

Ecuador - Cock-of-the-Rock (BB)

Naturetrek Tour Report

13 - 21 August 2009



Golden Tanager



Torrent Duck



Crimson rumped Toucanet



Swordbill Hummingbird

Report and images compiled by Willie Perez

Additional report courtesy of Julian Thomas



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Day 0

Thursday 13th August

Travelling day from the UK

Day 1

Friday 14th August

I met two clients at 6 o'clock at the Hostal Fuente de Piedra, the other four were going to join us the next day to complete the group of six. We travelled in the direction of the Yanacocha Reserve and the first birds to be seen were the hummingbirds and we were very pleased to be able to see 9 species. The most exciting ones were Sword-billed, Mountain Velvetbreast and Shining Sunbeam. We were accompanied by White browed Spinetail and Golden crowned Tanager and then followed by Scarlet-bellied and Black-chested Mountain Tanagers whilst walking. On the way back from the walk we had good sights of Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Blue backed Conebill and Grass-green Tanager. Afterwards we had lunch in a very sunny and beautiful place near the entrance to the reserve.

In the afternoon we started on our way to the Maquipucuna Reserve along the famous old Nono Mindo road. We made several stops along the way and were very impressed when we had a fantastic sight of the rare Red brocket deer very close to us. Birding opportunities were seeing Slaty-backed Chat Tyrant and Masked Trogon and then it got more exciting when a couple of Plate billed Mountain Toucans were calling for long time and we obtained good video footage of them. The birding was excellent and we came across good mixed flocks with unique species like Golden Blue capped and Blue and black Tanagers. The last stop that we did was in the fish farm and we spotted some birds along the way like Green Kingfisher Swallow Tanager and Pacific Hornero. We arrived at the lodge at around 5:00 pm.

Day 2

Saturday 15th August

We got up at 5:30 am and after coffee we started to do birding from the dining room at Maquipucuna Lodge with Black Phoebes, Golden-crowned Flycatcher and Rufous Motmot. We had breakfast around 8:30 and the other participants arrived to complete the 6 people in the group. Near the lodge there was a tree full of tanagers, with a beautiful display of colours, including Swallow, Silver-throated, Bay-headed, Golden and Lemon-rumped. Also present were Thick-billed Euphonia, Buff-throated Saltator and of course the Bananaquit.

We started to walk up the main trail and were lucky with beautiful birding weather. The birding continued well for the whole morning with the most exciting time when we saw a Crimson-rumped Toucanet, a couple of Red headed Barbets and Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant.

We also found a flock with many Tanagers like White winged, the Choco endemic Ochre breasted and Fawn breasted. After all the excitement we went to have lunch to get some energy to keep going in the afternoon. But as a last activity before lunch we went down to the bridge near Maquipucuna and we found White capped Dipper, Torrent Duck and Green fronted Lancebill.

After lunch we had a very good time watching the Hummingbird feeders from the dining room and here we saw, White-whiskered Hermit, Green-crowned Brilliant, Green-crowned Woodnymph and the most common one White-necked Jacobin. By group agreement we left at 2.00 pm straight after lunch and walked along the road out of the Reserve in the direction of Santa Lucia, looking for any birds that we hadn't seen in the morning. We had a good time there, near the bridge there was a Torrent Tyrannulet eating insects. Higher up along the road some of the other Tanagers were showing off beautifully such as Blue-necked, Rufous throated Fawn-breasted and a big group of Swallow Tanager again. We managed to see Pale eyed Thrush follow by Golden-olive Woodpeckers and Choco Toucan. The afternoon passed very quickly and we went back to the lodge very satisfied and ready for the next day.

Day 3

Sunday 16th August

We spent the morning at Maquipucuna. We had breakfast at 5:30 and left at 6:00 going back along the main trail. The morning birding was fantastic and just to mention some of the good birds, there were Golden headed Quetzal, Toucan Barbet, Collared Trogon and Choco Toucan again. On the way back we saw good quality birds like Spotted Barbtail, Esmeraldas Antbird and many others.

Our final destination of that day was Mindo Loma lodge. As it was good weather on the way out we were able to stop at the fish farm again, from there we saw Green Kingfisher, and different kinds of Seedeaters. We left this place around 12:00 pm and we went in the direction of Bellavista to look for some other target birds. We found several flocks on the way with Flame-faced, Metallic-green, Golden-naped, Beryl-spangled and Green and black Fruiteater, Dusky bush Tanager, and Grass green Tanager. The bird of the day was the Plate billed Mountain Toucan without doubt.

We had our minds set on reaching the lodge to see the Hummingbirds and when we got there we weren't let down. It was the most fantastic display of colours, stunning to see all the Hummingbirds, in particular the Choco endemics such as Empress Brilliant, Velvet purple Coronet, Brown Inca and many others. All of this was accompanied with delicious beer. After dinner we tried for owls but had no luck.

Day 4

Monday 17th August

Today we went to visit the Cook of the Rock Lek, our departure from the lodge was 4:45 am and it took us one hour to get to the hide. Angel who is the owner of the reserve was already there waiting for us. The birds started to arrive at 6:00 am and we saw five males and 1 female - the views were great and some people got good photos. After we moved 20 metres to the next place to see some of the other target birds and we were very lucky because in 20 minutes the display was wonderful with 14 Sickled-winged Guans plus Olivaceous Piha, Toucan Barbet, and Black chinned Mountain Tanager coming to eat the fruits. But the birding kept going and the Antpittas were even better, Moustached, Yellow breasted and Giant all gave us a great show. Later on we tried for the rare Orange breasted Fruiteater but we only saw a male flying away.

Back at Angel's house he provided us with a delicious breakfast and we left the reserve at 11:00 am in the direction to the Mindo Loma lodge. Before a late lunch and packing we managed to see a male Orange breasted Fruiteater which came very close to the lodge and that was, so far, the bird of the trip.

In the afternoon we left the lodge in the direction of Quito but before reaching the city we did a last stop and saw the colourful Rufous chested and Blue capped Tanagers. Also we did a cultural stop at the Equator to take a photo of all of us. We arrived to Quito around 6.30pm in preparation for the highlands the next day.

