northern waterthrush. On the feeders we had Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, black throated mango, shining green hummingbird, White-necked Jacobin, pale bellied hermit, and rufous breasted hermit.

That night we went out in search of owls, but without luck, all was quiet.

At the end of the day we had seen 60 species, including 2 endemics.

Day 4

22 January, 2015

Rising to a 5:30 breakfast at the Paujil reserve, we heard the plaintive song of COMMON POTOO, as well as MOTTLED OWL from the breakfast table. At 6:00 am, we said our farewells at Paujil and set off for RNA Reinita Cielo Azul in Santander department, near San Vicente de Chucuri.



Cinnamon Screech Owl.

En route to San Vicente we made 2 short stops to clean up a few species that we had missed on the way in: black capped donacobius, again Northern Screamer, common yellowthroat, Lineated Woodpecker, Red-breasted Blackbird and capped heron. The second stop was at the tube bridge over the Rio Hermitaño where we had buff breasted wren white winged swallow, barred antshrike, black crested antshrike, crested bobwhite, southern beardless tyrannulet, cattle tyrant, rusty margined flycatcher, black crowned tityra, Black-chested Jay, slate colored seedeater, blue black grassquit, ruddy breasted seedeater, thick billed seed finch and crested oropendola.. After 2 fruitful stops, we continued north again along the Ruta del Sol toward a place called Campo 23, where we changed vehicle for the last leg to San Vicente de Chucuri. Our destination was RNA Reinita Cielo Azul, which is within the Serranía de los Yariguies National Park. From Puerto Pinzón to Campo 23 is about 160 miles and the journey took almost 9 hours, including stops.

We got to the lodge in daylight and had a chance to check out feeders. Endemics **INDIGO-CAPPED HUMMINGBIRD** and **CHESTNUT BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** both visited. We also saw green crowned brilliant, andean emerald short tailed emerald, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Black-throated Mango and Crowned Woodnymph. Evening looming we squeezed in sooty headed tyrannulet and bicolored wren before being at the lodge at 16:40. Observation continued unabated and with 5 minutes Sharon showed off her spotting skills the beautiful **TURQUOISE DACNIS**, which I put in the scope for fabulous views for a few minutes. We were still catching our breath from this stunning endemic when we heard a **NICEFORO'S WREN** singing behind us. It was nearly dark now, but we were finishing the day with 4 more endemics. Night at RNA Reinita Cielo Azul.

Day 5

23 January, 2015

Today was a long days birding with an early start – 13 hours of continuous birding at RNA Reinita Cielo Azul.

The day kicked off with a bleary-eyed coffee at 3:45 am. 15 minutes later we started, in darkness, along the old Lengerke Trail. Built in 1862 by a German engineer, the trail connects the towns of San Vicente de Chucuri and Zapatoca. We arrived at the forest at 5:00, still in darkness. I called in cinnamon screech owl. It took 3 minutes to come in and when it did it perched 5 feet away at just 3 feet above the ground. We are not normally so lucky with this bird – it was a surprise to us all to see it so well. As daylight arrived, we had already settled quietly by the grain and hummingbird feeders. One of the first visitors was endemic **BLACK INCA**. Others quickly followed: Andean Emerald, Crowned Woodnymph, Green-crowned Brilliant and booted racket tail. We could hear distant highland tinamou. Much closer, we heard and saw chestnut crowned gnateater, crimson rumped toucanet, was the other pre-breakfast record.

Time for more coffee and a field breakfast just after 7:00. Then the morning's main attraction approaches the grain feeder – the endangered **GORGETED WOOD-QUAIL**. A little later CHESTNUT-CAPPED BRUSH-FINCH turned up too. We left the feeders and returned to the Lengerke trail. Constructed of great, rounded boulders bearded in moss, it's a tricky and sometimes treacherous trail but, in morning light, bewitchingly beautiful.

