

# Ecuador & the Galapagos Islands

Naturetrek Tour Report

13 - 28 August 2018



Blue-footed Booby



Galapagos Flightless Cormorant



Land Iguana



Pahoehoe Lava at Sullivan Bay

Report by clients Phil Williams, Alice Nunn and Jonathan Freeman  
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with eight Naturetrek clients.

## Day 1

**Monday 13th August**

We arrived in Quito mid afternoon after a 6.05am flight from Norwich via Amsterdam. Quito is the second highest capital city in the world at 9,186ft and also the closest to the equator, La Paz in Bolivia is the world's highest at 11,942ft. Here we were greeted by Estoban, our guide for the next two days, and met four further members of our group. We were taken by minibus directly to the hotel, the Vieja Cuba, which was pleasantly rustic, and located in a lively area with lots of bars, restaurants and a supermarket nearby. We were checked in and left to rest after what had been a long tiring day.

## Day 2

**Tuesday 14th August**

After breakfast, we had a tour of the Old Town with Esteban: the Basilica del Voto Nacional, known as Quito's "little Notre Dame", with its gargoyles fashioned on the wild life of South America, Independence Square with its flowering trees, and my personal favourite, the Iglesia San Fransisco, with its lovely garden, Franciscan monks and the most ornate church I have ever seen, with gold leaf everywhere. They were also celebrating mass while we were there; it was a lovely place to visit. We finished at the highest point of the City, The Virgin of Quito, which is an amazingly tall aluminium statue, made from 7,000 pieces of cast aluminium, with fantastic views of Quito and beyond.

We then had a free afternoon to explore; four of us chose the Botanic Gardens, not large, but interesting and well worth a visit. We saw several species of bird here: Bluish Flowerpiercer, with its lovely red eye, Black Flowerpiercer, Hooded Siskin, Sparkling Violetear, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Purple Gallinule, Cinerous Conebill, Eared Dove, Great Thrush (lots) and an unidentified Seedeater.

## Day 3

**Wednesday 15th August**

We had an early breakfast, then went by minibus to the airport to catch our 9.35am flight to Galapagos. We were greeted at Baltra by Johan, our guide for the week, and met further party members who joined our flight at Guayaquil.

It was then a very short bus ride to a ferry, which crossed the short strait between Baltra and Santa Cruz. We boarded a bus to take us to Puerto Ayora on the south side of the island. The vegetation was very dry and dead looking; our guide explained that this was dry season and with rain, the trees would quickly spring back to life and that as we progressed and climbed higher, it would become cooler and damper, and the vegetation would become greener.

Our first stop was Los Gemelos, "the craters", not really craters but sink holes. These were surrounded by Scalesia trees, botanically not trees at all, but giant members of the Daisy family that can grow to 20 metres. It was noticeably cooler and damper here. This was a possible site for Vermilion Flycatcher, no luck, but I did see a few finches.

We continued onwards, climbing all the time, with the vegetation becoming greener and greener. Eventually we stopped for lunch at a tortoise reserve in the highlands. There were lots of Giant Tortoises and birds to see; we were provided with wellingtons so we could walk about, as it was quite muddy in places. Then we were back on the bus for the final descent to Puerto Ayora. Here we met the rest of the party and we ferried on pangas to the MY Millenium.

The MY Millenium is an 82-foot catamaran, with three decks, eight cabins, cruising speed of 12 knots and a crew of nine; it felt surprisingly roomy and spacious. Our cabin was clean and comfortable with air conditioning, twin beds, a bath and shower with hot water available at all times; it also had a small balcony.

Once on board we were allocated cabins, given a safety briefing, and told what would be doing tomorrow, followed by our evening meal. I'm not very keen on boats and was happy to finally take my sea-sickness pills and get to bed. The crossing to Isabela was quite rough and I don't think anyone enjoyed it very much.

## Day 4

## Thursday 16th August

We set off early before breakfast to visit an islet called Las Tintoreras, which I believe is a local name for shark. Unfortunately we didn't see any sharks, but there were two Sea Lions lounging where we were to land. They reluctantly shifted from the steps as we all landed safely. We spent about 45 minutes walking on fairly level but rocky lava. There was lots to see: a collapsed lava tube in a small bay with Marine Iguanas clinging to its sides and Sea Lions swimming playfully. There were birds too: a Blue Heron which took an unfortunate iguana off the rocks as we were watching, a Whimbrel poking about in the sand and rocks, and my first sighting of a turtle. All in all, well worth the early start. It was back to the pangas and Millenium for breakfast.

