

# Bolivia - Lowlands (BB)

Naturetrek Tour Report

11 - 20 November 2007

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Report compiled by Nick Acheson



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|---------------|--|
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## Day 0

**Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> November**

Depart the UK

## Day 1

**Monday 12<sup>th</sup> November**

A day of three airports: La Paz in the early hours (ok, I accept, on the basis of video evidence, that it was a Vermillion Flycatcher, but they are really never found there and in any case this is completely the wrong time of year for them to be in Bolivia), El Trompillo, and Viru Viru. By our good fortune we were able to watch birds at the third of these airports, notching up two of South America's most charismatic birds – Greater Rhea and Red-legged Seriema – in addition to a fine supporting cast of Red-winged Tinamou, Ringed and Brazilian Teals, Burrowing Owl, Southern Lapwing, Guira Cuckoo, Blue-winged Parrotlet and White-eyed Parakeet.

## Day 2

**Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> November**

Early this morning we visited the Jardín Botánico de Santa Cruz where the world-famous mosquitoes were notable by their near-complete absence (phew!). We saw some great birds here, including Blue-crowned Motmot, Blue-crowned Trogon, Rufous-sided Crake, Yellow- and Dark-billed Cuckoos, Sick's Swift, White Woodpecker, Black-banded, Buff-throated and Narrow-billed Woodcreepers, Rufous Casiornis, Swainson's Flycatcher, Crested Becard and Red-crested Cardinal. Silvery Marmosets, Capybara and Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth were also greatly appreciated here. We lunched in Santa Cruz at the ever-popular Casarão (Brazilian delights by the kilo) and in the afternoon we journeyed on to Los Volcanes to be greeted by Andean Condor, King Vulture, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Turquoise-fronted Parrot, throngs of Mitred Parakeets, White-tipped Swift, and more Swainson's Thrushes than can possibly fit into North America in the boreal summer.

## Day 3

### Wednesday 14th November

Our full day in the forests of Los Volcanes afforded us encounters with many delightful birds including light-winged Plumbeous Kites, Bicoloured Hawk, Large-tailed Dove, Blue-headed and Red-billed Parrots, Chestnut-eared Aracari, Golden-Olive Woodpecker, Buff-fronted Foliage-Gleaner, Black-capped Antwren, Plain Antvireo, Yungas Manakin (yay!), Sclater's Tyrannulet, Smoke-colored Pewee, Yellow-browed Tyrant (a from-the-hammock view of a stunning species which was unusually numerous on this tour), Golden-crowned, Streaked and Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers (thereby finishing the genus *Myiodynastes* for Bolivia in one day) Masked Tityra, White-necked Thrush, Blue-browed, White-winged and Black-goggled Tanagers, Blue-naped Chlorophonia and seething masses of Two-banded Warblers. All this to the sound of Dusky-Green Oropendolas chwoinking overhead and the rolling laughter of Turquoise-fronted Parrots, and all set against the backdrop of towering sandstone cliffs. Heavenly place, Los Volcanes....

## Day 4

### Thursday 15th November

After early birding in Los Volcanes (huge numbers of Sulphur-bellied Flycatchers and Swainson's Thrushes in a fruiting tree), we left the lodge en route to Tambo. Over lunch in Samaipata we saw a rare White-vented Violetear among commoner species. Further on, favoured by wonderfully cloudy weather, we made roadside stops in dry valley vegetation, seeing Brown-capped Whitestart, White-tipped Plantcutter, Ringed and Black-capped Warbling-Finches, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Stripe-crowned Spinetail, Streak-fronted Thornbird, White-fronted Woodpecker, the dramatic and obliging Cream-coloured Woodpecker, White-bellied and Mouse-coloured Tyrannulets, Masked Gnatcatcher, Black-backed and Ultramarine Grosbeaks and, fortuitously, the endemic Bolivian Earthcreeper. At the quebradas behind Monteblanco (Tambo) we completed today's flycatcher-fest, seeing many Small-billed Elaenias and Bran-coloured Flycatchers and a Brown-crested Flycatcher. Also here we heard and very briefly saw the star bird of the trip, the endemic, endangered Red-fronted Macaw, and we were thrilled by Scissor-tailed Nightjars as we walked back through the dusk.

## Day 5

### Friday 16th November

Today was endemic parrot day and, as such, entailed a very early morning. But it was all worth it as, long before dawn, a Geoffroy's Cat bolted across the road and at first light we were already birding at San Rafael. Macaws were certainly to be seen but somewhat distantly and in poor light; and, as we were later to see, the light is critical when watching this dazzlingly beautiful bird. However, we also saw numerous other goodies here including Spot-backed Puffbird, Black-and-Chestnut Warbling-Finch, Great Pampa-Finch and Cliff Swallow. A short drive took us on to Saipina where almost immediately we found our first pair of Cliff Parakeets hanging from the cliff above us, flanked by Cliff Flycatchers and Southern Martins. Later we saw many more of these charming endemic parakeets and we also tracked down several Southern Scrub Flycatchers. In the afternoon, right over Monteblanco and in the quebradas, we were treated to superb and sustained looks at dozens more macaws, all in perfect golden light; and an Aplomado Falcon zipped by for good measure.

## Day 6

### Saturday 17th November

Another early morning saw us en route to Siberia. Alas at our first stop, at dawn, we knew in our hearts that strong wind would be the bane of our day and so it proved.

Numerous Red-tailed Comets pinged past us in the dry scrub leading up to Siberia but it was hard to see anything on most of them. At Siberia the flocks were held at bay by the continued violent wind, though in sheltered corners we succeeded in seeing some beautiful birds including Green Violetear, Blue-capped Puffleg, Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant, Dusky-capped and Pale-edged Flycatchers, Pale-footed Swallow, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager and Rufous-naped (Bolivian) Brush-Finch. Overhead we were treated to Short-tailed, Red-backed, Broad-winged and Roadside Hawks (quite the Buteo-identification workshop) and perfect Swallow-tailed Kites.

## Day 7

Sunday 18th November

Today's long drive back to Santa Cruz was broken by some excellent birding. At our first stop, still in dry valley vegetation, we saw some much-sought (not least by me!) and attractive birds including Dusky-legged Guan, Dot-fronted Woodpecker, White-barréd Piculet, Orange-headed Tanager and Variable Antshrike. Our next stop, in transitional vegetation between the dry valleys and the upper altitudinal limit of the Chiquitano dry forest, we saw an Ocellated Piculet and, high overhead, a Solitary Eagle. Tonight the lowlands-only clients were sent off to La Paz after a delightful evening walk through the Viru Viru savannahs with Long-winged Harriers quartering the grass.

## Day 8

Monday 19th November

And so to the highlands tour – and its fabulous birds- for the rest of the group....home!

**Summary:** Tremendous thanks are due to Clemente, Carlos and Benita who took such care of us in Los Volcanes, to the people of Monteblanco for getting up so very early to serve us breakfast. Thanks too to our tireless and ever-smiling driver Leo for so much more than driving, and to his friend Don Alfredo who drove us back from Tambo. Final thanks to each of you for your joyful humour, your sharp eyes, keen interest in Bolivia's birds, and great company.

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## Systematic list

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

Taxonomy and nomenclature are largely 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***: seen with consummate ease at Viru Viru on the first day.