Day 5

Tuesday 18th August

We left Quito very early again, very much prepared for the Highland birding, heavy coats, gloves etc. Our first stop was 45 minutes away from Quito along El Canon del Chiche and there we managed to see nice birds, Golden rumped Euphonia was exciting, followed by Vermillion Flycatcher, Scrub Tanager, Giant Hummingbird and many others. Our second stop at a place called Casa Vieja (old house) with no house actually (!) was where the serious birding started. Shiny Sunbeam, Red crested Cotinga and Green tailed Trainbearer were present. Travelling further up there was a lot of activity and some very well behaved Tawny Antpittas gave us wonderful views. Also we saw Curunculated Caracara and Ecuadorian Hillstar. After all this excitement we kept going up to look for the Seedsnipe but no luck as unfortunately the weather conditions were too much. We drove down and along the pass where we saw Red rumped Bush Tyrant and Red rumped Hawk. The rain started so we went down to the lodge and I have to say that the hot chocolate was very good!

Around 5:00 pm we did a walk close to the lodge and it was the best half an hour of our trip with so many birds around. The most interesting ones were Black eared and Black capped Hemispingus, Pale naped and Slaty Brush Finches and many other birds, with the highlight being four Torrent Ducks swimming in the rapids. The birding day finished at 6:30 pm.

Day 6

Wednesday 19th August

We started early at 4.30am, the aim was to look for some night birds along the way and we were lucky when a male Lyre tailed Nightjar was perched in full view. When we arrived to San Isidro Lodge we managed to see Rufous bellied Nighthawk flying around the car park. We spent the morning in San Isidro before going back to Guango Lodge. We did most of our birding around the lodge for the first two hours, with fantastic views of Black-billed Peppershrike, Subtropical Cacique, Olive backed Woodcreeper and many others. We saw so many birds until Marcelo the antpitta man arrived to take us to see the Antpittas, and White-bellied was well observed.

With some of the good birds already seen we could relax to have our breakfast at the place where the Hummingbird feeders were and it was great to see a couple of new ones for us, the Bronzy Inca and a male Gorgeted Woodstar. After all of this we went along the road going in the direction of the Research Station and we saw brilliant birds there, like White rumped Hawk, Plain tailed Wren, Rufous Spinetail and Southern Lapwing. We returned for a delicious lunch.

In the afternoon we did the Baeza road to look for some target birds of the trip, there we saw Golden eared Tanager, Lemon browed Flycatcher and the fantastic Golden collared Honeycreeper.

Along the way we made one more stop and we managed to see Red breasted Blackbird, Olivaceous Siskin and Blue-necked Tanager. We arrived at Guango Lodge around 6:30 pm.

Day 7

Thursday 20th August

Today we were aiming for the birds that we hadn't seen yet and again we were lucky as Chestnut-crowned Antpitta appeared in the car park of Guango lodge. Around 7:30 we started the route to the highlands and the main goal was to look for the Seedsnipe. However before that we went to visit a lake which is 200 metres away from the main road, and we puffed our way along with the altitude and through the scope we all saw Andean Ruddy Duck, Andean Coot and Silvery Grebe. Furthermore, along the Polylepis forest we got to see two Giant Conebills. The weather was very bad so we drove down to the hot springs and there we saw, Golden crowned Tanagers, Paramo Seedeater and fantastic views of Black chested Mountain Tanager.

Back at the lodge we had lunch at 12.30 and the idea was to start the return to Quito to look for any other Highland birds we hadn't seen. Once again we went to look for the Seedsnipe and despite the weather being terrible everyone wanted to see this bird. We arrived at the antennas again and Rob found one Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe near the road, what a joy to see this beautiful bird. This was our last day of birding and we got back to the Fuente de Piedra Hostel in Quito at 7pm.

Day 8

Friday 21st August

Travelling day back to the UK

Comments

The trip went well and the birding was stunning with everything working as we had planned. I hope that everybody enjoyed the tour as much as I did. Food, accommodation and transport worked really well and people in all the lodges were very friendly. It goes without saying that our driver also did a great job. The weather conditions were generally good and we managed to see an excellent variety of birds.

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Species Lists

Birds

	Common name	Scientific name	August						
			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
1	Silvery Grebe	<i>Podiceps occipitalis</i>							✓
2	Andean Teal	<i>Anas andium</i>					✓		✓
3	Yellow-billed Pintail	<i>Anas spinicauda</i>					✓		
4	Torrent Duck	<i>Merganetta armata</i>					✓	✓	
5	Andean Ruddy-Duck	<i>Oxyura ferruginea</i>							✓
6	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	✓		✓				
7	Cattle Egret	<i>Bulbulcus ibis</i>	✓			✓			
8	Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	✓		✓	✓			
9	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>			✓	✓			
10	Barred Hawk	<i>Leucopternis princeps</i>				✓			
11	Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle	<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>	✓				✓		✓
12	Roadside Hawk	<i>Buteo magnirostris</i>					✓	✓	
13	White-rumped Hawk	<i>Buteo leucorrhous</i>						✓	
14	Red-backed Hawk	<i>Buteo polyosoma</i>	✓				✓		✓
15	Black-and-Chestnut Eagle	<i>Oroaetus isidori</i>					✓		
16	Carunculated Caracara	<i>Phalcoenus carunculatus</i>					✓		
17	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>				✓	✓		
18	Sickle-winged Guan	<i>Chamaepetes goudotii</i>				✓			
19	Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe	<i>Attagis gayi</i>							✓
20	Andean Coot	<i>Fulica ardesiaca</i>							✓
21	Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>						✓	
22	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	✓						
23	Southern Lapwing	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>						✓	
24	Andean Gull	<i>Larus serranus</i>					✓		✓
25	Rock Dove/Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i>					✓		
26	Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Columba fasciata</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
27	Ruddy Pigeon	<i>Columba subvinacea</i>						✓	
28	Plumbeous Pigeon	<i>Columba plumbea</i>	✓			✓			
29	Eared Dove	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>	✓			✓	✓		✓
30	Common Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>					✓		✓
31	White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptotila verreauxi</i>	✓			✓			
32	White-throated Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon frenata</i>				✓			
33	Barred Parakeet	<i>Bolborhynchus lineola</i>						✓	
34	Red-billed Parrot	<i>Pionus sordidus</i>		✓		✓			
35	White-capped Parrot	<i>Pionus seniloides</i>				✓			
36	Bronze-winged Parrot	<i>Pionus chalcopterus</i>	✓						
37	Scaly-naped Amazon	<i>Amazona mercenaria</i>		✓		✓			
38	Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>	✓			✓			
39	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>						✓	
40	Rufous-bellied Nighthawk	<i>Lurocalis rufiventris</i>						✓	
41	Lyre-tailed Nightjar	<i>Uropsalis lyra</i>						✓	
42	White-collared Swift	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>		✓			✓		
43	Chestnut-collared Swift	<i>Cypseloides rutilus</i>						✓	
44	White-tipped Swift	<i>Aeronautes montivagus</i>					✓		
45	White-whiskered Hermit	<i>Phaethornis yaruqui</i>		✓	✓				
46	Tawny-bellied Hermit	<i>Phaethornis syrmatophorus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
47	Green-fronted Lancebill	<i>Doryfera ludovicae</i>		✓					