We then landed at Puerto Vilamil, Isabela's main settlement. There was an immediate demand for \$10, landing charge or island development tax, something like that. I found this a bit disappointing as we had all paid \$100 tourist tax when we landed at Baltra. It was a short walk past lazing Marine Iguanas to the transport onwards. A lorry with wooden seats and open sides, this took us inland towards the Caldera Sierra Negra, the largest caldera in the Galapagos; it's vast, six or seven miles across. We could only go so far in the lorry and had to do the final part on foot. This was an hour, maybe more, on a steadily rising track. The weather started out misty and drizzly, but the higher we went, the less so it became, and eventually the sun came out. The view of the caldera was impressive, if only for its sheer size. The return was as the ascent, we walked down into the mist and drizzle. The local term for this mist is "garua" and occurs at certain altitudes as the hot coastal air meets cooler, damper air at altitude. Then we sat and ate our packed lunches before beginning our descent, this time stopping at a tortoise-breeding centre on the edge of Puerto Vilamil. It was very hot now and I sat in the shade watching the Lava Lizards, which varied a lot in size and colouration, as well as several finches. After a short rest we set off on foot path leading to a boardwalk through several salt and brackish lagoons. There were lots of close-up views of Flamingos, Striated Heron, Lava Heron, White-cheeked Pintail, Black-necked Stilt, Common Gallinule, as well as several finches and Yellow Warblers. Eventually we reached the west end of town and a sandy beach. We took advantage of one the bars and enjoyed some beachside refreshment, watching some Lava Gulls, as we waited to return to the boat. The Lava Gull is only found in the Galapagos Archipelago and there are estimated to be less than 400 pairs, making it one of the rarest gulls in the world.

We returned to the boat, for our pre-dinner briefing. Then Ernesto the steward made everyone cocktails and we were introduced to Douglas the captain and his crew. We were all asked to introduce ourselves and say what we hoped to see and our expectations of the cruise. Then dinner and bed and what to me felt like rough seas as we headed round the southern end of Isabela towards Puento Moreno.

## Day 5

## Friday 17th August

When we awoke to a completely calm mooring off Puento Moreno, there was a strange orange glow in the half light, that turned out to be a distant erupting volcano. There was a large flock of Galapagos Shearwaters feeding close by, and a small pod of dolphins swam by; these were the only dolphins I saw all week.

We had breakfast, then a short panga ride to our first landing, briefly scanning the rocks, to find our first Penguins, as well as Blue-footed Boobies and Marine Iguanas.

We landed on what at first sight looked to be a barren lava field. The Lava here is called Pahoehoe and is a classic example of how gas-rich filled basaltic rock cools to form what looks like loosely coiled rope. But as we walked about, there were small brackish pools, where the lava surface had collapsed into the lava tubes beneath. I also got a very brief view of a snake as it slithered in one the cracks in the lava.

We returned to the boat for our first snorkel of the trip. This was my first-ever snorkel, and there was lots to see: large shoals of fish, Sea Lions, a turtle lazily browsing on the seaweed-covered rocks; I also saw quite a large shark slowly swim by beneath me. The water was clear and noticeably warmer/colder in places, which surprised me. We returned to the boat to be welcomed by Ernesto with refreshments.

We then sailed in very calm seas to Punta Mangle on Fernandina; Storm Petrels, Shearwaters, Phalaropes and Waved Albatrosses were seen as we headed towards Fernandina. This is the most westerly, youngest and third-largest of the Islands. We moored off Punta Mangle as there is no landing point here. We boarded the pangas and were given very close-up views of the wildlife perched on the rocks. There were Flightless Cormorants: a male appeared with a large piece of seaweed and was attempting to woo a female. There were also Blue-footed Boobies, Pelicans and a Wandering Tattler (a wader).

After returning to the boat, there was the usual briefing, dinner and bed, as we sailed the relatively short distance to the north of the island and Punta Espinosa.