Along the trail we had Slate-throated Whitestart, Canada Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, russet back oropendola, ashy throated brush finch ,black capped tanager, Tennessee Warbler, Golden Tanager, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, golden winged manakin, barred becard, golden crowned flycatcher, scale crested pygmy tyrant. We also heard and were lucky to see **WHITE-MANTLED BARBET**. Cautiously picking our steps along the trail, we had cinnamon flycatcher, then a distinctive song coming up from the earth, followed by views of the *yariguorum* race of the skulky **UPPER MAGDALENA TAPACULO**. Continuing, we had Plain antvireo, slaty antwren, rufous browed tyrannulet, spotted barbtail,, Montane Foliage-Gleaner, buff tailed coronet, lineated foliage gleaner, olivaceous woodcreeper, northern barred woodcreeper, olive backed woodcreeper, another Crimson-rumped Toucanet, **COLLARED TROGON** and Squirrel Cuckoo,

We were hearing wattled guan fairly often along the trail, but we didn't see it. It is an expert in hiding in foliage, rarely taking an exposed perch. Nearly ready to make our return we had quick views of **PARKER'S ANTBIRD**. On the way back to the

lodge we saw giant cowbird and Savanna Hawk in the open areas separating the forest from the accommodations.

We lunched at nearly 3:00 in the afternoon. After a short rest we started birding again in the coffee plantations below the lodge. We found stripe back wren, golden faced tyrannulet, Sooty-headed Tyrannulet, spot breasted woodpecker, Bar-crested Antshrike, tropical mockingbird, Yellow-backed Oriole, striped cuckoo, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Smooth-billed Ani, Black-billed Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, yellow legged thrush, and much better view of **Niceforo's Wren**, this time in better light.

Later we had bran colored flycatcher, streak saltator, Buff-throated Saltator, and another **Turquoise Dacnis**.

Night upon us, we added tropical screech owl, just across from the lodge. It was along day, but with 60 species, and a total of 9 endemics for our day and a half at RNA Reinita Cielo Azul.

Day 6

24 January, 2015

We had a 5:30 breakfast and left the reserve at 6:00. We made our first stop on the steep descent between the lodge San Vicente de Chucuri, 2 miles before the town. We had great views of Spot-breasted Woodpecker, Saffron Finch, Thick-billed Euphonia, another specialty in the near-endemic **yellow browed shrike vireo**, **Colombian Chachalaca**, cinnamon becard, turkey vulture, black vulture, broad winged hawk, yellow billed elaenia, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Cattle Egret, Yellow-headed Caracara, Ruddy Ground-Dove, White-tipped Dove, Spectacled Parrolet and golden rumped euphonia. After 3 more hours on the dirt road we again changed vehicle. Our next stop was Puerto Berrio and lunch on the banks of the Magdalena River. From there we drove 5 hours non-stop to RNA Arrierito. The last light of day offered us a chance of picking up some species at the hummingbird and grain feeders - Crowned Woodnymph, Green-crowned Brilliant, Andean emerald, gorgeted woodstar, steely vented hummingbird, Black-throated mango, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Black-striped Sparrow, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Crimson-backed Tanager, Blue-gray Tanager and Palm Tanager, After dusk, we had Tropical Screech-Owl opposite the lodge.

On what was a long travel day against the clock, we had fewer than 30 species.

Days 7 and 8

25-26 January, 2015

We left for the quail feeders after a 6:00 am breakfast. At first light, we could hear Wattled Guan vocalising and we found some **Colombian chachalaca** and sickle winged guan, along the trail. It was a little before 7:00 when we got **CHESTNUT WOOD QUAIL**, just 3 feet away. Soon we added ruddy foliage gleaner, and **Parker's Antbird**. We left the feeders and before to trek uphill, seeing yellow throated bush tanager, three striped warbler, Canada warbler, Slate-throated whitestart, Swallow-tailed kite, barred forest falcon, ruddy pigeon, White-necked Jacobin, greenish puffleg, golden headed quetzal, collared trogon, Highland motmot, Channel-billed Toucan, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, olivaceous piculet, smoky brown woodpecker, azara's spinetail, buff fronted foliage gleaner, lineated foliage gleaner, western woodhunter, streak xenops, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, brown billed scythebill, red headed barbet, Bar-crested Antshrike, Uniform Antshrike, longbilled gnatwren, wing barred piprites, white crowned tapaculo, **Stiles's Tapaculo**, variegated bristle tyrant, Rufous-browed Tyrannulet and olive striped flycatcher.