	Common name	Scientific name	August						
			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
48	White-necked Jacobin	<i>Florisuga mellivora</i>		✓	✓				
49	Brown Violetear	<i>Colibri delphinae</i>		✓	✓	✓			
50	Green Violetear	<i>Colibri thalassinus</i>				✓			
51	Sparkling Violetear	<i>Colibri coruscans</i>		✓			✓	✓	
52	Western Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus</i>					✓		
53	Green-crowned Woodnymph	<i>Thalurania fannyi</i>		✓	✓				
54	Andean Emerald	<i>Amazilia franciae</i>			✓	✓			
55	Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia tzacatl</i>		✓	✓				
56	Speckled Hummingbird	<i>Adelomyia melanogenys</i>					✓	✓	✓
57	Purple-bibbed Whitetip	<i>Urosticte benjamini</i>				✓			
58	Green Thorntail	<i>Popelairia conversii</i>				✓			
59	Empress Brilliant	<i>Heliodoxa imperatrix</i>			✓				
60	Fawn-breasted Brilliant	<i>Heliodoxa rubinoides</i>			✓	✓		✓	✓
61	Green-crowned Brilliant	<i>Heliodoxa jacula</i>		✓	✓				
62	Ecuadorian Hillstar	<i>Oreotrochilus chimborazo</i>					✓		
63	Giant Hummingbird	<i>Patagona gigas</i>					✓		
64	Shining Sunbeam	<i>Aglaeactis cupripennis</i>	✓				✓		✓
65	Mountain Velvetbreast	<i>Lafresnaya lafresnayi</i>	✓						✓
66	Great Sapphirewing	<i>Pterophanes cyanopterus</i>	✓						
67	Bronzy Inca	<i>Coeligena coeligena</i>						✓	
68	Brown Inca	<i>Coeligena wilsoni</i>			✓	✓			
69	Collared Inca	<i>Coeligena torquata</i>				✓	✓	✓	✓
70	Buff-winged Starfrontlet	<i>Coeligena lutetiae</i>	✓				✓		✓
71	Sword-billed Hummingbird	<i>Ensifera ensifera</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓
72	Buff-tailed Coronet	<i>Boissonneaua flavescens</i>			✓	✓			✓
73	Chestnut-breasted Coronet	<i>Boissonneaua matthewsii</i>					✓	✓	✓
74	Velvet-purple Coronet	<i>Boissonneaua jardini</i>			✓	✓			
75	Gorgeted Sunangel	<i>Heliangelus strophianus</i>			✓				
76	Tourmaline Sunangel	<i>Heliangelus exortis</i>					✓		✓
77	Sapphire-vented Puffleg	<i>Eriocnemis luciani</i>	✓						
78	Golden-breasted Puffleg	<i>Eriocnemis mosquera</i>	✓						
79	Booted Racket-tail	<i>Ocreatus underwoodii</i>			✓	✓			
80	Black-tailed Trainbearer	<i>Lesbia victoriae</i>				✓	✓		
81	Green-tailed Trainbearer	<i>Lesbia nuna</i>					✓		
82	Tyrian Metaltail	<i>Metallura tyrianthina</i>	✓				✓		✓
83	Blue-mantled Thornbill	<i>Chalcostigma stanleyi</i>					✓		
84	Mountain Avocetbill	<i>Opisthoprora euryptera</i>					✓		
85	Long-tailed Sylph	<i>Aglaiocercus kingi</i>					✓	✓	✓
86	Violet-tailed Sylph	<i>Aglaiocercus coelestis</i>			✓	✓			
87	Purple-throated Woodstar	<i>Calliphox mitchellii</i>			✓	✓			
88	Purple-collared Woodstar	<i>Myrtis fanny</i>					✓		
89	White-bellied Woodstar	<i>Acestrura mulsant</i>					✓		✓
90	Gorgeted Woodstar	<i>Chaetocercus heliodor</i>						✓	
91	Golden-headed Quetzal	<i>Pharomachrus uriceps</i>			✓	✓			
92	Collared Trogon	<i>Trogon collaris</i>			✓				
93	Masked Trogon	<i>Trogon personata</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓	
94	Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	✓		✓				
95	Broad-billed Motmot	<i>Electron platyrhynchum</i>		✓					
96	Rufous Motmot	<i>Baryphthengus martii</i>		✓	✓				
97	Red-headed Barbet	<i>Eubucco bourcierii</i>		✓	✓	✓			
98	Toucan Barbet	<i>Semnormis rampastinus</i>			✓	✓			

