

Bolivia - Lowlands

Naturetrek Tour Report

14 - 21 November 2005



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How should I begin describing such an action-packed week of Bolivian birding? Doubtless you all have innumerable memories. Here are some of my favourites:

The sights: Greater Rheas in the midday heat haze near Viru Viru; our Blue-throated Piping-Guan adorning the top of a tall tree in Los Volcanes; silver-backed Condors swooping to the cliffs at the same site; swirling flocks of Plumbeous and Swallow-tailed Kites by the road back from Comarapa; Chestnut-fronted Macaws and a Toco Toucan in perfect golden light over the Pirai; our diminutive Pygmy-Owl deep in the forest at the Jardín Botánico; the flowering Inga tree at Los Volcanes buzzing with five species of hummingbird; glorious Troupials and Red-crested Cardinals in the crown of an evening-lit tree at Lomas de Arena; and the clearing at Los Volcanes lit up by hundreds of dancing fireflies under a star-dappled sky.

The sounds: shrieking Red-legged Seriemas at Viru Viru on our first day; the haunting night-songs of Rufous Nightjars and a Band-bellied Owl echoing from the cliffs in Los Volcanes; the enthusiastic chuntering of Greater Wagtail-Tyrants in the cactus scrub around Tambo; jarring fishing-reel calls from White-tipped Plantcutters, also at Tambo; the wistful song of a Spotted Nightingale Thrush from deep in a valley at Siberia; Titi monkeys yodelling from riverside forest on our last evening at the Pirai, as Yellow-browed Sparrows buzzed from the sand beneath.

The endemics: those unbelievable macaws (more on them later); sapphire-winged Cliff Parakeets clinging to the rockfaces at Saipina (where even Janice would not dare to climb); the Bolivian Earthcreeper, tantalisingly heard the two previous evenings, finally giving himself up in the shade of a bush at Tambo; the virtual endemic, and subtly attractive, Bolivian Warbling-Finches we saw on the road to Siberia; Bolivian Blackbirds in the dramatic landscape of Saipina; and the recently-split Rufous-naped Brush-finches which took some tracking down in roadside bushes at Siberia.

The tastes: crisp fried yuca and a range of wonderful meals at the Casa del Camba on our first and last evenings in Santa Cruz; perfect pizza for lunch at Samaipata (as White-bellied Hummingbirds, Glittering-bellied Emeralds, and Blue-and-Yellow Tanagers visited the garden); Bolivian wines and beers at every available watering hole (and I mean every watering hole).

Many thanks are due to Carlos and Benita who took such good care of us in Los Volcanes, to the people of Monteblanco who scooped us homeless off the street and offered us excellent hospitality and a great picnic lunch, and to our tireless driver Leo. Thanks also to each of you for your contribution to a wonderful, bird-filled trip. Come back soon (to see all the rest of the many birds Bolivia has to offer).

Itinerary

Day 1

Monday 14 November

At the airport we were privileged to see two of South America's most charismatic birds – Greater Rhea and Red-legged Seriema – in addition to a fine supporting cast of White-eared Puffbird, Burrowing Owl, Southern

Lapwing, Guira Cuckoo and White-tailed Hawk. In the evening we visited Parque Regional Lomas de Arena where we were delighted by Red-capped and Red-crested Cardinals, Troupial, Thrush-like Wren and Common Thornbird. Supper this evening at the wonderful Casa del Camba.

Day 2

Tuesday 15 November

Early this morning we visited the Jardín Botánico de Santa Cruz where the mosquitos were not as bad as they can be but still quite a pain. We saw some great birds though, including Blue-crowned Motmot, Blue-crowned Trogon, Black-fronted Nunbird, Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl and nesting Savannah Hawks. We lunched in Santa Cruz and in the afternoon travelled on to Los Volcanes, seeing King Vultures and White-tipped Swifts along the road. When we reached Volcanes we were greeted by Andean Condors, throngs of Mitred Parakeets and Turquoise-fronted Parrots, a Peregrine, Eastern and Western Wood-Pewees, and Dusky Green Oropendolas.

Day 3

Wednesday 16 November

Despite the absence of notable flocks we notched up many lovely birds today in Los Volcanes, including more Andean Condors, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, seven species of hummingbird, Channel-billed Toucan, Red-necked Woodpecker, Black-capped Antwren, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Variegated Flycatcher, Masked Tityra, Purple Martin, Purplish and Plush-crested Jays, Thick-billed Euphonia and Masked Yellowthroat. As if that weren't enough, we ate well and enjoyed the stunning scenery around the lodge. Janice and Ian braved the streamwaters for a swim.

Day 4

Thursday 17 November

After early birding in Los Volcanes (Chestnut-tipped Toucanet and Toco Toucan), we left the lodge en route to Comarapa. Lunch in Samaipata produced the first flurry of birds of the dry Valles vegetation – Black-capped Warbling-Finch, Blue-and-Yellow Tanager, Glittering-bellied Emerald. Despite our problems with accommodation, we decided to drive on to Comarapa and hope for the best. And lucky for us that we did as we had a run of new species at Tambo including Baywing, White-tipped Plantcutter, Ringed Warbling-Finch, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Stripe-crowned Spinetail, White-fronted Woodpecker and a rather straggly Chacoan Fox. Luckier still, we were able to find clean, comfortable accommodation at Monteblanco, formerly the Mission School, in Tambo. Luckiest of all we had wonderful encounters with the fabulous endemic Red-fronted Macaws right behind Monteblanco and all the way down to the first quebrada.

Day 5

Friday 18 November

Having already seen the macaws and seeing that the weather was fair, today we decided to head for Siberia. Lucky decision again. The weather was perfect and we saw many wonderful birds. Stops in dry scrub on the way up to the cloud-forest afforded us Red-tailed Comet (ooh!), Bolivian, Rufous-sided and Black-and-Chestnut Warbling-Finches, Great Pampa-Finch, Yellow-browed Tyrant, White-winged Black-Tyrant, Ocellated Piculet, Spot-breasted Thornbird and Brown-capped Whitestart. The cloud-forest itself was excellent and we saw Masked Trogon, Crested Quetzal, Scaly-naped Parrot, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Blue-capped Puffleg, Scaled and Tyrian Metaltails, Broad-winged Hawk, Pearled Treerunner, Chestnut-crested Cotinga, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, Blue-capped Tanager and the glorious Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager. In the evening we returned

to Tambo and were blown away by the display of more than a hundred Red-fronted Macaws. We watched them for over an hour, decking the trees all around us, shrieking, and glowing in the horizontal light of evening. Digiscopers snapped cheerfully, everyone was overwhelmed, Dianne was almost speechless. Ian, who has travelled very widely, declared it was one of the three most amazing wildlife spectacles he had ever seen.

Day 6

Saturday 19 November

Today saw us heading for San Rafael and Saipina. Normally we would search for macaws here but in our case the two we saw were academic. Nevertheless we added many new birds including two endemics – Cliff Parakeet and Bolivian Blackbird. Other new species included Cliff Swallow, Hepatic Tanager, Harris' Hawk, Spot-backed Puffbird, Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet and White-barred Piculet. In the evening a final visit to Tambo meant we caught up with the endemic Bolivian Earthcreeper.

Day 7

Sunday 20 November

Today's long drive back to Santa Cruz was pretty birdy. Great flocks of Plumbeous and Swallow-tailed Kites swirled over the road and roadside birds seen by members of the party included Spot-backed Puffbird, Red-crested Cardinal and Swainson's Hawk. This evening several of us visited the Pirai river to the west of Santa Cruz where we were entertained by a Toco Toucan, a wonderful flock of Chestnut-fronted Macaws, Grey-necked Woodrails scurrying into the riverbank, Greater Thornbirds and our only White-eyed Parakeets. On the sand beneath the bridge we had great looks at Yellow-browed Sparrows, Collared Plovers and two Sanderling.