## Day 6

## Saturday 18th August

Breakfast and then we had a landing at Punta Espinosa, by some Red and White Mangroves, via a small wooden walkway. Lots to see here: there was a bleached skeleton of a Humpback Whale, two Galapagos Hawks in the trees, Marine Iguanas, Lava Lizards, lots of Sea Lions, including some very young ones, a Sally Lightfoot crab with a very dead Galapagos Rat, Lava Heron, Blue-footed Boobies, Pelicans, Finches, Mockingbirds, Yellow Warblers, a pair of nesting Flightless Cormorants and some Dragonflies.

There was also an area of coarse shell sand, where Marine Iguanas lay their eggs, so we needed to be careful and stick to the marked route. By Galapagos standards this was a "pretty" site: plenty of lava around but you are not required to walk on it!

We then sailed the short distance to Caleta Tagus an anchorage long used by pirates, whalers and other early visitors. You could immediately see the graffiti and inscriptions from the 19th Century carved into the cliffs and rocks that this site is famous for. From there it was a steady climb inland, until we reached a viewpoint, with lovely views back to Caleta Tagus and Darwin Lake, a flooded volcano crater, beneath us. Not everybody fancied the steep climb and they had a panga ride along the rocky coastline, and were lucky to see nesting Brown Noddies, a member of the tern family, and nesting Brown Pelicans.

We returned to the boat for a snorkel and then we had to make an early start, about 3pm, for the long sail to Santiago Island. As we cruised along the west side of Isabela Island, somebody spotted a whale and we rushed to the sun deck to get a better view. It was quite distant; it breached the surface, spouted and then slowly slid beneath the surface again. The further we sailed the choppiest the water became; by this time I was becoming a little more used to it.

## Day 7

## Sunday 19th August

Today it was a wet landing at Puerto Egas on Santiago. This was the site of a former salt mine and was mined commercially until 1970. There were several Sea Lions lazing on the beach, and Galapagos Hawks were wheeling in the sky. It was a short climb to a track through sparse vegetation leading to tidal pools and the Fur Seal grotto. Fur Seals are actually sea lions, not seals, and are appreciably smaller, with a smaller snout and larger eyes than the Galapagos Sea Lion, and were nearly hunted to extinction in the 19th Century. Their thick fur means they prefer to stay in the shade and they mostly hunt at night, this is when the squid on which they feed come to the surface and they are also less likely to be attacked by sharks.

This was another good spot for wildlife; I saw a Yellow-crowned Night Heron, a small nocturnal heron, resting between the rocks. There were lots of Finches, Yellow Warblers, Mockingbirds, American Oystercatchers, a Semipalmated Plover, Turnstones, Lava Heron as well as several Fur Seals .

This was followed by a snorkel from the beach. We returned to the boat and set sail for Sombrero Chino, Chinese Hat: a small, almost circular island, tucked close to Santiago, with a single prominent volcanic cone. This was another wet landing; not much to see here really, mostly geology (more laval!) and some colourful vegetation. I did get distant views on a nearby island of two Red-billed Tropicbirds, which seem very white when in flight. We returned to the boat for the briefing and dinner, then we set off for Santa Cruz. This would be some of the party's last night on board.

## Day 8

## Monday 20th August

We had an early start and boarded the pangas for a trip to Black Turtle Cove. This was an interesting trip, slowly cruising amongst the mangroves in quite shallow water. There was a lot to see, in and out of the water: Spotted Rays, several turtles, lots of birdlife and all at very close range. This is definitely one of the benefits of the Galapagos, you can get very close to the wildlife.

It was then another fairly short sail to moor off Baltra, and time to say goodbye to three party members, as they boarded the panga for the short ride to a floating jetty. When everybody was safely back on board, we upped anchor and sailed northwards towards North Seymour, our next destination; it wasn't far. There was lots of seabird activity along the cliffs, mostly Shearwaters and some Red-billed Tropicbirds. I think they were nesting in small holes and crevices in the cliffs. Most of the party then snorkelled; two of us were taken for a panga ride along the cliffs instead. I was hoping to photograph the Red-billed Tropicbirds at closer range. No luck but we did get very good sightings of Swallow-tailed Gulls perched on the rocks. When not breeding, it lives at sea all the time, and is unusual in that it is the world's only night-feeding gull. We also saw our first Land Iguana and lots of Shearwaters, wheeling and swooping around us.