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			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
99	Crimson-rumped Toucanet	<i>Aulacorhynchus haematopygus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
100	Pale-mandibled Aracari	<i>Pteroglossus erythropygius</i>		✓					
101	Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan	<i>Andigena laminirostris</i>	✓		✓				
102	Choco Toucan	<i>Ramphastos brevis</i>		✓	✓				
103	Crimson-mantled Woodpecker	<i>Piculus(Colaptes) rivolii</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	
104	Golden-olive Woodpecker	<i>Piculus(Colaptes) rubiginosus</i>		✓				✓	
105	Smoky-brown Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis fumigatus</i>		✓	✓			✓	
106	Bar-bellied Woodpecker	<i>Veniliornis nigriceps</i>	✓						
107	Guayaquil Woodpecker	<i>Campephilus guayaquilensis</i>			✓				
108	Stout-billed Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes excelsior</i>					✓		✓
109	Bar-winged Cinclodes	<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>					✓		✓
110	Pacific Hornero	<i>Furnarius cinnamomeus</i>	✓	✓	✓				
111	Andean Tit-spinetail	<i>Leptasthenura andicola</i>					✓		✓
112	Azara's Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis azarae</i>	✓			✓	✓	✓	
113	Slaty Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis brachyura</i>			✓				
114	Rufous Spinetail	<i>Synallaxis unirufa</i>						✓	
115	White-browed Spinetail	<i>Hellmayrea gularis</i>	✓						
116	Red-faced Spinetail	<i>Cranioleuca vulpina</i>		✓	✓				
117	Many-striped Canastero	<i>Asthenes flammulata</i>					✓		✓
118	White-chinned Thistletail	<i>Schizoeaca fuliginosa</i>					✓		
119	Pearled Treerunner	<i>Margarornis squamiger</i>	✓				✓		
120	Spotted Barbtail	<i>Premnoplex brunnescens</i>			✓				
121	Streaked Tuftedcheek	<i>Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii</i>	✓					✓	
122	Lineated Foliage-gleaner	<i>Syndactyla subalaris</i>				✓			
123	Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner	<i>Anabacerthia variegaticeps</i>		✓		✓			
124	Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner	<i>Philydor ruficaudatus</i>		✓	✓				
125	Plain-brown Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓		
126	Strong-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus</i>			✓				
127	Spotted Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythropygius</i>			✓				
128	Olive-backed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphoryhynchus triangularis</i>						✓	
129	Montane Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes lachrymiger</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
130	Russet Antshrike	<i>Thamnistes anabatinus</i>			✓				
131	Slaty Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula schisticolor</i>		✓	✓				
132	Esmeraldas Antbird	<i>Mtarmeciza berlepschi</i>			✓				
133	Giant Antpitta	<i>Grallaria gigantea</i>				✓			
134	Moustached Antpitta	<i>Grallaria alleni</i>				✓			
135	Chestnut-crowned Antpitta	<i>Grallaria ruficapilla</i>							✓
136	White-bellied Antpitta	<i>Grallaria hypoleuca</i>						✓	
137	Yellow-breasted Antpitta	<i>Grallaria flavotincta</i>				✓			
138	Tawny Antpitta	<i>Grallaria quitensis</i>					✓		✓
139	Blackish Tapaculo	<i>Scytalopus latrans</i>						✓	
140	Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus minor</i>						✓	
141	Golden-faced Tyrannulet	<i>Ornithion inermis</i>						✓	
142	Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma obsoletum</i>		✓		✓	✓		
143	White-throated Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus leucophrys</i>	✓						✓
144	Rufous-winged Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus calopterus</i>						✓	
145	White-banded Tyrannulet	<i>Mecocerculus stictopterus</i>	✓				✓		✓
146	Torrent Tyrannulet	<i>Serpophaga cinerea</i>	✓	✓				✓	
147	Tufted Tit-Tyrant	<i>Uromyias parulus</i>				✓			
148	Rufous tailed Tyrant	<i>Knipolegus poecilurus</i>						✓	
149	Streak-necked Flycatcher	<i>Mionectes striaticollis</i>	✓		✓			✓	

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			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
150	Rufous-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Leptopogon rufipectus</i>						✓	
151	Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant	<i>Pogonotriccus ophthalmicus</i>						✓	
152	Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant	<i>Lophotriccus vitiosus</i>		✓					
153	Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher	<i>Poecilatriccus ruficeps</i>						✓	
154	Cinnamon Flycatcher	<i>Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea</i>					✓	✓	
155	White-throated Spadebill	<i>Platyrinchus mystaceus</i>			✓				
156	Ornate Flycatcher	<i>Myiotriccus ornatus</i>			✓				
157	Smoke-coloured Pewee	<i>Contopus fumigatus</i>	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
158	Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	✓	✓	✓			✓	
159	Vermillion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>					✓		
160	Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca fumicolor</i>					✓		✓
161	Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca rufipectoralis</i>					✓		
162	Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant	<i>Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris</i>	✓						
163	Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant	<i>Cnemarchus erythropygius</i>					✓		
164	Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant	<i>Myiotheretes striaticollis</i>				✓			
165	Paramo Ground Tyrant	<i>Muscisaxicola alpina</i>					✓		✓
166	Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>		✓	✓				
167	Pale-edged Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cephalotes</i>						✓	
168	Rusty-margined Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes cayanensis</i>		✓					
169	Lemon-browed Flycatcher	<i>Conopias cinchoneti</i>						✓	
170	Golden-crowned Flycatcher	<i>Myiodynastes chrysocephalus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
171	Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	
172	Barred Becard	<i>Pachyramphus versicolor</i>					✓	✓	
173	Cinnamon Becard	<i>Pachyramphus cinnamomeus</i>		✓	✓				
174	One-coloured Becard	<i>Pachyramphus homochrous</i>			✓				
175	Masked Tityra	<i>Tityra semifasciata</i>		✓	✓				
176	Red-crested Cotinga	<i>Ampelion rubrocristatus</i>	✓				✓		
177	Orange-breasted Fruiteater	<i>Pipreola jucunda</i>				✓			
178	Olivaceous Piha	<i>Lathria cryptolophus</i>				✓			
179	Andean Cock-of-the-Rock	<i>Rupicola peruviana</i>				✓			
180	Turquoise Jay	<i>Cyanolyca turcosa</i>					✓		✓
181	Inca Jay	<i>Cyanocorax yncas</i>						✓	✓
182	Black-billed Peppershrike	<i>Cyclarhis nigrirostris</i>						✓	
183	Red-eyed Vireo	<i>Vireo olivaceus</i>		✓	✓				
184	Brown-capped Vireo	<i>Vireo leucophrys</i>	✓		✓			✓	
185	Lesser Greenlet	<i>Hylophilus decurtatus</i>		✓	✓				
186	Pale-eyed Thrush	<i>Platycichla leucops</i>		✓					
187	Great Thrush	<i>Turdus fuscater</i>	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
188	Glossy-black Thrush	<i>Turdus serranus</i>				✓		✓	
189	Ecuadorian Thrush	<i>Turdus maculirostris</i>		✓					
190	White-capped Dipper	<i>Cinclus leucocephalus</i>		✓			✓		✓
191	Brown-bellied Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon murina</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓
192	Blue and White Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon cyanoleuca</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
193	Pale-footed Swallow	<i>Notiochelidon flavipes</i>						✓	
194	Southern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx ruficollis</i>		✓	✓			✓	
195	Sepia-brown Wren	<i>Cinnycerthia olivascens</i>				✓			
196	Grass Wren	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>					✓		
197	Plain-tailed Wren	<i>Thryothorus euophrys</i>						✓	
198	Bay Wren	<i>Thryothorus nigricapillus</i>		✓					
199	Southern House-Wren	<i>Troglodytes musculus</i>				✓	✓		
200	Mountain Wren	<i>Troglodytes solstitialis</i>					✓		