### TINAMIDAE: TINAMOUS

[Brown Tinamou, *Crypturellus obsoletus*: heard on no fewer than four days, at Los Volcanes and at Siberia.]

[Small-billed Tinamou, *Crypturellus parvirostris*: heard chiming from the savannah at Viru Viru and again the next day on the edge of the Jardín Botánico.]

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

[Undulated Tinamou, *Crypturellus undulatus*: heard oh-so-close-to-us at the Jardín Botánico but, alas, not seen.]

**Red-winged Tinamou, *Rhynchotus rufescens***: at last: a tinamou we actually saw! One flew out from long grass on our first day at Viru Viru and another was seen by the members of the group who went on to the highlands tour as we drove into the same site to catch our plane to Cochabamba.

**White-bellied Nothura, *Nothura boraquira***: also seen at Viru Viru on the first day and heard the following day at the Jardín Botánico. Known in lowland Bolivia as *chepi*.

### CRACIDAE: GUANS & CURASSOWS

**Dusky-legged Guan, *Penelope obscura***: a small group was seen in dry valley vegetation on the day we returned to Santa Cruz from Tambo.

[Spix's Guan, *Penelope jacquacu*: we heard the wonderfully weird vocalisations of this bird in the pre-breakfast chorus at Los Volcanes one morning.]

**ANATIDAE: WATERFOWL**

**White-faced Whistling-Duck, *Dendrocygna viduata*:** this lovely bird was seen at Viru Viru on our last evening in Santa Cruz.

**Comb Duck, *Sarkidiornis melanotos*:** a formation of these scarce birds flew over us near Viru Viru on the first day.

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

**Ringed Teal, *Callonetta leucophrys*:** this is a very good bird for the city of Santa Cruz, not to mention a very lovely one. We saw a handful at Viru Viru both on our first day and on the last evening.

**PODICIPEDIDAE: GREBES**

**Least Grebe, *Tachybaptus dominicus*:** seen at Viru Viru, on the pond at the Jardín Botánico and on the small reservoir on the road back from San Rafael.

**Pied-billed Grebe, *Podilymbus podiceps*:** seen alongside Least Grebes (for ease of comparison) on the pond at the Jardín Botánico.

**PHALACROCORACIDAE: CORMORANTS**

**Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*:** seen on five days around Santa Cruz and in the dry valley region. Aka *Phalacrocorax olivaceus*.

**ARDEIDAE: HERONS & EGRETS**

**Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*:** seen at its usual roost in trees over the pond at the Jardín Botánico.

**Rufescent Tiger-Heron, *Tigrisoma lineatum*:** seen in wet grass at Viru Viru on the first day.

**Striated Heron, *Butorides striatus*:** just one, at the Jardín Botánico.

**Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*:** seen on three days around Santa Cruz and in the dry valleys.

**Great Egret, *Ardea alba*:** seen on three days. Aka *Casmerodius albus* and Great White Egret.

[Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*: this lovely bird was seen by some on the Pirai river as we drove back to Santa Cruz on the last day.]

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

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## THRESKIORNITHIDAE: IBISES & SPOONBILLS

**Buff-necked Ibis, *Theristicus caudatus*:** this very handsome bird was seen distantly in flight over Samaipata and in the riverbed at our second (Solitary Eagle) stop as we drove back from Tambo to Santa Cruz.

## 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 many times. I can't help wondering whether they feel inadequate at having to flap beside such consummate fliers as Turkey Vultures.

**King Vulture, *Sarcoramphus papa*:** a young bird was seen as we arrived at Los Volcanes, where this magnificent species was seen three days in a row.

**Andean Condor, *Vultur gryphus*:** we had a superb run of condors on this tour (and the highlands tour for that matter). Adults and young birds seen on all three days in Los Volcanes and at several sites in the dry valleys.

## ACCIPITRIDAE: HAWKS & EAGLES

**Swallow-tailed Kite, *Elanoides forficatus*:** this exceptionally graceful bird was seen on five days of the tour and proved a great favourite.

**White-tailed Kite, *Elanus leucurus*:** this delightful bird was seen on two days at Viru Viru and once, extremely well, at Tambo.

**Snail Kite, *Rosthamus sociabilis*:** several on migration over the Jardín Botánico.

**Plumbeous Kite, *Ictinia plumbea*:** this lovely bird was seen on all three days around Los Volcanes.

**Long-winged Harrier, *Circus buffoni*:** several of these elegant birds, in diverse plumages, were seen over the Viru Viru savannahs on our last evening there.

**Sharp-shinned Hawk, *Accipiter striatus*:** we saw these dashing little hawks on two days in the dry valleys, including one in flight right over us at the quebradas at Tambo. 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*:** this much-sought hawk was seen on no fewer than three days – twice in distant flight at Los Volcanes and again, extremely well, in dry forest on the road to Siberia.

**Savannah Hawk, *Buteogallus meridionalis*:** this beautiful bird was seen on our first day at Viru Viru. Aka *Heterospizias meridionalis*.

**Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*:** this magnificent, absurdly short-tailed, bird was seen on two days in Los Volcanes.

**Solitary Eagle, *Harpyhaliaetus solitarius*:** one of these awesome birds floated past at great height, dwarfing nearby Black Vultures, as we stopped on the road back from Tambo to Santa Cruz.

**Harris' Hawk, *Parabuteo unicinctus*:** seen perched and in flight by the Least Grebe pond on the road back from San Rafael. Seen again the next day at Tambo. Great bird.

**Roadside Hawk, *Buteo magnirostris*:** this common bird was seen many times and on five days of the tour, at roadsides and in several more inspiring habitats.

**Short-tailed Hawk, *Buteo brachyurus*:** a pale-phase bird was seen at Siberia and a dark-phase bird was seen the next day on the drive back from Tambo.

**Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus*:** three of these boreal migrants together at Siberia (not quite a kettle but at the very least a teacup).

**Red-backed Hawk, *Buteo polyosoma*:** seen very well at Siberia. Lumped by many authors with Puna Hawk *Buteo poecilochrous* as Variable Hawk.

#### FALCONIDAE: FALCONS & CARACARAS

**Southern (Crested) Caracara, *Caracara plancus*:** seen on most days of the tour. Aka *Polyborus plancus*.

**Yellow-headed Caracara, *Milvago chimachima*:** seen at the Jardín Botánico and on the last day at Viru Viru.

**Mountain Caracara, *Phalcoboenus megalopterus*:** this common highland bird was seen very high over a ridge at Siberia.

**American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*:** seen on four days, around Santa Cruz and Tambo.

**Bat Falcon, *Falco rufigularis*:** a brief zip-past by an individual of this species at Los Volcanes.

**Aplomado Falcon, *Falco femoralis*:** we had a superb run of Aplomados on both the lowlands and highlands tours. Seen twice around Tambo and again at Viru Viru on the last evening (though everyone was watching harriers at the time).

#### ARAMIDAE: LIMPKIN

[Limpkin, *Aramus guarauna*: only heard, near Santa Cruz on the first day.]

#### RALLIDAE: RAILS & CRAKES

**Grey-necked Wood-Rail, *Aramides cajanea*:** seen extremely well at the pond at the Jardín Botánico.

**Rufous-sided Crane, *Laterallus melanophaius*:** also seen extremely well, at the same site. Always good to start a tour with a crane.

**Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*:** numerous at Viru Viru, on the Jardín Botánico pond and on the Least Grebe pond on the road to San Rafael.

#### CARIAMIDAE: SERIEMAS

**Red-legged Seriema, *Cariama cristata*:** one of these ultra-charismatic birds was seen striding over the hillside, as we watched much closer rheas, on the first afternoon at Viru Viru.

#### JACANIDAE: JACANAS

**Wattled Jacana, *Jacana jacana*:** seen at Viru Viru and the Jardín Botánico.

#### CHARADRIIDAE: PLOVERS

**Southern Lapwing, *Vanellus chilensis*:** seen at Viru Viru on the first day and on the day the highlands group flew to Cochabamba.

**Andean Lapwing, *Vanellus resplendens*:** this is one of a series of high Andean species that sneakily made it onto the lowlands list through being seen by tour participants as they made a connection in La Paz airport.

#### SCOLOPACIDAE: SANDPIPERS

**Solitary Sandpiper, *Tringa solitaria*:** at least three (but separately, so we can still consider them solitary) at a pond in the savannah at Viru Viru.

**Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*:** one at the river at Saipina as we watched the Cliff Parakeets (I wrote the exact same sentence in my November 2005 report – must be a reliable site!).

#### LARIDAE: GULLS

**Andean Gull, *Larus serranus*:** another of the La-Paz-airport birds that had no business being seen on the lowlands tour.

#### COLUMBIDAE: PIGEONS & DOVES

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

**Pale-vented Pigeon, *Columba cayannensis*:** it was a surprise to find a singing individual of this species in dry valley vegetation by the roadside (at the Cream-backed Woodpecker stop) as we drove from Samaipata to Tambo. This is neither a vegetation type nor an area I normally associate with this bird.

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

**Eared Dove, *Zenaida auriculata*:** seen first at Viru Viru and later in hordes in the dry valley region.

**Ruddy Ground-Dove, *Columbina talpacoti*:** we saw this pretty bird on four days.

**Picui Ground-Dove, *Columbina picui*:** very common throughout the tour, especially in the dry valleys.

[Blue Ground-Dove, *Claravis pretiosa*: heard singing at Los Volcanes where a male was very briefly seen by some.]

**Bare-faced Ground-Dove, *Metriopelia ceciliae*:** another highland bird (albeit a very pretty one) that snuck onto the lowlands list by dint of being seen at La Paz airport.

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

**Large-tailed Dove, *Leptotila megalura*:** seen on two days in Los Volcanes, where it was heard near-constantly. Seen again by some at Siberia.

## PSITTACIDAE: PARROTS

[Military Macaw, *Ara militaris*: heard in Los Volcanes but only distantly and momentarily glimpsed by a couple of people here.]

**Red-fronted Macaw, *Ara rubrogenys*:** we saw this most glorious **endemic** on three days around Tambo and at San Rafael. After somewhat disappointing views to begin with, we were later treated to slow, low flybys in rich evening light. Fantastic!

**Blue-crowned Parakeet, *Aratinga acuticauda*:** common in the dry valley sites around Tambo and San Rafael. Aka *Aratinga acuticaudata*.

**Mitred Parakeet, *Aratinga mitrata*:** seen in great numbers on five days of the tour. Very handsome despite being so common.

**White-eyed Parakeet, *Aratinga leucophthalmus*:** seen extremely well near Viru Viru on the first day and very briefly the following day at the Jardín Botánico.

**Dusky-headed Parakeet, *Aratinga weddellii*:** a quick flyover pair at the Jardín Botánico.

**Green-cheeked Parakeet, *Pyrrhura molinae*:** this charming bird was seen commonly at the Jardín Botánico and Los Volcanes.

**Cliff Parakeet, *Myiopsitta luchsii*:** this recently-split **Bolivian endemic** was seen extremely well, and in considerable numbers, at the usual site at Saipina. A quite lovely creature. Though physically fairly 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 shove their untidy nests into rock-face clefts.

**Grey-hooded Parakeet, *Psilopsiagon aymara*:** we were tantalised by a quick view of a bird going to roost in a mud cliff ('looked like a budgie') one evening at Tambo, but the next day we saw this delightful bird very well on the drive to Siberia.

**Blue-winged Parrotlet, *Forpus xanthopterygius*:** we saw this utterly charming bird on the first two days around Santa Cruz. Aka *Forpus crassirostris*.

**Yellow-chevroned Parakeet, *Brotogeris chiriri*:** these bright and lovely birds were seen in a range of habitats on most days of the tour.

**Blue-headed Parrot, *Pionus menstruus*:** we saw this very beautiful parrot well in Los Volcanes. Despite the ease with which we saw them this normally more Amazonian bird is very scarce at the site and ours represents only the second record

**Red-billed Parrot, *Pionus sordidus*:** normally the common *Pionus* in Los Volcanes, this species was harder to find than Blue-headed on our tour. Nonetheless we had some good looks at birds in flight and were able to hear the subtle differences in call between the two species (Red-billed sounds distinctly harsher and barkier).

[Scaly-headed Parrot, *Pionus maximiliani*: this typical lowland dry-forest species was only seen very briefly in flight over the Jardín Botánico.]

**Turquoise-fronted Parrot, *Amazona aestiva*:** we had superb looks at numerous pairs of this dramatically beautiful bird in Los Volcanes. Also seen on a couple of occasions in the dry valleys. Aka Blue-fronted Parrot.

## CUCULIDAE: CUCKOOS

**Yellow-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus americanus*:** seen, fresh from the USA, at the Jardín Botánico and again at San Rafael.

**Dark-billed Cuckoo, *Coccyzus melacoryphus*:** this attractive bird, a resident of South America, was also seen at the Jardín Botánico.

**Squirrel Cuckoo, *Piaya cayana*:** this common but very handsome bird was seen and heard at numerous sites on four days of the tour.

**Smooth-billed Ani, *Crotophaga ani*** common at the lowland sites we visited.

[Greater Ani: *Crotophaga major*: heard chuntering in overhanging vegetation by the pond at the Jardín Botánico.]

**Guira Cuckoo, *Guira guira***: extremely charismatic despite being so common. Seen on five days and at a range of sites.

[Striped Cuckoo, *Tapera naevia*: this lovely bird was agonisingly only heard (as is typical of this species) near Viru Viru, on the road to Tambo (where it was just glimpsed at the Cream-backed Woodpecker stop) and at San Rafael.]

### STRIGIDAE: TYPICAL OWLS

[Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl, *Glaucidium brasilianum*: heard only, on one morning in Los Volcanes. Incidentally, for the first time in months, this morning I heard one in my street in Santa Cruz.]

**Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia***: seen beautifully at Viru Viru on all three days there.

### NYCTIBIIDAE: POTOOS

[Common Potoo, *Nyctibius griseus*: for the first time in my experience we heard this enigmatic creature singing its plaintive song on two mornings in Los Volcanes.]

### CAPRIMULGIDAE: NIGHTJARS

**Scissor-tailed Nightjar, *Hydropsalis torquata***: seen at point blank range on two evenings on the track to the quebradas at Tambo. Impossibly lovely. Aka *Hydropsalis brasiliana*.