Forest guard Jose Aicardo brought us a warm lunch which we had in the field, then we continued to climb to the highest part of the reserve. Mixed flocks brought us **RED BELLIED GRACKLE**, Slaty capped Flycatcher, Ornate Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Acadian Flycatcher, tropical pewee, golden crowned flycatcher, golden breasted fruiteater, golden winged manakin, white winged becard, inca jay, sooty headed wren, house wren, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Scaly-breasted Wren, bay wren, pale eyed thrush, blue winged mountain tanager, **BAY WREN**, **MULTICOLORED TANAGER**, indigo flowerpiercer, southern rough winged swallow, Blue-and-white Swallow, Great Thrush, Black-billed Thrush, Tropical mockingbird, white lined tanager, beryl spangled tanager, silver throated tanager, Blue-necked tanager, Scrub tanager, Golden tanager, speckled tanager, Swallow tanager, bay headed tanager, Saffron-crowned Tanager, yellow faced grassquit, Black-winged Saltator, Buff-throated Saltator, Yellow-bellied Seedeater, Chestnut-capped brush-Finch, Summer tanager, white naped brush finch, Russet-backed oropendola and orange bellied euphonia. So, we had 2 days of good birding, despite not having seen the Piha on the first day. The following morning we birded the road to Anori. Only after 9:00am on the second day did we catch up with **CHESTNUT CAPPED PIHA**, on a narrow trail, where we also had **MOUSTACHED PUFFBIRD**. There were also some common birds in the open areas – Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Rusty-margined Flycatcher and piratic flycatcher. We spent some time at the fruit-feeders by the lodge on the second day; 7 species of tanagers, saltators and chachalaca visit.

On the second afternoon we headed toward Rio Porce dam, just a few miles below the lodge. There we bumped into a family of 4 **White-mantled Barbet**, slaty

spinetail and Chestnut-crowned Gnatcatcher, as well as some more common species.

We hadn't been very lucky with owls so far but while at RNA Arrierito we had heard STYGIAN OWL at dusk, and an short excursion on our last night brought us LYRE-TAILED NIGHTJAR.

Over our stay at RNA we had a heartening 96 with 8 endemics.

Day 9

27 January, 2015

Today we left the reserve at 5:00 am. Our next destination was RNA Las Tangaras, near Carmen de Atrato, in the Pacific department of Choco. Driving distance is 150 miles. This road can see heavy traffic in places so we left ourselves 9 hours. Again we stopped at the Rio Porce dam. We saw Canada Warbler, Slate-throated Whitestart, Russet-backed Oropendola, Rufous-capped Warbler, Shiny Cowbird, Red-breasted Blackbird, Thick-billed euphonia, Thick-billed seed-finch, bay breasted warbler, Plain-colored Tanager, Bananaquit, Grayish saltator, Streaked saltator, slate coloured seedeater, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater, Yellow-bellied seedeater, Scrub tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, yellow tufted dacnis, green honeycreeper, Blue-necked Tanager, Swainson's Thrush, Black-billed thrush, Crimson-backed tanager, flame rumped tanager, Palm Tanager, Blue-gray Tanager, Gray-breasted Martin, Southern Rough-winged swallow, Bay Wren, Scaly-breasted Wren, Tropical gnatcatcher, cinereous becard, scrub greenlet, Piratic Flycatcher, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Streaked Flycatcher, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, pacific antwren, dusky antbird, Tropical Kingbird, gray lined hawk, osprey, wattled jacana. We birded about 2 hours total before continuing to Medellin, crossing the city from north to south and stopping for lunch at a Rancherito restaurant.

We made our next stop near the town of Bolombolo, on the tropical dry forests of the River Cauca Valley.

First up, we found Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet and Mouse-colored Tyrannulet. Soon we also heard **ANTIOQUIA WREN** vocalising and we caught a brief but good view. Another great endemic turned up in **GREYISH PICULET** and we had cocoa woodcreeper, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, Orange-chinned Parakeet, more Turkey Vulture, Black Vulture, Roadside Hawk, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, **Apical Flycatcher**, red eyed vireo, and rufous-capped warbler. Short and sweet. We continued toward coffee town Ciudad Bolivar, then to Carmen de Atrato, and finally RNA Las Tangaras.

We concluded this travel day with 53 species, of which 3 were endemics.

Days 10 and 11

28-29 January, 2015.

On the first morning at the Tangaras reserve we were out at 4:30, again in the hope of seeing owls, and again without luck. We spent the entire first day birding in the high forest above the lodge, with a field lunch. The 29th, we took it a little easier, waiting around the lodge for the dawn arrival of blue-riband endemic **CRESTED ANT-TANAGER**, of which we got great views and photographs. We also birded the road up to the forest on the second day and had lunch back at the lodge before returning to the forest at dusk on another fruitless owl-quest.

Returning to the 28th, we started slowly on the narrow trail that leads to the highest part of the forest and at 6:30 we were in position at the summit. Within a few minutes **GOLD-RINGED TANAGER** appeared on an open perch. I had it in the scope, highlighted by the morning sunlight for nearly 5 minutes. This bird was the main reason for climbing to the high part of the reserve so



Gold Ringed Tanager.