	Common name	Scientific name	August						
			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
201	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>			✓				
202	Southern Nightingale-Wren	<i>Microcerculus bamba</i>			✓				
203	Paramo Pipit	<i>Anthus bogotensis</i>					✓		
204	Tropical Parula	<i>Parula pitiayumi</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
205	Slate-throated Whitestart	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	
206	Spectacled Whitestart	<i>Myioborus melanocephalus</i>	✓				✓	✓	✓
207	Three-striped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus tristriatus</i>		✓	✓	✓			
208	Black-crested Warbler	<i>Basileuterus nigrocristatus</i>				✓	✓		✓
209	Russet-crowned Warbler	<i>Basileuterus coronatus</i>						✓	
210	Buff-rumped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus fulvicauda</i>						✓	
211	Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>		✓	✓			✓	
212	Golden-rumped Euphonia	<i>Eufonia cyanocephala</i>					✓		
213	Orange-bellied Euphonia	<i>Euphonia xanthogaster</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
214	Thick-billed Euphonia	<i>Euphonia laniirostris</i>		✓					
215	Cinereous Conebill	<i>Conirostrum cinereum</i>				✓	✓		✓
216	Blue-backed Conebill	<i>Conirostrum sitticolor</i>	✓				✓		
217	Capped Conebill	<i>Conirostrum albifrons</i>			✓		✓		
218	Giant Conebill	<i>Oreomanes fraseri</i>							✓
219	Masked Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa cyanea</i>	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓
220	Glossy Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa lafresnayii</i>	✓						✓
221	Black Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa humeralis</i>					✓		
222	Rusty Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa sittoides</i>					✓		
223	White-sided Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa albilatera</i>							✓
224	Golden-collared Honeycreeper	<i>Iridophanes pulcherrina</i>						✓	
225	Fawn-breasted Tanager	<i>Pipraeidea melanonota</i>	✓		✓				
226	Rufous-throated Tanager	<i>Tangara rufigula</i>		✓	✓				
227	Golden Tanager	<i>Tangara arthus</i>	✓	✓	✓	✓			
228	Silvery-throated Tanager	<i>Tangara icterocephala</i>		✓					
229	Saffron-crowned Tanager	<i>Tangara xanthocephala</i>						✓	
230	Golden-eared Tanager	<i>Tangara chrysotis</i>						✓	
231	Flame-faced Tanager	<i>Tangara parzudakki</i>			✓	✓		✓	
232	Metallic-green Tanager	<i>Tangara labradorides</i>		✓		✓			
233	Blue-necked Tanager	<i>Tangara cyanicollis</i>		✓				✓	
234	Golden-naped Tanager	<i>Tangara rufivertex</i>		✓	✓	✓		✓	
235	Bay-headed Tanager	<i>Tangara gyrola</i>		✓	✓				
236	Beryl-spangled Tanager	<i>Tangara nigroviridis</i>			✓	✓		✓	
237	Blue-and-black Tanager	<i>Tangara vassorii</i>	✓		✓				
238	Black-capped Tanager	<i>Tangara heinei</i>		✓				✓	
239	Scrub Tanager	<i>Tangara vitriolina</i>					✓		
240	Golden-crowned Tanager	<i>Iridosornis rufivertex</i>	✓						✓
241	Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager	<i>Anisognathus igniventris</i>	✓				✓		✓
242	Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager	<i>Anisognathus somptuosus</i>	✓		✓	✓		✓	
243	Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager	<i>Anisognathus notabilis</i>				✓			
244	Hooded Mountain-Tanager	<i>Buthraupis montana</i>							✓
245	Black-chested Mountain-Tanager	<i>Buthraupis eximia</i>	✓						✓
246	Swallow Tanager	<i>Tersina viridis</i>	✓	✓	✓				
247	Blue-gray Tanager	<i>Thraupis episcopus</i>		✓	✓			✓	
248	Palm Tanager	<i>Thraupis palmarum</i>		✓					
249	Blue-capped Tanager	<i>Thraupis cyanocephala</i>	✓		✓	✓			
250	Blue and Yellow Tanager	<i>Thraupis bonariensis</i>					✓		
251	Lemon-rumped Tanager	<i>Ramphocelus icteronotus</i>	✓	✓	✓				