Day 8

Monday 21 November

This morning saw six of the party leave (sadly) and the rest (also a little sadly at having to say good-bye to such great companions) carry on for the highlands tour. Thank you all for superb company and great birds.

Systematic list

Species named in bold letters were seen by the leader and at least one tour participant. Species marked [] were either heard only or, in a very few cases, seen by only one person.

Taxonomy and nomenclature are almost exclusively derived from **Hennessey, A. B., Herzog, S. K. & Sagot, F. 2003. *Lista Anotada de las Aves de Bolivia*. Quinta edición. Asociación Armonía/BirdLife International, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.** However, in the case of common names, British spellings are used here where American spellings are used in that publication.

Birds

RHEIDAE: RHEAS

Greater Rhea, *Rhea americana*: 'One of the main reasons we came to Bolivia was to see rheas' said Dick and Mary; words which strike fear into a leader's heart, especially coming as they did just after we had missed the normally reliable rheas in the savannah surrounding Viru Viru airport. However, we received a tip that on a dirt track behind the airport there were '*hartos piyos*' ('loads of rheas'). There were two; but we saw them very well and two rheas were much better than no rheas.

TINAMIDAE: TINAMOUS

[Grey Tinamou, *Tinamus tao*: we distantly heard the wonderful song of this species on our first day in Los Volcanes.]

[Brown Tinamou, *Crypturellus obsoletus*: heard by everyone at Los Volcanes and at Siberia. Only glimpsed crossing the entrance road at Los Volcanes.]

[Small-billed Tinamou, *Crypturellus parvirostris*: heard chiming from the savannah on our first day in Santa Cruz.]

[Tataupa Tinamou, *Crypturellus tataupa*: we heard the delightfully exuberant song of this species in the upper dry forest at Los Volcanes.]

[Red-winged Tinamou, *Rhyndotus rufescens*: on our first day we heard the plaintive four-note song of this large species both at Viru Viru and Lomas de Arena.]

[White-bellied Nothura, *Nothura boraquira*: heard singing close to the road at Lomas de Arena. An individual which burst into flight behind a bush, giving its distinctive flight call, was glimpsed by some. Aren't Tinamous just tricky to see?]

CRACIDAE: GUANS & CURASSOWS

Speckled Chachalaca, *Ortalis guttata*: a group seen on our first evening at Lomas de Arena.

Blue-throated Piping-Guan, *Pipile cumanensis*: the one we saw perched atop a tree in Los Volcanes on our first evening caused several people, who had already gone off for a rest, to come dashing in pursuit of this beautiful bird. Aka Common Piping-Guan, *Pipile pipile* and *Aburria pipile*. This is the subspecies *P. c. grayi*.

ANATIDAE: WATERFOWL

Brazilian Teal, *Amazonetta brasiliensis*: a pair seen in wet grassland on the first day at Viru Viru.

PODICIPEDIDAE: GREBES

Least Grebe, *Tachybaptus dominicus*: many on a small reservoir on the road back from San Rafael.

PHALACROCORACIDAE: CORMORANTS

Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*: seen on two days along rivers in the *Valles* region at the end of the tour. Aka *Phalacrocorax olivaceus*.

ARDEIDAE: HERONS & EGRETS

Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*: David found us a roosting individual of this species at Lomas de Arena on our first evening.

Striated Heron, *Butorides striatus*: seen both at Lomas de Arena (by the pond where we saw the two species of cardinal) and the next day at the Jardín Botánico.

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*: amazingly it took us until almost the end of the tour to see this super-abundant, hugely widespread species.

Cocoi Heron, *Ardea cocoi*: seen only on the last day of the tour. Aka White-necked Heron.

Great Egret, *Ardea alba*: seen on the first day in Santa Cruz and later at Saipina. Aka *Casmerodius albus* and Great White Egret.

Whistling Heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix*: we saw this pretty species on the first day at Viru Viru and Lomas de Arena..

THRESKIORNITHIDAE: IBISES & SPOONBILLS

Buff-necked Ibis, *Theristicus caudatus*: seen the first day at Viru Viru as we searched for Seriemas. Sam found a distant pair in flight as we drove back to Santa Cruz on the last day.

CICONIIDAE: STORKS

Wood Stork, *Mycteria americana*: one circled in the distant haze as we stopped at a toll on the road north of Viru Viru on the first day.

CATHARTIDAE: NEW WORLD VULTURES

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*: common, common, common. But no less elegant for it. Seen on every day of the tour.

Black Vulture, *Coragyps atratus*: also seen every day of the tour. I can't help wondering whether they feel inadequate at having to flap beside such consummate fliers as Turkey Vultures. Anthropomorphic, who me?

King Vulture, *Sarcoramphus papa*: seen on the drive into Los Volcanes but only distantly (David was rather underwhelmed at these views of one of his 'key species'). Luckily David and Dick had much better views of one as we walked out of Volcanes.

Andean Condor, *Vultur gryphus*: seen on all three days in Los Volcanes. Some spectacular views of adults landing on the cliffs above the lodge. A major scalp for most of the group.

ACCIPITRIDAE: HAWKS & EAGLES

Swallow-tailed Kite, *Elanoides forficatus*: this exceptionally graceful bird was seen on four days (even Sam who professes not to like raptors much was moved to admit they were *very* lovely). On the drives to and from the *Valles* region we saw huge flights mingling with equally huge flocks of Plumbeous Kites.

Snail Kite, *Rostrhamus sociabilis*: on the first day at Viru Viru and the second day at the Jardín Botánico. Once you are south of the Everglades this, and the rare, elusive Limpkin, are really very numerous birds.

Plumbeous Kite, *Ictinia plumbea*: seen on four days, notably in large migrating flocks on the day we drove back to Santa Cruz from Comarapa.

Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter striatus*: one seen briefly over the Hotel Paraíso in Comarapa. Note that this form is now generally split as the Plain-breasted Hawk, *Accipiter ventralis*, though this split is not recognised by the BirdLife International list I am using here.

Bicoloured Hawk, *Accipiter bicolor*: one seen in flight over the Jardín Botánico as we watched Black-tailed Tityras in a dead tree.

Savannah Hawk, *Buteogallus meridionalis*: seen on our first and second days. The (very cute) chick in the nest to the west of the Jardín Botánico was Mary's bird of the day.

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*: this magnificent, absurdly short-tailed, bird was seen on the full day spent in Los Volcanes.

Harris' Hawk, *Parabuteo unicinctus*: we briefly saw a flyover adult of this attractive species as we watched the Cliff Parakeets near Saipina.

Roadside Hawk, *Buteo magnirostris*: seen at Lomas de Arena and the Jardín Botánico. Heard on one day in Los Volcanes and then seen perched in the clearing as we prepared to leave.

Swainson's Hawk, *Buteo swainsoni*: seen over the Jardín Botánico on the second day and by the roadside on the last day as we returned from Comarapa.

White-tailed Hawk, *Buteo albicaudatus*: one circled languidly in the distance at Viru Viru on our first day.

Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus*: a brief flypast in the mist of an adult of this species at Siberia.

[Red-backed Hawk, *Buteo polysoma*: a brief, distant shadow in the mist at Siberia was almost certainly this species, lumped by many authors with Puna Hawk as Variable Hawk.]

FALCONIDAE: FALCONS & CARACARAS

Southern (Crested) Caracara, *Caracara plancus*: seen almost every day of the tour. Aka *Polyborus plancus*.

Yellow-headed Caracara, *Milvago chimachima*: seen only at the Jardín Botánico.

American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*: seen on three days, principally around Santa Cruz.