**Rufous Nightjar, *Caprimulgus rufus***: just as I pointed out its strident song one morning before dawn, one skimmed right over our heads outside the dining room at Los Volcanes.

[Nacundá Nighthawk, *Podager nacunda*: unfortunately all we saw of this amazing bird was the briefest of silhouettes over the road as we drove out of Viru Viru on the last evening. We stopped and scanned, but to no avail.]

### APODIDAE: SWIFTS

**White-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne zonaris***: these wonderfully dashing swifts were seen on five days of the tour.

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

**Sick's Swift, *Chaetura meridionalis***: one of these whippy-winged creatures zipped past us as we left the Jardín Botánico. Unmistakable thanks to its flight style. Formerly regarded as part of Ashy-tailed Swift, *Chaetura andrei*.

**White-tipped Swift, *Aeronautes montivagus*:** this wonderful bird was seen every day in Los Volcanes.

**Andean Swift, *Aeronautes andecolus*:** just stunning. We saw these brilliant birds extremely well as we drove back from Saipina.

**TROCHILIDAE: HUMMINGIRDS** (Peter, you can just count all of these as one species if you like.)

**Planalto Hermit, *Phaethornis pretrei*:** seen in Los Volcanes, though not as well or as often as it is normally seen.

[Great-billed Hermit, *Phaethornis malaris*: true to its normal form, this unfeasibly hyperactive bird was heard frequently but only seen shooting past at high speed in Los Volcanes. Formerly considered conspecific with Long-tailed Hermit, *Phaethornis superciliosus*.]

[Buff-bellied Hermit, *Phaethornis subochraceus*: heard giving its in-flight squeak in the Jardín Botánico.]

**Sparkling Violetear, *Colibri coruscans*:** seen on all three days around Los Volcanes, principally feeding from the flowers of *Inga* trees.

**Green Violetear, *Colibri thalassinus*:** after much peering and craning of necks we were finally able to identify this bird at the treeline at Siberia.

**White-vented Violetear, *Colibri serrirostris*:** this is a very patchily distributed bird in the foothills of the Andes in Santa Cruz so we were lucky to see one over lunch in Samaipata.

**Blue-tailed Emerald, *Chlorostilbon mellisugus*:** a female was seen at a flowering *Inga* tree as we approached the gates of Los Volcanes.

**Glittering-bellied Emerald, *Chlorostilbon aureoventris*:** this beautiful hummingbird was seen in Samaipata and on all three days around Tambo. As is often the case, we saw only one female among countless males.

**Fork-tailed Woodnymph, *Thalurania furcata*:** seen on all three days in Los Volcanes, though it took us a while to get really good looks at this lovely bird.

**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.

**Gilded Hummingbird, *Hylocharis chrysura*:** seen on the first two days around Santa Cruz: at Viru Viru and the Jardín Botánico.

**White-bellied Hummingbird, *Amazilia chionogaster*:** very common at all lower-elevation dry valley sites.

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

**Blue-capped Puffleg, *Eriocnemis glaucopoides*:** a male was briefly seen at Siberia.

**Red-tailed Comet, *Sappho sparganura*:** always a favourite, we had many quick views of this stunning bird, and some 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*:** the only individual of this species we saw was our first metaltail at Siberia.

[Blue-tufted Starthroat, *Heliomaster furcifer*: it was a surprise that some members of the group saw an adult male of this dazzling species in a dry valley between San Rafael and Saipina.]

#### TROGONIDAE: TROGONS AND QUETZALS

**Blue-crowned Trogon, *Trogon curucui*:** seen beautifully in the Jardín Botánico and in Los Volcanes.

[Masked Trogon, *Trogon personatus*: heard briefly in Los Volcanes.]

#### ALCEDINIDAE: KINGFISHERS

[Ringed Kingfisher, *Ceryle torquata*: heard chattering distantly in Los Volcanes. Aka *Megaceryle torquata*.]

**Amazon Kingfisher, *Chloroceryle amazona*:** one seen at the pond in the Jardín Botánico.

#### MOMOTIDAE: MOTMOTS

**Blue-crowned Motmot, *Momotus momota*:** seen well, also by the pond in the Jardín Botánico.

#### BUCCONIDAE: PUFFBIRDS

**Spot-backed Puffbird, *Nystalus maculatus*:** seen well on the day we spent around San Rafael and Saipina.

#### RAMPHASTIDAE: TOUCANS

[Chestnut-tipped Toucanet, *Aulacorhynchus derbianus*: heard often, giving its desperate song, in Los Volcanes.]

**Chestnut-eared Aracari, *Pteroglossus castanotis*:** this dramatically handsome bird was seen first in the Jardín Botánico and again in Los Volcanes.

[Channel-billed Toucan, *Ramphastos vitellinus*: heard on all three days in Los Volcanes. Aka, to some, Yellow-ridged Toucan.]

#### PICIDAE: WOODPECKERS

**White-barred Piculet, *Picumnus cirratus*:** this much-wanted species took some time to find but eventually we saw one, quite distantly, at the Dusky-legged Guan stop on the drive back to Santa Cruz from Tambo.

**Ocellated Piculet, *Picumnus dorbignyanus*:** seen briefly and poorly on the day we went into Los Volcanes. Later seen much better at the Solitary Eagle stop on the drive back from Tambo.

**White-wedged Piculet, *Picumnus albosquamatus*:** seen very well 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 – but there is a degree of disagreement over where each one occurs. This species is also known as *Picumnus minutissimus*.

**Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, *Melanerpes cruentatus*:** seen commonly around Santa Cruz.

**White Woodpecker, *Melanerpes candidus*:** also seen on both days around Santa Cruz: near Viru Viru and at the entrance to the Jardín Botánico.

**White-fronted Woodpecker, *Melanerpes cactorum*:** common, and entertaining, in the dry *Valles* vegetation near Tambo.

**Little Woodpecker, *Veniliornis passerinus*:** seen in the Jardín Botánico.

**Dot-fronted Woodpecker, *Veniliornis frontalis*:** it was a real treat to see this bird at our first stop on the way back from Tambo.

**Golden-Olive Woodpecker, *Piculus rubiginosus*:** a pair seen wonderfully at their usual spot at the entrance to the clearing in Los Volcanes.

**Green-barred Flicker, *Colaptes melanochloros*:** we first – surprisingly – saw this very attractive bird in the front of the Jardín Botánico. Later we saw it at its usual haunts around Tambo.

**Campo Flicker, *Colaptes campestris*:** this wonderful species was seen briefly by the main road outside Viru Viru.

**Cream-backed Woodpecker, *Campephilus leucopogon*:** having seen it fly in front of the bus, we closely watched an individual of this most handsome species as it vandalised a tree by the road between Samaipata and Tambo.

**Red-necked Woodpecker, *Campephilus rubricollis*:** seen well at Los Volcanes. Another very striking bird.

**DENDROCOLAPTIDAE: WOODCREEPERS**

**Olivaceous Woodcreeper, *Sittasomus griseicapillus*:** heard at the Jardín Botánico but not seen until we reached Los Volcanes.

**Black-banded Woodcreeper, *Dendrocolaptes picumnus*:** this handsome, bulky beast was seen both at the Jardín Botánico and at Los Volcanes.