	Common name	Scientific name	August						
			14	15	16	17	18	19	20
252	White-winged Tanager	<i>Piranga leucoptera</i>		✓	✓				
253	Ochre-breasted Tanager	<i>Chlorothraupis stolzmanni</i>		✓	✓				
254	Rufous-chested Tanager	<i>Thlypopsis ornata</i>				✓			
255	Common Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus ophthalmicus</i>						✓	
256	Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus flavigularis</i>		✓	✓				
257	Dusky Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus semifuscus</i>			✓	✓			
258	Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager	<i>Cnemoscopus rubrirostris</i>					✓	✓	✓
259	Black-backed Bush-Tanager	<i>Urothraupis stolzmanni</i>							✓
260	Grass-green Tanager	<i>Chlorornis riefferii</i>	✓		✓				
261	Black-eared Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus melanostis</i>					✓	✓	
262	Black-capped Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus atropileus</i>					✓		
263	Superciliaried Hemispingus	<i>Hemispingus superciliaris</i>	✓						
264	Buff-throated Saltator	<i>Saltator maximus</i>		✓	✓				
265	Black-winged Saltator	<i>Saltator atripennis</i>		✓	✓				
266	Southern Yellow-Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus chrysogaster</i>				✓	✓		
267	Yellow-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris olivacea</i>				✓			
268	Variable Seedeater	<i>Sporophila corvina</i>	✓	✓					
269	Yellow-bellied Seedeater	<i>Sporophila nigricollis</i>	✓						
270	Band-tailed Seedeater	<i>Catamenia analis</i>					✓		
271	Plain-colored Seedeater	<i>Catamenia inornata</i>	✓						
272	Paramo Seedeater	<i>Catamenia homochroa</i>							✓
273	Plumbeous Sierra-finch	<i>Phrygilus unicolor</i>					✓		✓
274	Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch	<i>Phrygilus plebejus</i>					✓		
275	Slaty Finch	<i>Haplospiza rustica</i>			✓				
276	Pale-naped Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes pallidinuchq</i>					✓		
277	Rufous-naped Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes latinuchus</i>	✓				✓		
278	Tricolored Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes tricolor</i>			✓	✓			
279	Slaty Brush-Finch	<i>Atlapetes schistaceus</i>					✓		
280	Yellow-browed Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus aurifrons</i>						✓	
281	Rufous-collared Sparrow	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
282	Russet-backed Oropendola	<i>Psarocolius angustifrons</i>						✓	
283	Scarlet-rumped Cacique	<i>Cacicus microrhynchus</i>			✓				
284	Subtropical Cacique	<i>Cacicus uropygialis</i>						✓	
285	Northern Mountain-Cacique	<i>Cacicus leucoramphus</i>					✓	✓	✓
286	Red-breasted Blackbird	<i>Sturnella militaris</i>						✓	
287	Hooded Siskin	<i>Carduelis magellanica</i>				✓	✓		✓
288	Olivaceous Siskin	<i>Carduelis olivacea</i>						✓	

Mammals

Red brocked Deer	<i>Mazama Americana</i>
White tailed Deer	<i>Odocoileus virginianus</i>
Long tailed Weasel	<i>Mustela frenata</i>
Kinkajou	<i>Potos flavus</i>
Central American Agouti	<i>Dasyprocta punctata</i>
Brazilian Rabbit	<i>Sylbilagus brasiliensis</i>

Account of Tour kindly submitted by participant Julian Thomas

14th August

The trip did not get off to the best of start for four of us, with a delay on the flight to Houston, but later on that day we got the travel arrangements sorted and were on our way to Quito...

15th August

After an early breakfast at the Piedra de Fuente Hotel we left Quito at six and started the two hour journey to the Maquipucuna Reserve. Leaving the rather arid surroundings of Quito we soon found ourselves in largely forested hills, and although quite a lot of cloud forest had been cleared or degraded the situation is better than in most other areas of South and Central America that I had previously visited. The first Ecuadorian birds were seen along the road – Roadside Hawk, Turkey and Black Vultures, Smooth-billed Ani, Black Phoebe, Tropical Kingbird, Lemon-rumped Tanagers and Three-striped Warblers, but the first real hint of the treats in store came when we finally arrived at Maquipucuna Lodge, beautifully sited in a significant reserve of 6,000 Ha of largely intact primary cloud forest. Here we met Max and Miles and our guide William Perez. I try not to be taken in by first impressions, but it only took me five minutes to decide that we were extremely fortunate to have William as our guide. Boundlessly enthusiastic and a great communicator he had brilliant ID skills, but even more impressive was his seemingly magical facility for locating birds, something he would demonstrate again and again on this trip.

The hummingbird feeders and fruiting trees around the lodge held us spellbound as we made progress on our first walk, with White-necked Jacobins, Brown Violetears, White-whiskered Hermits, Green-crowned Woodnymphs, Green-crowned Brilliants and Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds on the feeders, and a variety of birds in the trees such as Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Swallow tanager, Sparkling Violetear, Blue-grey tanager, Cinnamon Becard, Red-eyed Vireo, Golden tanager, Red-headed Barbet, Red-faced Spinetail, Tropical Parula, Rufous Motmot, Slate-throated Whitestart, Yellow-throated Bush-tanager, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Broad-billed Motmot, White-collared Swift, Immaculate Antbird, Masked Tityra, Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Ochre-breasted Tanager, Slaty Antwren, Plain Ant-vireo, Choco Toucan and Orange-billed Sparrow.

A brief stop by the fast flowing Umachaca River below the lodge produced an insect catching Green-fronted Lancebill, Torrent Tyrannulet, White-capped Dipper and that quintessential Andean species, the Torrent Duck. Along the trail walked in the morning we saw quite a lot of Spectacled Bear signs, where they had ripped down branches of wild avocado and bromeliads, but as expected the animal remained elusive.

After lunch a different trail produced a suite of new birds such as Pale-eyed thrush, Band-tailed Pigeon, Squirrel Cuckoo, Variable Seed-eater, Smoke-coloured Pewee, Blue-necked Tanager, Rufous-throated Tanager, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Southern-beardless Tyrannulet, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, Red-billed Parrot, Plain-brown Woodcreeper, Black-winged Saltator, Pacific Hornero, Metallic green tanager, Ecuadorian Thrush and Rufous-collared Sparrow.

In the evening I went for a brief walk with the spotlight, and my rather half hearted efforts were rewarded with a rather beautiful Western Woolly Opossum before collapsing into bed.

16th August

A pre-dawn start was made as we set out to explore the same trail as yesterday at Maquipucuna. The intention was to reach the Spectacled Bear feeding area as early as possible, but this plan was thwarted by a procession of sought after bird species that reduced our progress to a crawl. Several species we had heard yesterday now deigned to give crippling views, including Golden-headed Quetzal, Toucan Barbet and Guayaquil Woodpecker as well as species such as Tri-coloured Bush-finch, Buff-throated Saltator, Slaty Spinetail, White-throated Spadebill, Ornate Flycatcher, Fawn-breasted Tanager, Plumbeous Pigeon, Western Slaty Antshrike, One-coloured Becard, Bay-headed Tanager, Brown-capped Vireo, White-backed Fire-eye, Red-faced Spinetail, Russet Antshrike, Southern Nightingale Wren, Collared Trogon, Spotted Nightingale-thrush, lesser Greenlet, Spotted Barbtail, Spotted Woodcreeper and Esmerelda Antbird. Mammal interest was confined to a Central American Agouti.