Peregrine, *Falco peregrinus*: seen on our first and last days in Los Volcanes. The first time I have seen this species there. A reminder for British and US birders alike of wind-whipped winter wetlands (when I left home, my father pulled me to one side and said, 'Son, never miss an opportunity for gratuitous alliteration.'). Somehow I doubt that Barry and Shrubby's next Peregrine at Titchwell will be accompanied by Turquoise-fronted Parrots but you can live in hope.

ARAMIDAE: LIMPKIN

Limpkin, *Aramus guarauna*: seen on all days around Santa Cruz and heard once in the *Valles* region.

RALLIDAE: RAILS & CRAKES

Grey-necked Wood-Rail, *Aramides cajanea*: heard duetting at the Jardín Botánico and subsequently seen from the bridge over the Piráí river on our last evening.

Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*: numerous on the Jardín Botánico pond and on the Least Grebe pond on the road to Saipina.

American Purple Gallinule, *Porphyrio martinica*: one or two on the pond at the Jardín Botánico. Aka *Porphyryla martinica*.

CARIAMIDAE: SERIEMAS

Red-legged Seriema, *Cariama cristata*: having heard the shrieking song of this species, we braved the blazing sun of the first day at Viru Viru and found a pair pacing through the savannah.

JACANIDAE: JACANAS

Wattled Jacana, *Jacana jacana*: seen at Lomas de Arena, the Jardín Botánico and the Least Grebe pond near Saipina.

CHARADRIIDAE: PLOVERS

Southern Lapwing, *Vanellus chilensis*: seen at Viru Viru on the first day. If only this handsome bird had a voice to match.

Collared Plover, *Charadrius collaris*: years ago I glued a pair of this species to the sand beneath the bridge over the Pirai. Just kidding but I have never failed to see them there with any group.

SCOLOPACIDAE: SANDPIPERS

Solitary Sandpiper, *Tringa solitaria*: one over the pond at the Jardín Botánico.

Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*: one over the river at Saipina as we watched the Cliff Parakeets.

Sanderling, *Calidris alba*: two adult winter birds on the sandbars at the Pirai. Always helpful to have keen Norfolk birders like Barry and Shrubby with you when claiming a sight record of a bird which is rare inland in South America but winters in thousands on the East Anglian coast.

COLUMBIDAE: PIGEONS & DOVES

Spot-winged Pigeon, *Columba maculosa*: a few people saw this species fly over the first quebrada at Tambo on our second evening there.

Band-tailed Pigeon, *Columba fasciata*: seen at Siberia.

Pale-vented Pigeon, *Columba cayannensis*: seen on all days around Santa Cruz.

Plumbeous Pigeon, *Columba plumbea*: common in Los Volcanes where we saw it every day.

Eared Dove, *Zenaida auriculata*: seen first at Viru Viru and then commonly around all the *Valles* sites.

Ruddy Ground-Dove, *Columbina talpacoti*: we saw this species on the first two days around Santa Cruz. A very handsome beast in all plumages.

Picui Ground-Dove, *Columbina picui*: very common throughout the tour.

White-tipped Dove, *Leptotila verreauxi*: abundant as ever in the dry *Valles* vegetation around Comarapa and Saipina.

Large-tailed Dove, *Leptotila megalura*: seen by some in Los Volcanes and Siberia. Very similar to the last species but browner and with a very distinctive five-note song.

PSITTACIDAE: PARROTS

Red-fronted Macaw, *Ara rubrogenys*: well wow! Never before have I seen such numbers of this **Bolivian endemic**. Never before have they put on such a spectacular display. The apparent setback of having to stay at Tambo put us in pole position for seeing this species there on our first evening in the *Valles*. We saw them fantastically that evening and hardly imagined that the following day we would watch over a hundred of them fly around us in circles and adorn the trees to every side of us. Simply amazing and truly moving. As a *yapa* we saw a pair at the usual site in San Rafael.

Chestnut-fronted Macaw, *Ara severa*: a group put on a real show for us on the last evening at the Pirai.

Blue-crowned Parakeet, *Aratinga acuticauda*: common in the *Valles* sites around Comarapa. Aka *Aratinga acuticaudata*.

Mitred Parakeet, *Aratinga mitrata*: seen in great numbers on five days of the tour including some great looks at San Rafael.

White-eyed Parakeet, *Aratinga leucophthalmus*: not seen until the last day by the Pirai river.

Dusky-headed Parakeet, *Aratinga weddellii*: identified by call ('dji dji') and seen quite distantly over the Jardín Botánico.

Green-cheeked Parakeet, *Pyrrhura molinae*: common at Los Volcanes and heard at San Rafael. A lovely bird.

Cliff Parakeet, *Myiopsitta luchsii*: our tip-off of a site for this species near Saipina paid off. Having heard them first, we had great views of this recently-split **Bolivian endemic**. Though physically quite similar to Monk Parakeets, *Myiopsitta monachus*, Cliff Parakeets differ subtly in their vocalisations and have a totally separate distribution. Perhaps the most striking difference is in their breeding behaviour. Monks build huge communal stick nests while Cliffs nest in, well, cliffs. Our views of these birds were greatly enhanced by Con's excellent scope – thanks Con for stoically carrying your scope around throughout the lowlands and highlands tours and for generously letting everyone see birds better with the help of your zoom.

Blue-winged Parrotlet, *Forpus xanthopterygius*: oh so pretty. We saw this lovely species on all days around Santa Cruz. Aka *Forpus crassirostris*.

Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, *Brotogeris chiriri*: these bright and beautiful birds were seen every day of the tour.

Red-billed Parrot, *Pionus sordidus*: seen on our full day in Los Volcanes. Remember: when identifying *Pionus* parrots, look for birds which look as if they seriously need lessons in flying. Birds of the genus *Amazona* by contrast have flying down to a fine art.

Scaly-headed Parrot, *Pionus maximiliani*: also a learner-flier, this typical lowland dry-forest species was seen as we entered the Jardín Botánico.

Turquoise-fronted Parrot, *Amazona aestiva*: numerous pairs flew over to roost in the evenings at Los Volcanes. Aka Blue-fronted Parrot.

Scaly-naped Parrot, *Amazona mercenaria*: seen several times in Siberia.

CUCULIDAE: CUCKOOS

Yellow-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus*: seen, fresh from the US, on our first evening at Lomas de Arena. We really had an excellent run of northern migrants on this tour.

Squirrel Cuckoo, *Piaya cayana*: seen at the Jardín Botánico and on two days in Los Volcanes.

Greater Ani, *Crotophaga major*: this handsome velvet-blue species was seen at Lomas de Arena.

Smooth-billed Ani, *Crotophaga ani*: not exactly handsome but very charismatic and common at the lowland sites we visited.

Guira Cuckoo, *Guira guira*: also common and also extremely charismatic.

STRIGIDAE: TYPICAL OWLS

[Band-bellied Owl, *Pulsatrix melanota*: heard only, on our first evening in Los Volcanes.]

[Great Horned Owl, *Bubo virginianus*: a pair of this magnificent species was heard duetting one morning before dawn at Tambo (shortly before Con was attacked by the guard dog). Some authors split this form as *Bubo magellanicus*.]

[Subtropical Pygmy-Owl, *Glaucidium parkeri*: this is the second tour in a row on which a participant, in this case Dick, has heard this species in the night in Los Volcanes and identified it from a whistled imitation of the bird.]

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, *Glaucidium brasilianum*: one of the best birds of the trip for many. He came in and perched in full view as we whistled an imitation of his song in order to draw in a flock (a very good flock as it happened) in the Jardín Botánico.

Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia*: adults and chicks seen beautifully at Viru Viru.

CAPRIMULGIDAE: NIGHTJARS

Scissor-tailed Nightjar, *Hydropsalis torquata*: seen by several people from the vehicle as we drove around the *Valles* region at dawn and dusk. What is it with birders and early mornings and late evenings? Aka *Hydropsalis brasiliana*.