[Straight-billed Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus picus*: heard only, both near Viru Viru and at the Jardín Botánico.]

**Ocellated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus ocellatus*:** we heard this species' short squeak again and again in Los Volcanes but only had brief views on a couple of days.

**Buff-throated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus guttatus*:** seen and heard at the Jardín Botánico though much less frequently than is typical of the site.

**Narrow-billed Woodcreeper, *Lepidocolaptes angustirostris*:** this lovely woodcreeper was very obliging. We saw it well at the Jardín Botánico, and later saw it several times around Tambo.

[Red-billed Scythebill, *Campyloramphus trochilirostris*: only heard, and briefly at that, in the Jardín Botánico.]

**FURNARIIDAE: OVENBIRDS**

**Bolivian Earthcreeper, *Upucerthia harterti*:** this **Bolivian endemic** was heard and then seen very well on a stop as we approached Tambo. We heard it again on each of the following three days.

**Rufous Hornero, *Furnarius rufus*:** this is one of *the* characteristic birds of the department of Santa Cruz and we saw it on six days of the tour.

**Chotoy Spinetail, *Schoeniophylax phryganophila*:** we had a brief flight view of this very distinctive bird in the Viru Viru savannah on our last evening.

**Sooty-fronted Spinetail, *Synallaxis frontalis*:** seen on numerous occasions at dry valley sites.

[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's birds are what was regarded as the Buff-browed Spinetail, *Synallaxis superciliosa* although the site is very close to the overlap with the nominate form.]

[Plain-crowned Spinetail, *Synallaxis gujanensis*: heard briefly at the Jardín Botánico.]

[Ochre-cheeked Spinetail, *Synallaxis scutata*: heard repeatedly in Los Volcanes but impossible to track down. Aka *Poecilurus scutatus*.]

**Stripe-crowned Spinetail, *Cranioleuca pyrrhrophia*:** this lovely bird was seen well on the day we first drove to Tambo and again on the day we drove back to Santa Cruz.

**Yellow-chinned Spinetail, *Certhiaxis cinnamomea*:** seen very well in scrub at the edge of the Jardín Botánico pond.

**Rusty-vented Canastero, *Asthenes dorbigny*:** we had superb looks at this cheery little bird at Torrecillas, on the road to Siberia.

[Common Thornbird, *Phacellodomus rufifrons*: heard only, on our first evening near Viru Viru. Aka Plain Thornbird and Rufous-fronted Thornbird.]

**Streak-fronted Thornbird, *Phacellodomus striaticeps*:** seen very well on two days in the dry valley region, including birds at the nest near Tambo.

**Greater Thornbird, *Phacellodomus ruber*:** heard at Viru Viru on the first day and seen there on the last.

**Pearled Treerunner, *Margarornis squamiger*:** the gold-spangled southern form of this beautiful species was seen at Siberia (where you tried to string it into a woodcreeper if I remember rightly).

**Buff-fronted Foliage-Gleaner, *Philydor rufum*:** this very lovely bird was seen several times in Los Volcanes. One individual repeatedly left a nest-hole in a mud bank (and yes indeed, they do nest in cavities, though not always in mud banks).

**Streaked Xenops, *Xenops rutilans*:** this acrobatic little bird was seen in a flock over the main track on the full day we spent in Los Volcanes.

#### THAMNOPHILIDAE: TYPICAL ANTBIRDS

**Barred Antshrike, *Thamnophilus doliatus*:** a female was seen in Bermejo as we waited to go into Los Volcanes. Heard at the end of the tour at Viru Viru.

[Chestnut-backed Antshrike, *Thamnophilus palliatus*: heard in song as we walked out of Los Volcanes.]

**Variable Antshrike, *Thamnophilus caerulescens*:** a couple of handsome males were seen at the Dusky-legged Guan stop on the drive back to Santa Cruz.

[Rufous-capped Antshrike, *Thamnophilus ruficapillus*: heard distantly at Torrecillas as we drove towards Siberia. This species always sounds to me as if it were complaining.]

[Bolivian Slaty-Antshrike, *Thamnophilus sticturus*: we only heard this common species sing once, distantly, at the Jardín Botánico.]

**Plain Antvireo, *Dysithamnus mentalis*:** males and females of this subtle, unassuming bird were seen nicely in Los Volcanes.

**Black-capped Antwren, *Herpsilochmus atricapillus*:** true to form, this species was seen well in Los Volcanes.

[White-backed Fire-eye, *Pyriglena leuconota*: heard in Los Volcanes on all three days.]

#### FORMICARIIDAE: GROUND-ANTBIRDS

[Short-tailed Antthrush, *Chamaeza campanisoma*: heard off in the forest on three days at Los Volcanes. What a great song.]

#### RHINOCRYPTIDAE: TAPACULOS

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

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

[Olive-crowned Crescentchest, *Melanopareia maximiliani*: heard distantly in dry scrub near Torrecillas. Despite much searching (and attempts to trick it into thinking we had left) we were unable to see the bird.]

#### TYRANNIDAE: TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

**Sclater's Tyrannulet, *Phyllomyias sclateri*:** seen in a couple of flocks in Los Volcanes. Like Black-goggled Tanager this species can seem to disappear from the site altogether in the wet season so we were lucky to see it.

**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 dry valley sites; the benchmark against which to judge all of the other greyish flycatchers of the area (and we saw and judged them all!).

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

[Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, *Camptostoma obsoletum*: I can't believe that – on no fewer than five days of the tour – we only heard this very common species.]

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

**Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet, *Phaeomyias murina*:** we had good views of this subtle species at several sites in the dry valley region.

**Southern Scrub-Flycatcher, *Sublegatus modestus*:** not the most dazzling of flycatchers (the scientific name says it all), it is nonetheless one of my favourites and it was a much-sought prize for the listers in the group. We heard it first, and then saw it several times, at Saipina.

**Suiriri Flycatcher, *Suiriri suiriri*:** this pretty flycatcher was seen on our last evening visit to Tambo and, probably (though inconclusively), again the next day on the drive back to Santa Cruz.

**White-throated Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus leucophrys*:** seen, making an attempt at a flock with Spectacled Whitestarts, in Siberia.

**Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, *Stigmatura budytoides*:** this delightful flycatcher is always a crowd-pleaser – and not only because, with Bran-coloured, it is one of only two readily-identifiable small flycatchers in the lower dry valleys. It delighted us at several sites in the region.

**Plain Tyrannulet, *Inezia inornata*:** this, the last in a long line of dull, greyish flycatchers that cause groups id headaches (I love 'em!), was seen and heard several times in the Jardín Botánico.

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

[Sepia-capped Flycatcher, *Leptopogon amaurocephalus*: heard several times in flocks in Los Volcanes.]

[Slaty-capped Flycatcher, *Leptopogon superciliosus*: also only heard in Los Volcanes where it is often a common, easily-seen bird.]

**Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, *Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer*:** this strange little bird was heard on the ridge above Los Volcanes and seen easily on all four days in the dry valley region.

[Yellow-olive Flycatcher, *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*: heard numerous times in Los Volcanes. For such a common bird it can be extremely difficult to see.]