After lunch we rather reluctantly left Maquipucuna, an outstanding area, and set off for Milpe, making frequent stops along route to view birds in cloud forest along the road. At the fish farm on the Umachaca River Green Kingfisher and Snowy Egret were noted, and further stops gave Slate-throated Whitestart, Masked Flowerpiercer, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Golden tanager, Blue-capped tanager, White-sided Flowerpiercer, Streak-necked Flycatcher, Gorgeted Sunangel, Green and black Fruiteater, Dusky Bush-tanager, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Blue-winged Mountain Tanager, Grass-green tanager, and Andean Solitaire. Typically the birds came in waves, with a seemingly quiet forest suddenly coming alive as a host of new species in the canopy had our binoculars scanning in all directions.

We arrived at Mindo Loma Lodge where even a short altitudinal and geographical change from Maquipucuna Lodge meant a new cast of hummingbirds on the feeders was there to further challenge us, and additions to the list were Andean Emerald, Empress Brilliant, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Green-crowned Brilliant, Brown Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, and Purple-throated Woodstar. Perhaps the most stunning species was the Velvet-purple Coronet, although it would vie for this title with the tiny Booted Racquet-tail.

At night we failed with two of the rather limited owl options on the trip, only hearing the Rufescent Screech-owl and not finding the Black-and-white Owl at the stake out around street lights where it hunts moths, but we did have brilliant views of Kinkajou moving deliberately through Cecropia trees close to the lodge.

17th August

An early departure was made from Mindo Loma to access the Cock-of-the-Rock lek at Angel's private reserve. It was still dark as we descended a steep trail through forest to the bottom of a gorge, with the sound of Andean Pygmy Owl in the background. We arrived at a hide and waited until the clear bell like calls of Andean Solitaire were drowned out by the raucous calls of the Cock-of-the-Rocks. Always an amazing bird to see! As the Cock-of-the-Rocks dispersed several more species appeared to eat fruit in front of another hide – some like Sickle-winged Guan and Toucan Barbet staying for several minutes, while others such as Olivaceous Piha, Black-chinned Mountain-tanager, and Sepia-brown Wren made more fleeting visits...

The next item on the agenda was the opportunity to view what had once been some of the most elusive of forest floor specialists as they responded to calls and came to eat worms provided by Angel – the Antpittas. I could hardly believe my eyes as first Giant Antpitta, then Moustached and finally Yellow-breasted all hopped onto the path just a few yards from us.

It was a little frustrating not to be able to use flash, but some reasonable pictures were still taken as the Antpittas would stand motionless before seizing a worm. Having failed to see any raptors while carefully scanning hillsides it was surprising that both Black-and-chestnut Eagle and two Barred Hawks cruised over narrow gaps in the canopy above us.

After climbing back up to the top of the ravine we rested to watch hummingbirds visiting feeders, including Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Green Violetear, and Collared Inca, before a late and enjoyable Ecuadorian breakfast. We then walked along the top of the valley, searching in particular for the Orange breasted Fruiteater, which was only glimpsed, but also seeing American Kestrel, White-throated Quail-dove, Barred Becard, White-capped and Scaly-naped Amazon Parrots, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Glossy-black Thrush, and Southern House-wren. Fortunately the sought after fruiteater was later seen well back at Mindo Loma Lodge before we departed for Quito.

We made further stops in relatively arid high altitude scrub in the afternoon and in this different type of vegetation further new species were recorded such as Azara's Spinetail, Tufted Tit-tyrant, Streak-throated Bush-tyrant, Great Thrush, Black-crested Warbler, Cinereous Conebill, Rufous-chested Tanager, Hooded Siskin, and the spectacular Southern Yellow Grosbeak. A stop by the equator line still produced one new bird which was the Black-tailed Train-bearer – the main monument being incorrectly sited with the real equator several metres distant!

18th August

A dull overcast day with light drizzle even in the arid surroundings of Quito as we explored the steep sided Chiche Canyon, with many Agaves on the higher slopes and Acacia scrub down below. Dry-land species such as Common Ground Dove, White-chested and White-tipped Swifts, Western Emerald, Purple-collared and White-bellied Woodstars, Vermilion Flycatcher, Golden rumped Euphonia, Rusty Flowerpiercer and Ash-breasted Sierra-finch were seen. William's persistence eventually located the elusive Scrub Tanager, although for me the best bird here was the swift-like Giant Hummingbird.

We then headed towards Papallacta Pass, passing through elfin cloud forest, which gave way to puya studded paramo grassland and patches of polylepis woodland. The pass itself is 4,000m, and we then climbed a further 400m to barren stony area dominated by mat forming alpine species. A few raptors seen included Black-chested Buzzard-eagle, Red-backed (Variable) Hawk, and graceful Carunculated Caracaras. This trip was never going to be notable for waterbirds, but some scattered pools held Andean Gull, Yellow-billed Pintail and Andean Teal while in the scrubby bushes held a variety of smaller birds, such as Red-crested Cotinga, Glossy and White-sided Flowerpiercers, Brown-backed Chat-tyrant, the scarce Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant, Pearled Treerunner and Green-tailed Trainbearer at lower altitudes, with species such as Shining Sunbeam, Stout-billed and Bar-winged Cinclodes, Many-striped Canastero, Blue-mantled Thornbill, White-chinned Thistletail, Tawny Antpitta, White-banded Tyrannulet, Paramo Pipit, Sedge(Grass) Wren, Paramo and Band-tailed Seed-eaters, and Rufous-naped Brush-finches appearing as we climbed higher. Blue-and-white and Brown-bellied Swallows hawked over the alpine grasslands. At the highest altitudes cloud rolled in and curtailed observations, although we did find Paramo Ground Tyrant and Ecuadorian Hillstar. Mammals seen during this journey were Brazilian Rabbit, White-tailed Deer, but I missed the Long-tailed Weasel that darted across the road.