Early, so we then began to descend, birding as we went. The narrow trail is less than 2 miles. We had Canada Warbler, Slate-throated whitestart, Three-striped warbler, Orange-bellied euphonia, a cleanly-scoped dusky capped bush tanager, Blackburnian Warbler, Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, glistening green tanager, Scrub Tanager, Golden-hooded Tanager, rufous throated tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Silver-throated Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Saffron-crowned

Tanager, Golden Tanager, Palm Tanager, Blue-gray Tanager, hepatic tanager, **BLACK-AND-GOLD TANAGER**, black chinned mountain tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, sharpe's wren, chestnut breasted wren, house wren, grey breasted wood wren, Bay Wren, black billed peppershrike, Barred becard, **CHOCO VIREO** various times in mixed foraging flocks, beautiful jay slaty back chat tyrant, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, green and black fruiteater, orange breasted fruiteater, olivaceous piha, Sickle-winged Guan, **Chestnut Wood-Quail**, Broad-winged Hawk, band tailed pigeon, Ruddy pigeon, plumbeous pigeon, White-collared Swift and Common pouraque.

The reserve boasts 2 hummingbird feeding stations at different altitudes. The main ones are in the higher forest and the lower ones are at the lodge. We had tawny bellied hermit, green fronted lancebill, greenish puffleg, brown inca, white tailed hillstar, velvet purple coronet, Booted racket-tail, empress brilliant, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, violet tailed sylph, and Rufous-tailed hummingbird. On the lower part of the reserve we found some pretty colorful birds: Golden-headed Quetzal, masked trogon, Highland Motmot, toucan barbet, Red-headed Barbet, emerald toucanet, golden olive woodpecker, Azara's Spinetail, red faced spinetail, fulvous dotted treerunner, pacific tufted cheek, scaly throated foliage gleaner, lineated foliage gleaner, uniform threehunter, Olive-backed woodcreeper, purplish mantled tanager, rufous rumped antwren, yellow breasted antpitta, **ALTO DE PISONES TAPACULO**, ashy headed tyrannulet, bronze olive pygmy tyrant, Golden-faced tyrannulet, marbled faced bristle tyrant, Ornate flycatcher, Handsome flycatcher, Cinnamon flycatcher, smoke coloured pewee, black phoebe, fawn breasted brilliant, Nariño tapaculo

We totalled 89 species for RNA Las Tangaras, with 6 endemics.

Day 12

30 January, 2015.

It's another long travel day, this time moving north on the Western Cordillera of the Colombian Andes to RNA Colibri del Sol, situated in the Urrao region, near Las Orquideas National Park.

Today's first coffee was welcomed at 3:45 am! We left Las Tangaras for Urrao at 4. Finally kissed by some owl-fortune we got rufous banded owl, about 90 minutes along the road. white throated screech owl, was singing too, but very far away. Then a few minutes later, less than 20 feet away on the ground we saw swallow tailed nightjar, Common pauraque and band winged nightjar. As day broke, we reached the highest point of our journey and made another stop for breakfast, black throated tody tyrant, a group of lacrymose mountain tanager, barred parakeet, speckled

faced parrot, **MUNCHIQUE WOOD WREN**, a very obliging rufous headed pygmy tyrant,gray browed brush finch,rufous spinetail,pearled treerunner, rusty winged barbtail,powerful woodpecker,crimson mantled woodpecker,streaked tuftedcheek ,buff breasted mountain tanager,citrine warbler,black crested warbler,rufous wren,black collared jay,tourmaline sunangel,collared inca,tyriant metaltail,white rumped hawk,tanager finch,spillmann's tapaculo , Band-tailed pigeon,rufous antpitta, chestnut naped antpitta, black capped tyrannulet , Cinnamon.



Rufous headed pygmy tyrant.

Flycatcher, Smoke-colored Pewee,smoky bush tyrant, Barred becard ,barred fruiteater, Green-and-black fruiteater, Black-billed Peppershrike, Andean solitaire, Great thrush,gray hooded bush tanager, hooded mountain tanager, Purplish-mantled tanager,black capped hemispingus,blue capped tanager,capped conebill , masked flowerpiercer, White-sided flowerpiercer, bluish flowerpiercer,slaty brush finch,golden fronted whitestar,. It was a decent morning's birding for what was really a travel day. We continued to Urrao.