**Bran-coloured Flycatcher, *Myiophobus fasciatus*:** I really *do* like this bird. This lovely tawny-striped species was seen many times around Tambo and at San Rafael.

[Cinnamon Flycatcher, *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea*: heard purring softly at Siberia.]

**Cliff Flycatcher, *Hirundinea ferruginea*:** seen mobbing a Buzzard-Eagle high against the red cliffs in Los Volcanes. Later seen rather closer over lunch at Samaipata and up-close-and-personal (and in considerable numbers) at the parakeet site at Saipina.

**Smoke-coloured Pewee, *Contopus fumigatus*:** a distant, perched bird in awful light was scrutinised at length in Los Volcanes, just to make sure it was not an Olive-sided Flycatcher.

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

**Black Phoebe, *Sayornis nigricans*:** this bird was, as always, to be seen on the streams around Los Volcanes.

**Vermillion Flycatcher, *Pyrocephalus rubinus*:** ok, so it was a male Vermillion Flycatcher you saw at La Paz airport (or else you faked the video evidence) but I assure you it had no business whatsoever being at La Paz airport; for that matter it had no business being in Bolivia in November when self-respecting Bolivian Vermillion Flycatchers should be far away on their breeding grounds in Argentina. But there is no accounting for taste.

**Andean Tyrant, *Knipolegus signatus*:** we briefly saw a female of this species at Siberia before later being treated to the dive-bombing display (precisely as illustrated by Fjeldså) of two males in a corner sheltered from the wind.

**White-winged Black-Tyrant, *Knipolegus aterrimus*:** lovely males and lovely females seen in dry vegetation at Monteblanco and on the drive up to Siberia.

**Yellow-browed Tyrant, *Satrapa icterophrys*:** seen superbly in a hammock-side bush at Los Volcanes one lunchtime. Then seen again over lunch at Samaipata and on all days in the dry valleys. A great run of sightings of a very attractive flycatcher.

**Rufous-bellied Bush-Tyrant, *Myiotheretes fusciorufus*:** a pair of these subtly attractive and little-known birds was seen sheltering from the wind (with several other species) in a clearing at Siberia.

**Cattle Tyrant, *Machetornis rixosus*:** common around Santa Cruz, especially at Viru Viru and the entrance to the Jardín Botánico.

**Social Flycatcher, *Myiozetetes similis*:** seen at its usual spot at the Jardín Botánico pond.

**Boat-billed Flycatcher, *Megarhynchus pitangua*:** this big-beaked beastie was seen on our visit to the Jardín Botánico.

**Great Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*:** seen commonly, usually near water, around Santa Cruz and in the dry valleys (ok, so in the wet bits of the dry valleys).

**Golden-crowned Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*:** this very handsome moss and lemon flycatcher was heard every day in Los Volcanes and seen here – as always over a stream – on one day.

**Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes luteiventris*:** we saw this handsome northern migrant many times, especially at a couple of fruiting trees.

**Streaked Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes maculatus*:** this rakishly attractive bird was seen on five days of the tour and heard on one other.

**Variegated Flycatcher, *Empidonomus varius*:** just for the sake of comparison with the above species, we had great looks at Variegated Flycatchers, in Los Volcanes and on the last day as we drove back from Tambo to Santa Cruz.

**Crowned Slaty Flycatcher, *Empidonomus aurantiatrocristatus*:** this plain-plumaged cousin of the Variegated Flycatcher was first seen at the Jardín Botánico but was scarcer than usual for this time of year in the dry valleys.

**Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*:** seen every day of the tour. Nonetheless very attractive if you take the time to look.

**Fork-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus savanna*:** just lovely. We saw this species on our first and last days at Viru Viru.

**Eastern Kingbird, *Tyrannus tyrannus*:** swirling hordes in Santa Cruz.

**Rufous Casiornis, *Casiornis rufa*:** we saw this very pretty species several times, both in the Jardín Botánico and in Los Volcanes.

**Dusky-capped Flycatcher, *Myiarchus tuberculifer*:** this bird – the most readily identifiable of the Bolivian *Myiarchus* – was seen both in Los Volcanes and at Siberia.

**Pale-edged Flycatcher, *Myiarchus cephalotes*:** how often do you get two members of a tricky genus perched next to each other? That is exactly what this subtle species and the last did for us in Siberia.

**Swainson's Flycatcher, *Myiarchus swainsoni*:** we saw one of these scarce birds in the Jardín Botánico.

**Brown-crested Flycatcher, *Myiarchus tyrannulus*:** somewhat unusually we saw this pretty bird on all four days we spent in the dry valley region.

## COTINGIDAE: COTINGAS

**Black-tailed Tityra, *Tityra cayana*:** seen well in the Jardín Botánico. Note that tityras are currently considered cotingas again.

**Masked Tityra, *Tityra semifasciata*:** seen on two days in Los Volcanes.

**Black-crowned Tityra, *Tityra inquisitor*:** just one of these birds was seen at the Jardín Botánico.

[White-winged Becard, *Pachyramphus polychopterus*: heard at the Jardín Botánico but only very briefly seen here by some.]

**Crested Becard, *Pachyramphus validus*:** a female of this subtle-plumaged species at the Jardín Botánico and a male at Saipina.

**Red-crested Cotinga, *Ampelion rufaxilla*:** despite the strong wind we saw one of these dapper birds in the crown of a tall tree at Siberia

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

#### PIPRIDAE: MANAKINS

**Yungas Manakin, *Chiroxiphia boliviana*:** despite the group's lack of confidence in my plan, we turned up at one of the leks in Los Volcanes and were almost immediately treated to views of this quite lovely bird.

#### VIREONIDAE: VIREOS

[Rufous-browed Peppershrike, *Cyclarhis gujanensis*: heard distantly both at Los Volcanes and Torrecillas. Astonishingly, this common species was also only heard on the highlands tour.]

**Red-eyed Vireo, *Vireo olivaceus*:** seen well in the Jardín Botánico and many times in the dry valley region. Split by some authors as Chivi Vireo, *Vireo chivi*. This form does not have a red eye.

#### CORVIDAE: JAYS

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

**Plush-crested Jay, *Cyanocorax chrysops*:** this striking, acrobatic bird was seen many times, principally in Los Volcanes, where it is very common and very vocal.

#### HIRUNDINIDAE: SWALLOWS & MARTINS

**Brown-chested Martin, *Progne tapera*:** elegant and streamlined, this species was seen on our first two days around Santa Cruz. Aka *Phaeoprogne tapera*.

**Southern Martin, *Progne elegans*:** high around the sandstone cliffs of Los Volcanes we repeatedly saw groups of these beautiful birds but we only saw them well (and here we saw them extremely well) at the cliffs in Saipina.

**Grey-breasted Martin, *Progne chalybea*:** seen outside the hotel, over the Cathedral, in Santa Cruz. Much chunkier and less elegant than Brown-chested.

**White-rumped Swallow, *Tachycineta leucorrhoa*:** seen quite distantly over the savannah at Viru Viru, on both our first and last days.

**Blue-and-White Swallow, *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*:** seen in Samaipata over lunch and again the following day in the dry valleys. Aka *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*.