[Rufous Nightjar, *Caprimulgus rufus*: heard singing its strident song on two nights in Los Volcanes.]

APODIDAE: SWIFTS

Chestnut-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne rutila*: seen in Siberia. Aka *Cypseloides rutilus*

White-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne zonaris*: these wonderfully large swifts were seen in Los Volcanes and on the day we went to Saipina.

Short-tailed Swift, *Chaetura brachyura*: common around Santa Cruz.

White-tipped Swift, *Aeronautes montivagus*: seen every day in Los Volcanes. We had earlier screamed the bus to a halt on the road for us to see some distant specks of this species, not knowing that they would be juggling and leaping through hoops of fire for us in Volcanes.

Andean Swift, *Aeronautes andecolus*: seen over a dry ridge on the drive up to Siberia.

TROCHILIDAE: HUMMINGBIRDS

Planalto Hermit, *Phaethornis pretrei*: seen on two days in Los Volcanes. As hermits go, this one is readily identifiable and very attractive.

Great-billed Hermit, *Phaethornis malaris*: seen briefly on our full day in Los Volcanes. Formerly considered conspecific with Long-tailed Hermit, *Phaethornis superciliosus*.

Sparkling Violetear, *Colibri coruscans*: we watched one of these beautiful birds feeding in the crown of an *Inga* tree at Los Volcanes, in the company of several other hummingbird species.

Glittering-bellied Emerald, *Chlorostilbon aureoventris*: this lovely hummingbird was seen in Samaipata and Comarapa.

Fork-tailed Woodnymph, *Thalurania furcata*: also seen feeding in the crown of the *Inga* tree in Los Volcanes. Also very beautiful.

Golden-tailed Sapphire, *Chrysuronia oenone*: in Los Volcanes we watched a resplendent, turquoise-headed male of this species in the canopy of the hummingbird-filled *Inga* tree.

White-bellied Hummingbird, *Amazilia chionogaster*: common at many lower valley sites including Samaipata (one of the lunch-stop new birds) and Comarapa. Singing their little hearts out at this time of year, albeit somewhat monotonously.

Violet-throated Starfrontlet, *Coeligena violifer*: isn't this a lovely bird? We saw it in all its rufous glory at Siberia.

[Amethyst-throated Sunangel, *Helianthus amethysticollis*: the distinctive purring call of this species was heard near the treeline at Siberia.]

Blue-capped Puffleg, *Eriocnemis glaucopoides*: also a very attractive bird and also seen well several times at Siberia.

Red-tailed Comet, *Sappho sparganura*: ah, the comet... always a favourite, we had many quick views of this stunning bird, and some very good ones, in dry scrub before reaching Siberia.

Tyrian Metaltail, *Metallura tyrianthina*: common at Siberia, more so than on any previous visit.

Scaled Metaltail, *Metallura aeneocauda*: seen briefly by a couple of us at Siberia.

Amethyst Woodstar, *Calliphlox amethystina*: hmmm, a tricky one. When we saw a female woodstar in the canopy of the distant *Inga* tree in Los Volcanes. I had no scruple in identifying it as White-bellied Woodstar *Aestrura mulsant* on the basis that this is the species that hangs around in the canopy of trees in foothill forests. However, I've since spoken to a friend from BirdLife International who has spent many months in Los Volcanes and he says that, despite the extreme difficulty of identifying the females of these species, and the fact that the woodstars in Volcanes *ought* to be White-bellied on the basis of distribution, he and his colleagues feel that the species at the site is Amethyst Woodstar which is normally considered to be much more Amazonian in distribution.

TROGONIDAE: TROGONS AND QUETZALS

Blue-crowned Trogon, *Trogon curucui*: a pair was seen beautifully at the Jardín Botánico. We saw this species again on two days in Los Volcanes.

Masked Trogon, *Trogon personatus*: found by David in Siberia and seen by those who could twist themselves into the right position for viewing.

Crested Quetzal, *Pharomachrus antisianus*: wow! A pair seen briefly by the roadside in Siberia responded to a whistled imitation of their song and flew across the road for all to see.

ALCEDINIDAE: KINGFISHERS

Ringed Kingfisher, *Ceryle torquata*: seen over the pond at the Jardín Botánico. Aka *Megaceryle torquata*.

MOMOTIDAE: MOTMOTS

Blue-crowned Motmot, *Momotus momota*: a pair seen perched on the roof of a shed (hardly 'nature red in tooth and claw') at the Jardín Botánico. Yet another absurdly beautiful bird.

BUCCONIDAE: PUFFBIRDS

White-eared Puffbird, *Nystalus chacurr*: one seen at Viru Viru as we hunted for Seriemas.

Spot-backed Puffbird, *Nystalus maculatus*: agonisingly only heard on our first evening at Tambo. We then saw this bird very well at Saipina. Sam saw one from the bus as we drove back to Santa Cruz on the last day.

Black-streaked Puffbird, *Malacoptila fulvogularis*: we had fantastic views of a pair of these subtly lovely birds on the afternoon of our full day in Los Volcanes. Janice, I am sure Ian will forgive you with time. However I can't imagine he'll ever forgive you for the oilbirds.

Black-fronted Nunbird, *Monasa nigrifrons*: seen very well at the Jardín Botánico. A very handsome creature with a thoroughly dippy song.

RAMPHASTIDAE: TOUCANS

Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, *Aulacorhynchus derbianus*: sharp-eyed David found us our only individual of this species in Los Volcanes.

[Chestnut-eared Aracari, *Pteroglossus castanotis*: amazingly we only heard this common bird, on our first evening at Lomas de Arena and the following day in the Jardín Botánico.]

Channel-billed Toucan, *Ramphastos vitellinus*: seen briefly by most people on the first two days in Los Volcanes and heard singing (if you can call it a song) on the last morning. Aka Yellow-ridged Toucan.

Toco Toucan, *Ramphastos toco*: we had great luck with this most wonderful bird, seeing a pair as we left Los Volcanes (which David and Dianne, expert toucan-spotters, had found and identified over beers during a 'break from birding' the day before). We then saw one fly over the Piráí, in wonderful light, on our last evening. Birds don't come much more charismatic than this.

PICIDAE: WOODPECKERS

White-barred Piculet, *Picumnus cirratus*: one heard calling at Tambo and one seen the next day at Saipina.

Ocellated Piculet, *Picumnus dorbignyianus*: Sam found and we all saw an individual of this distinctively scaled species in dry scrub on the way up to Siberia.

White-wedged Piculet, *Picumnus albosquamatus*: seen on our first evening at Lomas de Arena and heard the following day at the Jardín Botánico. Note that the taxonomy of piculets in Santa Cruz is complex and subject to future review. For the moment we are working on the basis that there are three species – and we saw them all. This species is also known as *Picumnus minutissimus*.

Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, *Melanerpes cruentatus*: seen commonly around Santa Cruz and, for the first time in my experience, heard in Los Volcanes. Sounds like a motorbike that won't start.

White-fronted Woodpecker, *Melanerpes cactorum*: common, and entertaining, in the dry *Valles* vegetation near Comarapa. We particularly liked its wing-lifting display from the top of a cactus.

Green-barred Flicker, *Colaptes melanochloros*: we saw this very attractive bird on all three days around Comarapa.

Campo Flicker, *Colaptes campestris*: this wonderful species performed well for us near Santa Cruz on the first day.

Red-necked Woodpecker, *Campephilus rubicollis*: seen fairly well at Los Volcanes. A very striking bird.

DENDROCOLAPTIDAE: WOODCREEPERS

Olivaceous Woodcreeper, *Sittasomus griseicapillus*: seen and heard at the Jardín Botánico and Los Volcanes.