Munchique wood wren

We grabbed lunch in Urrao then drove another 35 minutes to a place called El Chuscal, where forest guard Herney was waiting with horses for us. We took almost 2 hours by horse to reach the lodge, one of the highest in the Colombian Andes.

The hummingbird feeders were getting sword billed hummingbird, white bellied woodstar, mountain velvetbreast, Tourmaline sunangel, Long tailed sylph, Tyrian metaltail, buff tailed coronet, green violetear, and Sparkling Violetear. We saw a few other common species like Rufous-collared sparrow, Great Egret, Cattle Egret, Crested Caracara, red breasted blackbird, golden faced tyrannulet, Southern Lapwing and Wattled Jacana, acorn woodpecker, tropical mockingbird, blue gray tanager.

A long day, but with 74 species to show and a new endemic in **Munchique Wood-Wren**.

Day 13

31 January, 2015

All day today at the Colibrí del Sol reserve, so we got an early breakfast and went out to find **FENWICK'S ANTPITTA**, which we saw well. Then we began our 2-hour ascent to the cold and breathless paramo. Just before reaching the open paramo there is a hummingbird feeding station where we got **GLITTERING STARFRONLET**, together with some of the species which also occur at the lodge feeders. Golden-fronted Whitestart, Black-crested Warbler and Slaty Brush-Finch foraged nearby. Up at the observation tower we saw golden crowned tanager, black chested mountain tanager, blue and black tanager, black throated

flowerpiercer, **CHESTNUT BELLIED FLOWERPIERCER**, GLOWING PUFFLEG, SPECKLED HUMMINGBIRD and we heard only the extremely shy **PARAMILLO TAPACULO**. Other birds for the morning were Masked flowerpiercer, Great thrush, Gray-breasted wood-Wren, inca jay, brown backed chat tyrant, Green-and-black fruit eater, white banded tyrannulet, White-throated Tyrannulet, Spillmann's Tapaculo, Azara's Spinetail, Masked Trogon, purple backed thornbill, Tyrian Metaltail, Collared Inca, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sword-billed hummingbird, Tourmaline Sunangel, Sparkling Violetear, Green Violetear, Buff-tailed Coronet, Long-tailed Sylph, White-collared Swift, Highland Tinamou and Sickle-winged Guan.

We bedded down at day's end with 36 species, including 4 new endemics.

Day 14

1 February, 2015

We had coffee and breakfast and left the Colibri del Sol lodge for our next stop, RNA Loro Orejiamarillo, in Jardín. Another- day's travelling, we got to Jardín, where we were booked in at the Hotel Balandu, just above the town.

Day 15

2 February 2015

Field breakfast packed and still no coffee to warm our chilling guts, we set out at 4:00 am along the old road from Jardín to Rio Sucio, department of Caldas. We made a few more futile owl-stops on the way, but did, in the first light, catch the sight of a group of rufous bellied nighthawk, wheeling in the sky above us. Great thrush and pale edged flycatcher turned up, and then, **YELLOW EARED PARROT**, our main target for the morning. A few pairs in small groups were flying overhead, quite high, but as it was a clear morning, we could see their colors well.

Then we walked along the road where activity was a bit slow, maybe because it was so clear. We did have yellow bellied chat tyrant, rufous collared sparrow, Band-tailed pigeon, bronze winged parrot, Collared inca, Buff-tailed coronet, Tyrian metaltail, our best views yet of Golden-headed Quetzal as it worked by the road, Rufous spinetail, blackish tapaculo, Chestnut-naped antpitta, Black-capped Tyrannulet, Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Black-collared Jay, Gray-breasted Wood-wren, Chestnut-breasted Wren, oleaginous hemispingus, Lachrymose mountain-tanager, Blue-winged mountain-tanager, Blue-and-black tanager, Bluish flowerpiercer, White-sided flowerpiercer, Masked flowerpiercer, Gray-browed brush-finch, Slaty brush-finch and Blackburnian Warbler. We returned to Jardín for lunch.



Yellow eared parrot

In the afternoon we visited an andean cock of the rock lek, incredibly, situated just 7 blocks away from Jardin's bustling central plaza. About 12 males were cavorting and calling, at times coming into less than 10 feet of the spot from which we were observing. I have been visiting this lek for 7 years and this was the first time I had seen **Crested Ant-Tanager** there also. Other birds included Yellow-bellied Seedeater, Golden Tanager, Western emerald, Red-crowned woodpecker, Emerald toucanet and Rusty-margined flycatcher,

Just one additional endemic has been picked up at Jardin, but we saw about 40 species for the day.