As the bad weather closed in we dropped down the eastern side of the Andes, quickly finding ourselves in lush cloud forest again as we reached Guango Lodge. Once again a new selection of Hummingbirds presented itself as we caught up with the astonishing Sword-billed, as well as Speckled Hummingbird, Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Tourmaline Sunangel, Tyrian Metaltail, and Mountain Avocetbill, before we completed the day with a short walk from the lodge.

Mixed bird parties were soon encountered and the number of new species underlined the incredible diversity of the cloud forest avifauna. New species were Cinnamon Flycatcher, Turquoise Jay, Mountain Wren, Spectacled Whitestart, Blue-backed Conebill, Scarlet-bellied Mountain tanager, Blue-and-yellow Tanager, Black-eared and Black-capped Hemispingus, Plushcap, Pale napped and Slaty Brush Finches and Northern Mountain Caciques. We finally reached the river where viewing Torrent Ducks at home in the roaring cascade made a fitting conclusion to the day. A Neotropical Cormorant was the sole seabird representative of the trip.

19th August

Even by the standards of the trip we made a fairly early start, leaving Guango Lodge at 4.15am, as we drove down to an altitude of 2000m to San Isidro Lodge. The early start allowed us to find two crepuscular birds, with the superb Lyre-tailed Nightjar found calling from a branch by a road cutting, and Rufous-bellied Nighthawk flying around San Isidro Lodge. It was raining steadily at dawn, but we were able to view birds coming to eat moths around a streetlight from the shelter. Apart from the conspicuous Inca (Green) Jays, Smoky Brown Woodpecker, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Rufous Spinetail, Olive-backed Woodcreeper, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Black-billed Peppershrike were all there to take advantage of this opportunistic feast. We then went to another Antpitta 'stakeout' where this time a White-bellied dully arrived to dine on worms. As it was still drizzling we ate breakfast in another shelter where hummingbird feeders were visited by Bronzy Incas and the diminutive Gorgeted Woodstar among others.

We then toured round part of the reserve that is centred on San Isidro Lodge, in open grassland areas opening the Wader account with Southern Lapwing and Solitary Sandpiper, while in the forest we tried to view various skulking species. Chestnut-naped Antpitta and Long-tailed Antbirds were only heard calling from bamboo, but I did get views of Blackish Tapaculo, as well as Barred Parakeet, Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulet, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Rufous-breasted Flycatcher, Marble-faced Bristle-tyrant, Rufous-crowned Tody-flycatcher, Plain-tailed Wren, Russet-crowned Warbler, Golden-collared Honeycreeper, Saffron crowned Tanager, Golden-eared tanagers, Common Bush Tanagers, Violet-fronted Brilliant and Rufous-tailed Tyrant. Noisy flocks of Russet-backed Oropendolas, Sub-tropical and Northern Mountain Caciques flew over.

After a pleasant lunch we slowly made our way back to Guango Lodge via a loop road that allowed frequent stops for roadside birding. Flocks of swifts were mainly Chestnut-collared, while the rare Pale-footed Swallow was found perched on a wire. Other birds encountered were Ruddy Pigeon, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Lemon-browed Flycatcher, Black-capped Tanager, Yellow-browed Sparrow, Red-breasted Blackbird and Olivaceous Siskin.

20th August

Our final day in Ecuador! I started early with a pre-dawn spotlight walk from Guango Lodge. Rufous-banded Owl had been calling the previous night, but could not be located, but I did find Band-winged Nightjar on a path.

As the weather was reasonable it seemed sensible to head to the high altitudes of Papallacta Pass, but not before we viewed a smart Chestnut-crowned Antpitta lured out by worms. Once in paramo at around 3600m we made a short walk to a high altitude lake. On the way we searched polylepis woodland and were rewarded by sightings of Giant Conebill, as well as Bar-bellied Woodpecker, and Black-backed Bush-tanagers. The lake itself was only viewed from a distance – at this altitude the idea of having to re-ascend the steep slope of several hundred metres towards the lake seemed very unappealing, but we quickly located Andean Duck, Andean Coot and with searching three neat Silvery Grebes.

Unfortunately the promise of a fine day in the mountains, with spectacular views of distant snow clad peaks failed to materialise and we dropped to lower altitudes to explore scrub and elfin cloud forest in a reserve that extended from the small town of Papallacta. Birds were a little sparse in this rather harsh environment, but we found the beautiful Black-chested and Scarlet-bellied Mountain tanagers, White-banded and White-throated Tyrannulets, Golden-crowned Tanagers, Paramo Seedeater and heard Paramo Tapaculos and Rufous Antpitta. The hoped for Andean Condor failed to sail into view, so we had to content ourselves with Black-chested Buzzard-eagle and Red-backed hawk.

We returned to Guango Lodge in heavy rain, and this might have curtailed activity for the rest of the day, other than viewing and photographing the Hummingbirds on the feeders there, but miraculously it began to clear. We started on a walk from the lodge and quickly recorded White-sided Flowerpiercer, Hooded Mountain-tanager and Mountain Velvetbreast, before I suggested the clearing might give an opportunity to find Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe above Papallacta Pass. Accordingly we headed for the site, but it would seem hopes would be dashed as the clouds swirled in once again at the site, but with a considerable slice of luck Jane and Rob quickly found a Seedsnipe trundling around the hummocky vegetation. This sought after species was the last new bird and a fitting climax to our Ecuadorian trip.

21st August

We departed from Ecuador at 6.30am, the last bird seen being American Kestrel. The flight gave splendid views of a snow capped Cotopaxi Volcano, and in Central America several active volcanoes were seen, with extensive lava flows pouring from the belching cone.

Summary:

Overall a hugely enjoyable and action packed trip with a great deal of birding packed into six days. Having an expert guide made me realise what I must have missed on previous trips to South America, we left regretting we did not go on either the Galapagos or the Amazon Basin extensions. It was predictably poor for mammals, but the diversity of birds was stunning, with my personal favourites being Rufous-bellied Seedsnipe, Giant Antpitta, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Orange breasted Fruiteater, Toucan Barbet and Lyre-tailed Nightjar. Photography was generally challenging with light levels varying between poor and atrocious but with so much subject material I still obtained some pleasing images.