[Straight-billed Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus pius* heard only, at the Jardín Botánico.]

[Ocellated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus ocellatus* we heard this species again and again in Los Volcanes but were never able to set eyes on it.]

Buff-throated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus guttatus*: seen repeatedly and very well at the Jardín Botánico where its songs and calls accompanied us all morning.

Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, *Lepidocolaptes angustirostris*: this lovely woodcreeper was very obliging. We saw it well at Lomas de Arena on the first evening, and every day around Tambo.

FURNARIIDAE: OVENBIRDS

Bolivian Earthcreeper, *Upucerthia harterti*: this **Bolivian endemic** was heard ('pssssssp') on our first two evening visits to Tambo. On our third evening Ian and Janice stayed in the hotel as sacrificial birders and, no surprise, the bird was seen quite well. Actually I think they were feeling under the weather but I like to think of them in an heroic light. As Dianne pointed out, we *deserved* to see the bird by the third evening.

Rufous Hornero, *Furnarius rufus*: this is one of *the* characteristic birds of the department of Santa Cruz and we saw them very often during the tour.

[Chotoy Spinetail, *Schoeniophylax phryganophila*: Unfortunately we only heard this intriguing species on our second day at the edge of the Jardín Botánico. But seriously, who would give a perfectly innocent bird a scientific name like that?]

Sooty-fronted Spinetail, *Synallaxis frontalis*: seen unconvincingly on our first two days in the *Valles* and finally seen very well (to David's satisfaction) in Saipina.

[Azara's Spinetail, *Synallaxis azarae* heard at Siberia. What were formerly three species along the chain of the Andes (Elegant, Azara's and Buff-browed) are currently being regarded as just one. Siberia is exactly at the point of overlap between the nominate form and what was formerly regarded as the Buff-browed Spinetail, *Synallaxis superciliosa*. The songs of all three forms are all but indistinguishable by ear.]

[Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, *Synallaxis scutata*: heard in Los Volcanes and seen by Sam when he was called to 'look upon the hedge'. Aka *Poecilurus scutatus*.]

Stripe-crowned Spinetail, *Cranioleuca pyrrhophia*: this lovely bird was seen well on the first evening at Tambo. Subsequently heard again at the same site.

[Rusty-vented Canastero, *Asthenes dorbigyi*: the shrieky, descending song of this species was heard in dry scrub before reaching Siberia.]

Common Thornbird, *Phacellodomus rufifrons*: seen under the cardinal-filled trees at Lomas de Arena. Aka Plain Thornbird and Rufous-fronted Thornbird.

Spot-breasted Thornbird, *Phacellodomus maculipectus*: the individual of this species which we saw in tall *Eucalyptus* on the way up to Siberia was very tricky to see but eventually almost everyone managed to get good enough looks.

Greater Thornbird, *Phacellodomus ruber*: heard at the Jardín Botánico but not seen until the last evening by the Pirai.

Pearled Treerunner, *Margarornis squamiger*: the gold-spangled southern form of this beautiful species was seen at Siberia.

[Buff-browed Foliage-Gleaner, *Syndactyla rufosuperciliata*: heard once at Siberia.]

[Buff-fronted Foliage-Gleaner, *Philydor rufum*: heard many times at Los Volcanes but only seen once by Sam.]

Grey-throated Leaf-tosser, *Sclerurus albigularis*: seen in flight on two or three occasions as it left its nest-hole near the lodge in Los Volcanes. Aka Grey-throated Leafscraper.

THAMNOPHILIDAE: TYPICAL ANTBIRDS

[Great Antshrike, *Taraba major*: heard only, at the Jardín Botánico.]

[Barred Antshrike, *Thamnophilus doliatus*: heard only, on our first and last evenings in Santa Cruz.]

[Chestnut-backed Antshrike, *Thamnophilus palliatus*: heard by David and Dick, in the garden of the BirdLife International research station, as we walked out of Los Volcanes.]

[Variable Antshrike, *Thamnophilus caeruleus*: a female of this species was glimpsed one evening at Tambo.]

Rufous-capped Antshrike, *Thamnophilus ruficapillus*: the male which we heard singing near Siberia was found on the hillside by the sharp eyes of Shrubby.

[Plain Antvireo, *Dysithamnus mentalis*: amazingly we only heard this species' quiet song at Los Volcanes where it is usually very obliging.]

Black-capped Antwren, *Herpsilochmus atricapillus*: true to form, and undaunted by the uncooperative behaviour of the antvireos, this species was seen well at the Jardín Botánico and in Los Volcanes.

[White-backed Fire-eye, *Pyriglena leuconota*: heard in the Jardín Botánico and on two days in Los Volcanes.]

FORMICARIIDAE: GROUND-ANTBIRDS

[Short-tailed Antthrush, *Chamaeza campanisona*: heard at Los Volcanes. What a great song.]

[Rufous-faced Antpitta, *Grallaria erythrotis*: this **Bolivian endemic** was heard only distantly, in Siberia.]

CONOPOPHAGIDAE

[Slaty Gnateater, *Conopophaga ardesiaca*: we heard this species on our first afternoon in Los Volcanes but it was only seen by Sam who saw a pair one afternoon when he went for a walk while others were resting.]

RHINOCRYPTIDAE: TAPACULOS

[Trilling Tapaculo, *Scytalopus parvirostris*: heard distantly, at Siberia. Formerly part of Unicoloured Tapaculo, *Scytalopus unicolor*.]

[Bolivian Tapaculo, *Scytalopus bolivianus*: heard very infrequently on two days in Los Volcanes. Aka Southern White-crowned Tapaculo.]

[Olive-crowned Crescentchest, *Melanopareia maximiliani*: heard distantly across the valley as we approached Siberia.]

TYRANNIDAE: TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

[Sclater's Tyrannulet, *Phyllomyias sclateri*: only heard once in Los Volcanes where in the dry season it is abundant.]

Greenish Elaenia, *Myiopagis viridicata*: seen at the Jardín Botánico where it is a very common species in the wet season.

White-crested Elaenia, *Elaenia albiceps*: seen well at Siberia.

Small-billed Elaenia, *Elaenia parvirostris*: common at this time of year in all *Valles* sites.

Highland Elaenia, *Elaenia obscura*: seen at Siberia. Subtly but distinctly different from the other *Elaenia* species found in the area.

[Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, *Camptostoma obsoletum*: I can't believe we only heard this very common species, and only on one day at that.]

Buff-banded Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus hellmayri*: heard repeatedly and seen well in mixed flocks in Siberia.

White-bellied Tyrannulet, *Serpophaga munda*: this attractively cold-grey tyrannulet, very distinctive once you know it, was seen on two days in the *Valles* region.

Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet, *Phaeomyias murina*: we had good views of this species in the tops of roadside trees at Saipina.

Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, *Stigmatura budytoides*: this delightful flycatcher kept some people waiting for good views, affording only glimpses at Tambo, but was finally seen well by everyone at the Cliff Parakeet site.

Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant, *Phylloscartes ophthalmicus*: heard several times in a flock near the lodge at Los Volcanes. Seen high in the canopy by some.

Sepia-capped Flycatcher, *Leptopogon amaurocephalus*: in Los Volcanes Sam found an incredibly distant individual of this species which several people were able to see through scopes.

Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, *Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer*: heard repeatedly on the ridge above Los Volcanes and around Tambo. Seen at the latter site on our second visit.

Yellow-olive Flycatcher, *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*: seen by some in the Jardín Botánico (in the 'Pygmy-Owl flock') and heard many times in Los Volcanes.

Bran-coloured Flycatcher, *Myiophobus fasciatus*: I *do* like this bird. This lovely tawny-striped species was seen several times around Tambo.