Yellow crowned whitestar.



Anadean cock of the rock

3 february 2015.

Yesterday finished off the Andean leg of our itinerary. Today we drove 4 hours back to Medellín and then ascended to the International Airport at Rio Negro. We stopped for breakfast the Mayoria del San Juan Restaurant.

It was 10:30 when we arrived at the airport for our flight to Santa Marta. One hour later and we were touching down beside America's most beautiful bay on the shores of the Caribbean, Santa Marta.

We lunched on fresh local seafood and set out in the direction of Barranquilla to an unlikely spot just 15 minutes from the airport and still hungry for our next endemic. The place is called Puerto Vale and is a coal-shipping port with some remnant coastal dry forest, scrub and teak plantations.

Sharon quickly found a whooping motmot perched inconspicuously in the shade, then we had Black-chested Jay, Rufous-tailed Jacamar, magnificent frigatebird, Yellow-headed caracara, brown throated parakeet, and red billed emerald. Still no sign of our target bird when our driver rang me to inform me that 10 **CHESTNUT-WINGED CHACHALACA** had come to perch next to the vehicle after we had wandered off. When we returned, rather more briskly than we had departed, there was indeed a group of about 12 birds giving good views. We also had yellow breasted flycatcher, black crested antshrike, great tailed grackle, bicolor wren, brown pelican, Ruddy ground-dove, White-tipped dove, scaled dove, sick 's swift, Rufous-breasted hermit, russet throated puffbird, southern beardless tyrannulet, Yellow-bellied elaenia, northern scrub flycatcher, brown crested flycatcher, great kiskadee, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Blue-gray Tanager, ferruginous pygmy owl, Bananaquit, Grayish saltator, Streaked saltator, Crested oropéndola and Baltimore oriole.

Finishing up here, we drove an hour to our resting place at Hotel Minca.

At the end of this travel day we had seen 32 species and one endemic.

Day 17

4 February, 2015



Barred antshrike.

We had an early breakfast at the Hotel Minca, which was followed but fantastic views of Long-billed Gnatwren just beside the hotel.

We then started out on one of the trails which goes to a lookout where we could set up a scope. We had keel billed toucan, scaled pigeon, Swallow tanager, then Streaked saltator, Grayish saltator, Buff throated saltator, Thick-billed seed-finch, Yellow-bellied seedeater, pale breasted thrush, Bicolored wren, Black-crowned tityra, Bay-headed tanager, social flycatcher, boat billed flycatcher, Ochre-bellied Fruit-Tyrant, pale eyed pygmy tyrant, black backed antshrike, golden winged sparrow,, King vulture, Broad-winged hawk, Turkey vulture, Cocoa woodcreeper, rufous breasted wren, rufous and white wren, Red-billed Emerald, Black-chested jay, Rufous-capped warbler, Tennessee warbler, Black-and-white warbler, tropical parula dull coloured grassquit, White-bearded manakin, lance tailed manakin golden fronted greenlet, and cinnamon becard. After a very productive morning we returned to the hotel for lunch. Some hummingbirds we had seen at other places were visiting the feeders: Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Black-throated mango, White-necked jacobin and Rufous-breasted hermit.

We got together again at 2:30 pm, ready for the afternoon trip up to ProAves RNA EL Dorado, the jewel in the crown of birding in Colombia.

As we ascended we started to come into the main belt of Santa Marta endemism. We got rosy thrush tanager, only heard. scarlet-fronted parakeet, **SANTA MARTA ANTBIRD**, Pale-breasted Spinetail, **BANGS' WOOD WREN**, **SANTA MARTA BRUSH-FINCH**, rusty breasted antpitta, band tailed guan, rufous nightjar, **SANTA MARTA TAPACULO**, **SANTA MARTA FOLIAGE-GLEANER**, **SANTA MARTA SCREECH OWL**, Crested oropendola, American redstart and mottled owl

On this our first day on the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, we had 60 species and, with only a short afternoon incursion into the endemic zone, 6 new endemics.



Black back thornbill

Day 18 and 19

5-6 February, 2015

We got up early on day 18, leaving the lodge at 4:00 am with a field breakfast already prepared.