**Pale-footed Swallow, *Notiochelidon flavipes*:** we were delighted by the high, trilling calls and the acrobatic antics of a group of this scarce cloud-forest species in a sheltered corner at Siberia (a corner they thoughtfully shared with two displaying male Andean Tyrants). After much grilling, finally everyone clearly saw the pinkish throat on these fast-moving birds.

**Tawny-headed Swallow, *Alopochelidon fucata*:** after a few tantalising glimpses, this lovely bird was finally seen well, allowing us to see all of the features which distinguish it from Southern Rough-wing.

**Southern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*:** only one, at our second stop (where it was somewhat eclipsed by the Solitary Eagle) on the way back to Santa Cruz from Tambo.

**Sand Martin, *Riparia riparia*:** seen in a mixed swallow-flock as we approached Tambo for the first time. Later seen again on the day we returned to Santa Cruz. Aka Bank Swallow, but we are British after all.

**Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*:** this widespread northern migrant was seen on four days of the tour.

**Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*:** this barrel-bodied northerner was first seen as we approached Tambo and was seen again – in numbers – the following day 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 genibarbis*:** heard on all three days in Los Volcanes and seen here by some.

[Fawn-breasted Wren, *Thryothorus guarayanus*: it is hard to believe that this species is very common at the Jardín Botánico as we scarcely even heard it there.]

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

## POLIOPTILIDAE: GNATCATCHERS

**Masked Gnatcatcher, *Polioptila dumicola*:** this delightful species was seen several times – and on all four days – in the dry valley region.

#### TURDIDAE: THRUSHES

[Spotted Nightingale Thrush, *Catharus dryas*: heard singing wistfully in the distance at Siberia.]

**Swainson's Thrush, *Catharus ustulatus*:** plankton in Los Volcanes. One fruiting tree had more Swainson's Thrushes than fruit.

**Chiguanco Thrush, *Turdus chiguanco*:** first seen (entirely without my permission) by the tour participants as they waited for a plane in La Paz airport. Later seen on the day we drove up to Siberia.

**Rufous-bellied Thrush, *Turdus rufiventris*:** this happy-sounding bird did very well for itself, being encountered on no fewer than six days of the tour in Los Volcanes and around Tambo. As I pointed out at the time, the birds around Tambo have a quite distinct dialect – 'Ding dong the witch is dead' – from their relatives in the forest at Los Volcanes.

**Creamy-bellied Thrush, *Turdus amaurochalinus*:** ultra-common, as always, around Santa Cruz and in the dry valleys.

**White-necked Thrush, *Turdus albicollis*:** we did well for this normally deep forest dwelling bird, seeing it in numbers at two fruiting trees in Los Volcanes.

[Hauxwell's Thrush, *Turdus hauxwelli*: we distantly heard the lovely song of this forest bird in the Jardín Botánico.]

#### COEREBIDAE: BANANAQUIT

**Bananaquit, *Coereba flaveola*:** we saw our first Bananaquit over pizza in Samaipata. Later that same afternoon we saw more in a little valley on the road to Tambo. Finally we saw another at our first stop on the day we drove back to Santa Cruz.

#### THRAUPIDAE: TANAGERS

**Orange-headed Tanager, *Thlypopsis sordida*:** we were pleased to see one of these very pretty birds at our first stop on the drive back to Santa Cruz.

**Blue-browed Tanager, *Tangara cyanotis*:** this was a much-desired species among the members of the group so we were delighted to see it over the river by the main clearing in Los Volcanes. Our sighting of this very pretty bird boded well for the quite dazzling display of *Tangara* tanagers (seven species in one tree!) we later saw on the highlands tour.

**Grey-headed Tanager, *Eucometis penicillata*:** this dishevelled-crested, big tanager was seen in the Jardín Botánico.

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

**Black-goggled Tanager, *Trichothraupis melanops*:** this very striking bird was seen numerous times in Los Volcanes. It can be very hard to find there in the wet season (whereas in the dry season it is all over the place) so we should count ourselves lucky.

**Sayaca Tanager, *Thraupis sayaca*:** very common throughout the trip. Seen on every day.

**Palm Tanager, *Thraupis palmarum*:** seen on all three days in Los Volcanes.

**Blue-and-Yellow Tanager, *Thraupis bonariensis*:** wonderfully beautiful. We saw this superb creature many times in the valleys – 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 in Siberia. Thank heavens there were at least *some* flocking birds in Siberia.

**Guira Tanager, *Hemithraupis guira*:** seen many times in the Jardín Botánico and in Los Volcanes.

**Common Bush-Tanager, *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*:** seen only briefly along the main road at Siberia.

**White-winged Tanager, *Piranga leucoptera*:** this super-attractive bird was seen several times in Los Volcanes.

**Hepatic Tanager, *Piranga flava*:** first seen two seconds after I told the group to keep their eyes peeled for it, as we drove towards Tambo. Seen again the following day. 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. Rather incongruously, the form we saw on the lowlands tour is the putative 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).

**Scarlet Tanager, *Piranga olivacea*:** and, joining us from the north, another member of this handsome genus. We saw one of these birds in a fruiting tree in Los Volcanes.

**Purple-throated Euphonia, *Euphonia chlorotica*:** heard many times – at many sites and on six days – but only seen on a couple of occasions.

**Thick-billed Euphonia, *Euphonia lanirostris*:** seen and heard in Los Volcanes where it is a very reliable bird.

**Blue-naped Chlorophonia, *Chlorophonia cyanea*:** this perfectly lovely bird was seen in a fruiting tree in Los Volcanes.

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**EMBERIZIDAE: FINCHES & NEW WORLD SPARROWS**

**Rufous-collared Sparrow, *Zonotrichia capensis*:** seen very commonly on the four days we spent in the dry valley region.

**Grassland Sparrow, *Ammodramus humeralis*:** heard on our first day at Viru Viru but not seen here until our last evening.

**Grey-crested Finch, *Lophospingus griseocristatus*:** a much-sought species by the group, and the cause of considerable excitement, until everyone realised just *how* common it is in the dry valleys. Nonetheless this is a very attractive little bird.

**Bolivian Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza boliviana*:** this **Bolivian virtual endemic** (just creeps into extreme north Argentina) was seen very quite distantly by almost all in dry scrub on the road up to Siberia. Luckily, those who missed it here saw it very well the next week on the highlands tour.

**Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza hypochondria*:** also seen in upper elevation dry valley scrub on the road to Siberia.

**Black-and-Chestnut Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza whittii*:** this – one of the most handsome of all the warbling-finches – was seen first at San Rafael, where one perched very fetchingly along a fence line for us. We saw it again, in the company of the preceding two species, on the way up to Siberia. 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 dry valleys.

**Black-capped Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza melanoleuca*:** ditto. What a great haul of wonderful warbling-finches.

**Peruvian Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus punensis*:** yet another highland bird that could not wait another week for us to arrive in La Paz. Like all the others it was seen by participants as they waited in the capital's airport.

**Saffron Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis flaveola*:** common at many sites throughout the trip. Seen every day except the full day we spent in the forests of Los Volcanes.

**Wedge-tailed Grassfinch, *Emberizoides herbicola*:** we saw this great bird in the Viru Viru savannahs on our first and last days.

**Great Pampa-Finch, *Embernagra platensis*:** seen well at San Rafael and on the road up to Siberia. Attractive and entertaining.