Cinnamon Flycatcher, *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea*: another very attractive rusty flycatcher and one we saw and heard ('prrrrr') at Siberia.

Cliff Flycatcher, *Hirundinea ferruginea*: and continuing the theme of handsome orange-toned flycatchers, we saw Cliff Flycatchers both in Los Volcanes (high up on the red sandstone cliffs) and in the *Valles* region.

Olive-sided Flycatcher, *Contopus cooperi*: several of these boreal migrants were to be seen on tall trees in the canopy around the lodge at Los Volcanes. Aka *Contopus borealis*, as in *Aurora* but far less call for flashing lights.

Smoke-coloured Pewee, *Contopus fumigatus*: several people, those who were collected last on the way out of Los Volcanes, saw this bird singing distantly in the canopy at that site.

Western Wood-Pewee, *Contopus sordidulus*: this boreal species was common around the lodge in Los Volcanes.

Eastern Wood-Pewee, *Contopus virens*: having identified the Westerns by plumage (duller with less prominent wingbars though this is very subtle) and by distribution, we then clearly heard the plaintive two-note call of an Eastern ('pewee'). This constitutes the onomatopoeic first record for the department of Santa Cruz. Had we seen a Tropical Pewee (white-lored for all to see) we would have finished the genus *Contopus* for Bolivia.

Black Phoebe, *Sayornis nigricans*: this bird was, as always, common and lovely on the streams around Los Volcanes.

Andean Tyrant, *Knipolegus signatus*: we briefly saw a female of this species at Siberia before later being treated to the dive-bombing display of the male. Janice stayed to watch the male as the rest of the group walked on a short way further.

White-winged Black-Tyrant, *Knipolegus aterrimus*: lovely males and lovely females seen in dry vegetation below Siberia.

Yellow-browed Tyrant, *Satrapa icterophrys*: seen briefly over lunch at Samaipata and on the approach to Siberia. A very attractive flycatcher.

Black-backed Water-Tyrant, *Fluvicola albiventer*: seen on the first evening at Lomas de Arena and again at the Jardín Botánico the following day. *Also* a very attractive flycatcher. It's all a myth that tyrant flycatchers are dull and boring – the perpetrators of the myth should come to Bolivia and see the wonderful birds this family has to offer.

Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca rufipectoralis*: this charming bird was seen very nicely at Siberia.

Cattle Tyrant, *Machetornis rixosus*: common around Santa Cruz.

Social Flycatcher, *Myiozetetes similis*: seen perched incongruously on a huge sign at Lomas de Arena. I like this group of similar flycatchers, each species subtly different from the others.

Great Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*: bizarrely, we heard kiskadees on four days and only managed to see them on a couple of days. Something's wrong with the world.

Golden-crowned Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*: heard first, giving its squeaky-toy call, and then seen very well on several occasions at Los Volcanes. Subtly lovely – I especially like the moss-green tones.

Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes luteiventris*: continuing our lucky streak with the genus *Myiodynastes* in Los Volcanes, we several times saw this handsome northern migrant.

Streaked Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes maculatus*: also at Volcanes we repeatedly saw and heard Streaked Flycatchers, thereby completing the genus for Bolivia.

Variegated Flycatcher, *Empidonomus varius*: and when you're on a roll... just for the sake of comparison with the above species, we had great looks at a pair of Variegated Flycatchers, also in Los Volcanes.

Crowned Slaty Flycatcher, *Empidonomus aurantatrocristatus*: this plain-plumaged cousin of the Variegated Flycatcher (with a sinfully long and complicated scientific name) was common in all sites in the dry *Valles* region.

Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*: seen every day of the tour.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus savanna*: just lovely. We saw this species on our first two days around Santa Cruz.

Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*: I think we may have rather overcatered on Eastern Kingbirds. Swirling hordes in Santa Cruz.

[Rufous Casiornis, *Casiornis rufa*: unfortunately we only heard this pretty species, and only once at that, in Los Volcanes ('piiiint').]

[Dusky-capped Flycatcher, *Myiarchus tuberculifer*: a surprise that we only heard this species, on two days, in Los Volcanes. It is generally to be seen in every flock. But then again, where were the flocks?]

COTINGIDAE: COTINGAS

Black-tailed Tityra, *Tityra cayana*: a pair seen very well in dead trees on the edge of the Jardín Botánico. Note that tityras are currently considered cotingas again.

Masked Tityra, *Tityra semifasciata*: we watched a pair attending their nest in a tree at the edge of the clearing in Los Volcanes.

[White-winged Becard, *Pachyramphus polychopterus*: Dick and David heard one of these pretty birds on the walk out of Volcanes. Also a recent return to the cotinga family, having been a flycatcher for some time. It must be awfully confusing for them.]

Crested Becard, *Pachyramphus validus*: males of this subtle-plumaged species were seen at the Jardín Botánico and at Siberia.

Chestnut-crested Cotinga, *Ampelion rufaxilla*: At Siberia I was called to identify a bird in Con's scope and it turned out to be one of these rare and little-known birds.

White-tipped Plantcutter, *Phytotoma rutila*: very common in the *Valles* around Comarapa, Tambo and Saipina. Formerly placed in the now defunct Plantcutter family, Phytotomidae.

PIPRIDAE: MANAKINS

Yungas Manakin, *Chiroxiphia boliviana*: we heard this charming bird often at Los Volcanes and most people managed to get reasonable views.

VIREONIDAE: VIREOS

Red-eyed Vireo, *Vireo olivaceus*: seen well in the Jardín Botánico, around Tambo and on the road to Siberia. We also heard its aimless song in Los Volcanes. Split by some authors as Chivi Vireo, *Vireo chivi*. This form does not have a red eye – if you see a vireo with a red eye in Bolivia, it's Yellow-Green.

CORVIDAE: JAYS

Purplish Jay, *Cyanocorax cyanomelas*: this noisy, attractive beast was seen repeatedly and very well at Los Volcanes.

Plush-crested Jay, *Cyanocorax chrysops*: this lovely bird was seen at Lomas de Arena on the first evening and was common and vocal in Los Volcanes, particularly around the clearing.

HIRUNDINIDAE: SWALLOWS & MARTINS

Brown-chested Martin, *Progne tapera*: elegant and streamlined, this species was seen on our first day near Viru Viru and on our last day on the way back to Santa Cruz. Aka *Phaeoprogne tapera*.

Purple Martin, *Progne subis*: high around the sandstone cliffs of Los Volcanes we repeatedly saw groups of these northern migrants.

Grey-breasted Martin, *Progne chalybea*: seen on our first two days around Santa Cruz.

Blue-and-White Swallow, *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*: seen surprisingly little as this is a very common bird in dry valleys of the Andes. Aka *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*.

Tawny-headed Swallow, *Alopochelidon fucata*: seen extremely well over fields around Tambo, allowing us to see all of the features which distinguish this lovely bird from Southern Rough-wing.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*: Dick saw an individual of this common species among the hordes of swallows over the Jardín Botánico.

Bank Swallow, *Riparia riparia*: a few were seen with the numerous Barn Swallows over the Jardín Botánico on the second day. Aka Sand Martin, of course.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*: seen on the first day and in big numbers over the Jardín Botánico on the second day.

Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*: many seen over the irrigated fields at San Rafael. Aka *Hirundo pyrrhonota*.

TROGLODYTIDAE: WRENS

Thrush-like Wren, *Campylorhynchus turdinus*: seen and heard in riotous duet around Santa Cruz on our first couple of days.

[Moustached Wren, *Thryothorus gnibarbix* heard only in Los Volcanes.]

House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*: seen or heard virtually everywhere we went and on virtually every day of the tour. Split by some as Southern House Wren, *Troglodytes musculus*.

POLIOPTILIDAE: GNATCATCHERS

Masked Gnatcatcher, *Polioptila dumicola*: this delightful species was common in the *Valles* region around Comarapa and Tambo.