We were going further up the hill to the highest part of the outlying ridge of San Lorenzo. Like many great birding roads, this is an antennae road that leads to Telecommunication towers. The day's first bird was Band-winged Nightjar, which displayed in front of us. A few minutes later we caught a Stygian owl in the darkness, then slaty backed nightingale thrush,, **YELLOW-CROWNED WHITESTART**, and then a group of **SANTA MARTA PARAKEET**, one of the main reasons for coming up this high, perched next to the road. Soon we added **RUSTY-HEADED SPINETAIL**, **SANTA MARTA BUSH-TYRANT**, breakfast, of course, then **Santa marta Brush-Finch**, **SANTA MARTA MOUNTAIN-TANAGER**, **WHITE TAILED STARFRONLET**, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Black-capped Tyrannulet, yellow billed cacique, flammulated threehunter, *sanctaemartae* race of strong billed woodcreeper, Montane foliage-gleaner, White-sided flowerpiercer, White-throated tyrannulet, *carrikeri* race of Buff-breasted Mountain-Tanager, **BROWN-RUMPED TAPACULO**, **SANTA MARTA WARBLER**, *spatiator* race of rufous antpitta,plushcap **STREAK-CAPPED SPINETAIL**, *districta* race of Tyrian Metaltail, scaly naped parrot, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, **SANTA MARTA WOOD-WREN**, *sanctaemartae* race of Sickle-winged Guan, **SANTA MARTA TOUCANET**, Black Vulture and Turkey Vulture. At 11:00 am we started to make our way slowly back down, stopping for **WHITE-LORED WARBLER**, Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, black and chestnut eagle, Broad-winged hawk, Barred forest-falcon and Band-

tailed pigeon. We got in for lunch just after 3:00 pm. We spent the rest of the day doing the various feeders around the lodge, getting **SANTA MARTA WOODSTAR**, Golden-breasted Fruiteater, **COLOMBIAN BRUSH-FINCH**, Green Violetear, Crowned Woodnymph, lazuline sabrewing, Band-tailed guan, Rufous-collared sparrow, blue naped chlorophonia, Crested oropendola, Cinnamon flycatcher, White-tipped dove, lined quail dove, Scaly-naped Parrot, Mountain velvetbreast and brown violetear. Late in the afternoon we confirmed the presence of a very rare high-altitude visitor in the garden- the endemic **BLACK-BACKED THORNBILL**.



Santa Marta Parakeet.

Day 19

6 February, 2015

Today was a bit more relaxed as we had cleaned up a lot of our targets yesterday. We had breakfast at 7:30 am and then went downhill to Palo Alto, a farm on the edge of the ProAves property. **SANTA MARTA BLOSSOMCROWN** soon came to the flowers in the garden. Rusty Flowerpiercer, White-sided Flowerpiercer, Bay-headed Tanager, olive sided flycatcher, Crowned woodnymph, Rufous-collared Sparrow and **Bangs' Wood-Wren**. also made an appearance. After Palo Alto we made our way slowly back up, finding, along the way, Montane foliage-gleaner, *sanctaemartae* race of montane woodcreeper, **White lored warbler**, Black-hooded Thrush, Blue-naped Chlorophonia, **Santa marta brush-finch**, Olive-striped Fruit-Tyrant, Black-fronted Wood-Quail, Streak-capped Spinetail, Keel-billed Toucan and **Santa Marta Toucanet**.



Crowned woodnymph

Back at El Dorado for lunch and a short rest, we regrouped at 2:30 pm to explore some of the trails around the lodge. The Mirador Trail leads to an observation tower. We saw white tipped quetzal, Black-chested jay, and on the path on the way back, great views of **SANTA MARTA ANTPITTA**. This species had been getting difficult over the last few months, but came in very close for us. A bit further on we found gray throated leaf-tosser, tossing leaves in the understory, Slaty-backed Nightingale-thrush, Streaked xenops, dusky capped flycatcher, Golden-crowned flycatcher, Yellow-legged thrush, Pale-breasted thrush, Blue-capped tanager, Black-capped tanager, Tennessee Warbler and Blackburnian Warbler.

Our account at RNA El Dorado came to 75 species with a whopping 23 endemics plus a few other possible future splits.

Day 20

7 February, 2015.

Our final destination today is the desert town of Riohacha on the Guajira peninsula in Colombia's extreme north.