**Blue-black Grassquit, *Volatinia jacarina*:** seen on four days, including birds in a seedeater flock in the clearing in Los Volcanes.

**Dull-coloured Grassquit, *Tiaris obscura*:** we saw this demure little bird in the canyon, where I always see it, at Saipina.

**Double-collared Seedeater, *Sporophila caerulescens*:** seen on three days, including birds in the flock in Los Volcanes.

**Lined Seedeater, *Sporophila lineola*:** a striking male was also found in the clearing in Los Volcanes.

**White-bellied Seedeater, *Sporophila leucoptera*:** seen on our first day near Viru Viru. 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*.

[Rufous-rumped Seedeater, *Sporophila hypochroma*: despite searching two areas where this wonderful bird breeds in the Viru Viru savannah, the only individual of this species seen was a distant speck of a male in flight.]

**Band-tailed Seedeater, *Catamenia analis*:** this delightful little bird was seen in fields at San Rafael and again on the road up to Siberia.

**Saffron-billed Sparrow, *Arremon flavirostris*:** now this is a very smart little bird. We saw it both in Los Volcanes (a juvenile begging from its parent, no less) and at a couple of sites around the dry valleys.

**Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, *Atlapetes rufinucha*:** seen well, after some initial effort, at Siberia. This form is now recognised as a separate species and therefore a **Bolivian endemic**. Aka Bolivian Brush-Finch.

**Red Pileated Finch, *Coryphospingus cucullatus*:** we saw this very attractive species at numerous roadside stops in the dry valleys and the transitional vegetation before we reached them. Aka Red-crested Finch.

**Red-crested Cardinal, *Paroaria coronata*:** this bright, cheerful-sounding bird was seen, as it always is, right at the entrance to the Jardín Botánico.

**Red-capped Cardinal, *Paroaria gularis*:** we also saw this lovely creature at the Jardín Botánico, but true to its nature it was in low vegetation overhanging the pond.

## CARDINALIDAE: GROSBEAKS & SALTATORS

**Black-backed Grosbeak, *Pheucticus aureoventris*:** this wonderful chunky species was seen and heard on many occasions in the dry valleys.

[Greyish Saltator, *Saltator coerulescens*: we only managed to hear the delightfully bouncy song of this bird on our first two days around Santa Cruz.]

**Buff-throated Saltator, *Saltator maximus*:** a pair visited a fruiting tree we were watching in Los Volcanes.

**Golden-billed Saltator, *Saltator aurantiirostris*:** we had many good looks at this striking bird and very frequently heard its explosive song in the dry valleys.

**Ultramarine Grosbeak, *Cyanocompsa brissonii*:** we had very good luck with this superb bird in the dry valleys. Lustrous velvet males and warm orange-brown females were much admired here by all.

#### PARULIDAE: NEW WORLD WARBLERS

**Tropical Parula, *Parula pitiayumi*:** recorded on five days of the tour – in the Jardín Botánico, in Los Volcanes and in the dry valley vegetation.

**Masked Yellowthroat, *Geothlypis aequinoctialis*:** this pretty bird is not always common on our route but we encountered it on no fewer than seven days – a record! 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 delicate bird several times in the dry valleys, and on our drive up to Siberia. Aka Brown-capped Redstart.

**Spectacled Whitestart, *Myioborus melanocephalus*:** hard to come by, on account of the wind, in Siberia, where in general it is very common. Aka Spectacled Redstart.

**Slate-throated Whitestart, *Myioborus miniatus*:** we saw this lovely bird on several occasions in Los Volcanes.

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

**Citrine Warbler, *Basileuterus luteoviridis*:** one of these bright, beautiful creatures was seen at Siberia.

**Golden-crowned Warbler, *Basileuterus culicivorus*:** we had to wade through mud to see it but we closely watched one of these subtly attractive birds 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.

**Crested Oropendola, *Psarocolius decumanus*:** seen frequently at the Jardín Botánico, Viru Viru and Los Volcanes. Just as attractive and entertaining as the last species.

**Golden-winged Cacique, *Cacicus chrysopterus*:** we were lucky to see this scarce species perched atop a resplendent-flowered *ceibo* (*Erythrina*) tree as we drove towards Tambo.

[Troupial, *Icterus icterus*: this gloriously bright bird was heard, but only briefly seen by some, at the Jardín Botánico. Split by some as Orange-backed Troupial, *Icterus croconotus*.]

**Epaulet Oriole, *Icterus cayanensis*:** seen well by everyone in a *Cecropia* tree at the Jardín Botánico. Later seen briefly a couple of times in the valleys.

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

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

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

**Shiny Cowbird, *Molothrus bonariensis*:** very numerous; seen on five days of the tour. The lustrous males are gorgeous, however common they may be.

#### FRINGILLIDAE: OLD WORLD FINCHES & SISKINS

**Hooded Siskin, *Carduelis magellanica*:** this very lovely little bird was seen on five days around the valleys region.

**Black Siskin, *Carduelis atrata*:** this wonderful highland bird is the last of the species which slipped surreptitiously onto the lowlands list through being seen by tour participants at La Paz airport.

### Mammals

#### BRADYPODIDAE: THREE-TOED SLOTHS

**Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth, *Bradypus variegatus*:** we were very pleased to see a sleepy individual of this widespread species, very close to the definitely-not-sleepy marmosets, in the forest at the Jardín Botánico.

#### CALLITRICHIDAE: MARMOSETS AND TAMARINS

**Silvery Marmoset, *Callithrix argentata*:** a family of these delightful small primates was seen at the forest edge in the Jardín Botánico. Split by some as the Black-tailed Marmoset, *Callithrix melanura*.

#### CEBIDAE: LARGER NEW WORLD MONKEYS

**Brown Capuchin, *Cebus apella*:** one seen sharing a fruiting tree with Swainson's and White-necked Thrushes in Los Volcanes.

#### FELIDAE: CATS

**Geoffroy's Cat, *Oncifelis geoffroyi*:** always extremely good to see a cat on a tour, however briefly. An individual of this dotted species bolted across the road in the pre-dawn dark as we drove to San Rafael in search of the macaw.

## SCIURIDAE: SQUIRRELS

**Bolivian Squirrel, *Sciurus ignitus*:** seen at the Jardín Botánico and on two days in Los Volcanes. In her book 'Neotropical Rainforest Mammals', Louise Emmons says 'The small brown squirrels of the genus *Sciurus* in Peru and Bolivia are confusing and in need of taxonomic revision; they are often misidentified in museum collections.' So squirrel aficionados, watch this space.

## CAVIIDAE: CAVIES

**Wild Cavy, *Cavia* sp. or *Galea* sp.:** Guinea Pigs were seen on all four days we spent around the dry valleys. Identification of these species (even these genera) is nightmarishly tricky.

## HYDROCHAERIDAE: CAPYBARA

**Capybara, *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*:** the same fellow who has for years frequented the pond at the Jardín Botánico was seen again on our tour.

Reptiles

## TEIIDAE

**Tegu, *Tupinambis* sp.:** we saw several of these giant lizards in and around 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 dry valleys, 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 animals, which were silver and black, were clearly not it. 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 ones we saw *looked* like the hundreds of *T. teguixin* I have seen in Amazonia. But who knows?