TURDIDAE: THRUSHES

[Spotted Nightingale Thrush, *Catharus dryas* in the distance at Siberia we heard the charming, ethereal song of this lovely bird.]

Swainson's Thrush, *Catharus ustulatus*: seen every day in Los Volcanes where in the wet season it is among the most numerous birds (the BirdLife International researchers who work there frequently run out of B rings because so many Swainson's Thrushes fall in their nets).

Chiguanco Thrush, *Turdus chiguanco*: seen in upper dry valley vegetation the day we went to Siberia. Its name derives from the Quechua *chiwanku*

Glossy Black Thrush, *Turdus serranus*: seen very nicely in Siberia.

[Andean Slaty Thrush, *Turdus nigricaps*: we heard the directionless muttering of this species a couple of times in Siberia. Could do with singing lessons from a thrush which sings with purpose, perhaps a Mistle Thrush.]

Rufous-bellied Thrush, *Turdus rufiventris*: having heard this species repeatedly, we finally saw one singing its cheerful, repetitive song on the top of a dead tree in the clearing in Los Volcanes. We then saw several more around Comarapa and Tambo.

Creamy-bellied Thrush, *Turdus amaurochalinus*: ultra-common, as always, around Santa Cruz and Comarapa.

[Hauxwell's Thrush, *Turdus hauxwelli*: Now *that's* a thrush that knows how to sing. We heard the lovely song of this forest bird in the Jardín Botánico.]

MIMIDAE: MOCKINGBIRDS

Chalk-browed Mockingbird, *Mimus saturninus*: we saw this rakish bird very well as we drove to Lomas de Arena on our first evening.

THRAUPIDAE: TANAGERS

Rust-and-Yellow Tanager, *Thlypopsis ruficeps*: this lovely bird was seen in mixed flocks at Siberia.

Grey-headed Tanager, *Eucometis penicillata*: seen in a mixed flock in the Jardín Botánico.

Silver-beaked Tanager, *Ramphocelus carbo*: oh so handsome. We saw these glorious birds every day at Los Volcanes.

Sayaca Tanager, *Thraupis sayaca*: very common throughout the trip.

Palm Tanager, *Thraupis palmarum*: easily seen in the clearing at Los Volcanes where a pair was nesting in a *tajibo* tree.

Blue-capped Tanager, *Thraupis cyanocephala*: we saw this very attractive bird in mixed flocks at Siberia.

Blue-and-Yellow Tanager, *Thraupis bonariensis*: wonderfully beautiful. This striking bird was first seen over lunch at Samaipata. We subsequently saw it several times in the *Valles* – stunning males and subtle grey females.

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, *Anisognathus somptuosus*: and staying with the theme of wonderfully beautiful birds, we saw this eye-catcher (which by the way also has a very jazzy song) in mixed flocks in Siberia.

Blue Dacnis, *Dacnis cayana*: seen twice in the clearing at Los Volcanes.

Guira Tanager, *Hemithraupis guira*: seen in a canopy flock in the Jardín Botánico.

Plushcap, *Catamblyrhynchus diadema*: Sam identified a flash-past individual of this species in a flock at Siberia and some others were lucky enough to get onto it. The taxonomy of this species is unclear. It has been a finch, it has been placed in its own family - Catamblyrhynchidae - and now it's a tanager.

Common Bush-Tanager, *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*: common at Siberia.

Hepatic Tanager, *Piranga flava*: seen well at Saipina on our last day in the *Valles*. Both Ridgely & Tudor (Birds of South America Volume 1) and Isler & Isler (The Tanagers) treat all forms of Hepatic Tanager as one species but recognise the possible existence of three species. By behaviour and habitat, the form we saw on the lowlands tour would most likely be the Highland Hepatic Tanager *Piranga lutea* (as opposed to the Northern Hepatic Tanager *Piranga hepatica* of North and Central America and the Lowland Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* principally of the south eastern lowlands of South America). Note, however, that the area in which we saw Hepatic Tanagers is precisely the area of contact between the putative Lowland and Highland species and the two forms are very similar.

Purple-throated Euphonia, *Euphonia chlorotica*: heard many times but only seen on a couple of occasions. Most people caught up with this pretty bird by the road at Saipina, exactly where we also saw Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet and White-barred Piculet.

Thick-billed Euphonia, *Euphonia laniirostris*: seen in the clearing on both evenings we spent in Los Volcanes. So predictable are these birds that I haven't had to change a word of that sentence from my last Naturetrek report.

EMBERIZIDAE: FINCHES & NEW WORLD SPARROWS

Rufous-collared Sparrow, *Zonotrichia capensis*: seen very commonly in the *Valles* around Comarapa and Tambo. Handsome all the same.

Grassland Sparrow, *Ammodramus humeralis*: seen on our first day at Viru Viru and, surprisingly, seen perched on a fence at Los Negros on the drive to Comarapa.

Yellow-browed Sparrow, *Ammodramus aurifrons*: we saw three of these subtle fawn-coloured sparrows singing their grasshopper-like song on the sand beneath the bridge over the Pirai river.

Grey-crested Finch, *Lophospingus griseocristatus*: abundant around Comarapa, Tambo and Saipina.

Bolivian Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza boliviana*: this **Bolivian virtual endemic** (just creeps into extreme north Argentina) was seen very nicely in dry scrub on the road up to Siberia.

Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza hypochondria*: as we watched the Bolivian Warbling-Finches, Sam found a Rufous-sided in the same tree. We later had several good looks and were able to see all the features that distinguish these two very pretty species.

Black-and-Chestnut Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza whittii*: also at the same site we saw these striking birds. And we saw them again the following day at San Rafael. Formerly considered conspecific with Black-and-Rufous Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza nigrorufa*.

Ringed Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza torquata*: also a lovely bird, we saw this species every day we spent in the *Valles*.

Black-capped Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza melanoleuca*: first seen, by just the tour participants, over lunch at Samaipata. At first they disagreed over the bird's identity (Thick-billed Gnatcatcher was mooted, and for that matter invented) but I'm pleased to say the correct identity was reached. We then saw them many times, making their little 'zip' calls, around Tambo.

Saffron Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis flaveola*: common at many sites throughout the trip. Seen every day, even, surprisingly, in Los Volcanes.

Wedge-tailed Grassfinch, *Emberizoides herbicola*: we saw a pair of this species at the rhea site near Viru Viru on our first day.

Great Pampa-Finch, *Embernagra platensis*: seen well by the road as we drove up to Siberia. Attractive and entertaining.

Blue-black Grassquit, *Volatinia jacarina*: seen on several days. We especially enjoyed a male performing his high-jumping display in fallow fields on the edge of the Jardín Botánico.

[Double-collared Seedeater, *Sporophila caerulea*: seen by Sam in a distant flock of Band-tailed Seedeaters at Saipina.]

White-bellied Seedeater, *Sporophila leucoptera*: seen on our first day in Santa Cruz. Some authors split this distinctive black-and-white form (through most of eastern South America they are grey-and-white) as Bicoloured Seedeater, *Sporophila bicolor*.

Tawny-bellied Seedeater, *Sporophila hypoxantha*: Sam found us a migrant male of this attractive cinnamon-bellied species in rough grass on the edge of the Jardín Botánico.

Band-tailed Seedeater, *Catamenia analis*: seen in dry hillsides on the way up to Siberia and in fields at Saipina. Common but very lovely.

Saffron-billed Sparrow, *Arremon flavirostris*: seen by the bridge over the river in Los Volcanes on two days.

Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, *Atlapetes rufinucha*: though the taxonomy is not universally accepted, many argue that the form we saw is a separate species and therefore a **Bolivian endemic**. We eventually saw them well at Siberia after many tantalising glimpses.