With breakfast at 6:00, we started to make our way back down, with a few stops along the way. Our first big surprise at the side of the road was spotted barbtail, also, Olive-striped Fruit-Tyrant, Keel-billed Toucan, Groove-billed toucanet, Montane foliage-gleaner, Black-capped tanager, Blue-naped chlorophonia, Rusty-breasted antpitta, black headed tanager, Swallow tanager, Crested oropendola, Yellow-backed oriole, **White-lored Warbler**, Slate-throated whitestart, Black-hooded thrush, Yellow-legged thrush, Summer Tanager, rose breasted grosbeak,

American redstart, Black-and-white warbler, Buff-throated saltator, Streaked saltator, Bananaquit, Bay-headed tanager, Rufous-breasted wren, Rufous-and-white wren, **Santa Marta Antbird**, **Santa Marta Foliage-Gleaner**, Pale-breasted thrush, White-lined tanager, Crimson-back tanager, ruddy woodcreeper Collared aracari, Tropical kingbird, scaled piculet, Crimson-crested woodpecker, Lined woodpecker, Masked trogon, Golden-winged sparrow, red billed parrot, Scarlet-fronted parakeet, White-tipped dove, Lined quail-dove, bat falcon and last bird of the stretch down to Minca was the shy and difficult Rosy Thrush-Tanager. 40 minutes after we first heard one with no luck, another came to 6 feet from us. We continued to Santa Marta and took the road toward Riohacha, briefly stopping at Las Acacias restaurant near the entrance to Tayrona park for lunch.

At 3:30 pm we got to Camarones a coastal area with thorn scrub. Soon out of the vehicle we had some new species –white fringed antwren, Southern beardless tyrannulet, vermilion flycatcher, slender billed inezia, white whiskered spinetail, common black hawk, road sided hawk, harris hawk, brown throated parakeet, bicolored wren, chestnut piculet, northern scrub flycatcher, Venezuelan flycatcher, red billed scythebill, pileated finch, Trinidad euphonia, Yellow oriole, Great-tailed grackle, Greyish saltator, Cattle tyrant, Gray kingbird, Pale-legged hornero, Russet-throated puffbird, Rufous-tailed jacamar and Red-billed emerald.

Today we had 71 species between the Santa Marta mountains and the dry habitat at the Santuario de Flora y Fauna Los Flamencos - no new endemics but many near-endemics that are very rarely seen outside Colombia. We spent the night at Hotel Majayura in Riohacha.

Day 21

8 February, 2015

Today we left the hotel with our luggage at 05:00 am for the final coastal leg of our tour.

We got to our birding spot at 5:25.

Birds started appearing at first light: Slender-billed inezia, orinocan saltator, roseate spoonbill, Neotropical cormorant, white ibis, scarlet ibis, Grey kingbird, buffy hummingbird, Tropical gnatcatcher, White-whiskered Spinetail, Southern Lapwing, Carib grackle, glaucous tanager, Red-billed Emerald, Pale-legged Hornero, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Pileated finch, vermilion cardinal, Greyish saltator, Trinidad Euphonia, pale tipped tyrannulet, Tropical mockingbird, Pied Water-Tyrant, Great kiskadee, Scrub greenlet, Black-crested antshrike, Pale-breasted spinetail, green rumped parrotlet, black faced grassquit, and bananaquit. We then

proceeded to the village of Pericos in search of super-difficult Tocuyo Sparrow, but without luck this time. In that area we added Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and double striped thick knee. Finally we called it a day and made quickly for Riohacha Airport to catch our flight to Bogotá, which was an hour late as it turned out!

Day 22

9 February, 2015

Leaving the hotel in Bogotá at 5:00 am, we set out for Chingaza National Park. Among roadside boulders we could make out our first birds in the early morning light - Glowing Puffleg, Scarlet-bellied mountain-tanager, Pearled treerunner, White-throated tyrannulet, Great thrush, pale bellied tapaculo, blue backed conebill, glossy flowerpiercer, Masked flowerpiercer, Bluish Flowerpiercer, ochre breasted brush finch and Slaty Brush-Finch. We then made our way toward the parakeet nesting site. By good luck, we found 2 pairs, one giving scoped views of over a minute, a good observation for **BROWN-BREADED PARAKEET**. Later we also added Black-crested Warbler, white capped tanager, Hooded mountain-tanager, Black-chested mountain-tanager, Tyrian metaltail, amethyst throated sunangel, the east Andean race of Rufous Antpitta, Chestnut-naped Antpitta and, later, black billed mountain toucan and andean guan.

So we finished a successful tour: 625 species, and 54 endemics.

We invite readers to come with us next time to enjoy the country with the greatest diversity in birds on the planet with EcoTurs, Colombia.



White capped tanager