Red Pileated Finch, *Coryphospingus cucullatus*: we saw this very attractive species by the roadside at Los Negros on the way to Comarapa. Aka Red-crested Finch.

Red-crested Cardinal, *Paroaria coronata*: having heard their lovely lilting song we were treated to fantastic golden-evening-light views of this glorious bird on top of a *apesí* tree at Lomas de Arena. Mary saw this species again by the roadside on our drive back to Santa Cruz.

Red-capped Cardinal, *Paroaria gularis*: Also a stunner. We saw this bird in exactly the same spot as the last species, though true to form the Red-capped were lurking close to water. Lovers of splits watch out: clever DNA-minded people are suggesting that the birds south of Amazonia are not the same as the birds north of Amazonia so there is probably an armchair tick in the pipeline (where *else* would you hear a sentence like that?).

CARDINALIDAE: GROSBEAKS & SALTATORS

Black-backed Grosbeak, *Pheucticus aureoventris*: seen on many occasions in the *Valles*. We frequently were treated to its rich, bright song.

[Greyish Saltator, *Saltator coerulescens*: amazingly we only managed to hear the delightfully bouncy song of this common species on our last evening by the Pirai.]

Golden-billed Saltator, *Saltator aurantiirostris*: not nearly as numerous as expected in the *Valles*. We nonetheless had many good looks at this striking bird and very frequently heard its explosive song ('pit soot swiiiu').

Ultramarine Grosbeak, *Cyanocompsa brissonii*: I *do* love this bird. One was glimpsed as we drove into Los Volcanes, and, thank goodness, everyone later had good looks at males and melted-milk-chocolate females in the *Valles* around Tambo.

PARULIDAE: NEW WORLD WARBLERS

Tropical Parula, *Parula pitiayumi*: this is a tremendously common bird and it is amazing to me that we saw it so little. Having heard them in the Jardín Botánico and all over Los Volcanes, some people finally caught up with one on our visit to Saipina.

Masked Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis aequinoctialis*: we saw males and females of this species on many occasions in the clearing at Los Volcanes. We saw the species again at San Rafael. For the split-aficionados, this species is recognised by some authors as the Southern Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis velata*.

Brown-capped Whitestart, *Myioborus brunniceps*: we saw this very lovely bird on our drive up to Siberia. Aka Brown-capped Redstart.

Spectacled Whitestart, *Myioborus melanocephalus*: common, but very beautiful, in mixed flocks in Siberia. Aka Spectacled Redstart.

Two-banded Warbler, *Basileuterus bivittatus*: super-abundant, as always, in Los Volcanes.

Pale-legged Warbler, *Basileuterus signatus*: heard first and then seen at Siberia, though always in fairly dense vegetation.

Golden-crowned Warbler, *Basileuterus culicivorus*: heard singing and eventually seen joining a canopy flock at the Jardín Botánico.

ICTERIDAE: NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS

Dusky-Green Oropendola, *Psarocolius atrovirens*: common at Los Volcanes where the cliffs reverberated with its bizarre metallic call ('chwoink').

Crested Oropendola, *Psarocolius decumanus*: seen frequently at Lomas de Arena, the Jardín Botánico and Los Volcanes. Common but really very beautiful.

[Solitary Black Cacique, *Cacias solitarius* heard calling ('waargh') on our first evening at Lomas de Arena.]

Troupial, *Icterus icterus*: this gloriously bright bird was seen glowing in evening light at Lomas de Arena and was seen again at the Jardín Botánico. Wow! Split by some as Orange-backed Troupial, *Icterus croconotus*.

Chopi Blackbird, *Gnorimopsar chopi*: common and delightfully vocal, as always, around Santa Cruz.

Chestnut-capped Blackbird, *Chrysosomus ruficapillus*: seen singing from *Typha* reedmace on our visit to the Jardín Botánico. This bird is *always* in *Typha* reedmace. Aka *Agelaius ruficapillus*.

Bolivian Blackbird, *Oreopsar bolivianus*: our sighting of a group at the Cliff Parakeet site in Saipina was the second record of this **Bolivian endemic genus** for the department of Santa Cruz. The first was on Naturetrek's Bolivia tour this year in July and August so, bizarrely, only Naturetrek tour participants have ever seen the Bolivian Blackbird in Santa Cruz. We had great views of the dull brown wings on the three birds we saw this time. We also heard their distinctive, hard calls.

Baywing, *Agelaioides badius*: very common around Comarapa and Tambo. Formerly Bay-winged Cowbird, *Molothrus badius*.

Giant Cowbird, *Molothrus oryzivorus*: seen at the Jardín Botánico and in Los Volcanes.

Shiny Cowbird, *Molothrus bonariensis*: very numerous, and seen every day except our full day in Volcanes. The lustrous males are gorgeous, however common they may be.

White-browed Blackbird, *Sturnella superciliaris*: seen in the savannah around Viru Viru on our first day.

FRINGILLIDAE: OLD WORLD FINCHES & SISKINS

Hooded Siskin, *Carduelis magellanica*: seen in large flocks in the clearing at Los Volcanes and several times at Tambo.

Mammals

CEBIDAE: LARGER NEW WORLD MONKEYS

['Dusky' Titi, *Callicebus donacophilus*: we heard this charmingly vocal species on our last evening by the river Pirai. Note that the 'Dusky' Titi was formerly a sprawling mess including many highly different forms which are now recognised as species. The specific name of the monkeys present in Santa Cruz means 'lover of reeds', presumably because they are often to be found along rivers. Or perhaps because of their great skill at thatching.]

[Brown Capuchin, *Cebus apella*: heard only in the forest at Los Volcanes.]

CANIDAE: DOGS

Chacoan Fox, *Pseudalopex gymnocercus*: the mangy individual of this species we saw on two evenings at Tambo was hardly an advert for his species. But we liked him.

SCIURIDAE: SQUIRRELS

Bolivian Squirrel, *Sciurus ignitus*: one seen at the Jardín Botánico.

CAVIIDAE: CAVIES

Wild Cavy, *Cavia* sp. or *Galea* sp.: Disillusioned by the lack of herds of Wildebeest, David had to turn his penchant for mammals to this species which we saw well every day in the *Valles* region.

LEPORIDAE: RABBITS

European Hare, *Lepus europaeus*: I am breaking my own rule about not including feral species (no House Sparrows or Feral Pigeons here) to mention the hare we saw running along the road in our headlights before dawn (*long long* before dawn) as we drove to San Rafael. European Hares have been present in Bolivia for some time and are widespread in dry habitats in the Andes. Aka Brown Hare and *Lepus capensis*.

While on subject of mammals, I remember fondly the large carnivore prints I was called to identify along the river at Los Volcanes. They belonged to Cachulina, Carlos' dog. However... they led us to a fine discussion of Cheetahs (being the only cats which leave claw prints). 'It's been a bad year for them in Bolivia' said Dick. Too right it has – I haven't seen a single one.

Reptiles

TEIIDAE

Tegu, *Tupinambis* sp.: we saw one of these giant lizards along a forest trail in Los Volcanes. The identification and taxonomy of the genus are complex and subject to revision (which is leader-speak for 'it's all Greek to me'). A friend who is a very expert herpetologist tells me that he would have expected *Tupinambis rufescens*, of the Chaco and *Valles* in Los Volcanes. However, *T. rufescens*, being, as its name implies, rufescent is among the more readily identified species (even *I* can identify it) and our animal, which was silver and black, was clearly not one. My friend therefore suggests *Tupinambis teguixin* (whence the name Tegu), which is an Amazonian species and theoretically out of its altitudinal range in Los Volcanes. Certainly the one we saw *looked* like the hundreds of *T. teguixin* I have seen in Amazonia. 'Unless it's a new species,' quoth my friend.