North Seymour is a small, low-lying island, part low cliffs and part sandy beach. It's mainly covered by a small forest of short Palo Santo trees, leafless and dead looking, waiting for the rain to bring them back to life. Like a lot of places on the Galapagos, it looked to me like a set from a sci-fi movie, somewhere Dr Who might land his Tardis.

This was a dry landing on steps cut into the low cliffs. This was a popular nesting site for Frigatebirds; there are two types, the "Great" and the "Magnificent". They are hard to distinguish apart; I didn't check every bird as there were lots of them, but these appeared to be Great Frigatebirds. The males have a red throat pouch, which is only visible during the breeding season. They can inflate this to form a huge balloon; several males were doing this and making a drumming noise. We saw several Land Iguanas: some were munching on the large cacti growing among the trees. We followed the path through the trees and came out onto a sandy, rock-fringed beach, where another Wandering Tattler was poking about on the shoreline.

We returned to our usual evening routine and set sail for our next destination.

## Day 9

## Tuesday 21st August

Lava, lava, lava and you guessed it more lava. We started off with very tall pointy lava in the shape of Bartholome Island. This must be a popular beauty spot and there were four other boats moored in quite close proximity. This was in contrast to most of our trip, where we hardly saw another boat, only in the far distance and we always had landing sites to ourselves. We made a dry landing on Bartolome, a penguin and a pelican were sitting close by. We had to share the island with another group and slowly made our way upwards from viewing platform to viewing platform before finally reaching the summit. There we were rewarded with views of more pointy lava, Pinnacle Rock. There was very little life on the island, I think I saw two lizards amongst the very sparse dead looking low vegetation.

We returned to the boat and everybody except me snorkelled. Here they saw penguins chasing and corralling a shoal of small fish before attacking them. I have seen the video made by Johan, our guide, and it looked quite a spectacle.

We then landed in the very-close-by Sullivan Bay on Santiago. The main attraction here is lava, a large black lava flow created by an eruption in 1889. It was cracked and twisted, another sci-fi movie set. Very little wildlife, one or two finches and several Painted Locusts; what they were doing there, I have no idea.

We returned to the boat for our final night on board. Ernesto made cocktails and the crew joined us.

## Day 10

## Wednesday 22nd August

We had another early start and a wet landing at Las Bachas on Santa Cruz, a small site with two sandy beaches. This is a well-known turtle-nesting site. This was another of Galapagos "pretty sites", with lots of birds: Boobies diving into the sea close to the shore, Wandering Tattlers, Sanderlings flying by, Noddies flying by too, as well as perched on the rocks. Inland and on the beach and rocks there were Mockingbirds, finches and Yellow Warblers. I could see several fish in the shallows close to the beach.

Then it was back to boat and time to make our farewells, as the boat made its way to Baltra. We were ferried to the same jetty that we'd dropped people off two days earlier. It was a short wait before a bus came to take us to the airport. We flew from here to Quito, once more stopping at Guayaquil on the way. On arrival at Quito we were greeted by Iris, she would be our guide for the four of us going to Antisana the next day. We were taken straight to our hotel, The San Jose in Puembo. Puembo is a suburb of Quito and is quite close to the airport. This is a large sprawling hotel, with extensive gardens, more like a small park than a garden, absolutely delightful. We checked in, had an excellent meal in the hotel and retired for the night.

## Day 11

## Thursday 23rd August

### Antisana Option

For those of us going birdwatching, it was an early start, 6.30am I think, and we were met by Iris and her driver. We then had a 45- to 60-minute drive as we ascended towards Antisana. We saw Black Vultures sitting together in some trees and Blue-and-white Swallows perched on the wires beside the road. Antisana is a volcano in the Northern Andes, it is the fourth highest in Ecuador at 18,714ft and lies about 30 miles south-east of Quito. We made several stops as we ascended to check for birds; at the first, we saw a pair of Black-breasted Buzzard-Eagles, as they drifted over a ridge behind us. There were several smaller birds nearby as well, including a Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant; I don't know who named this bird but it is a wonderful name for what is a small brownish bird with an eye stripe. I also photographed a Red-crested Cotinga. We then continued onward, and a Carunculated Caracara was spotted in a field as we drove along.

We continued to ascend, this time stopping at a specially constructed Condor viewpoint. Condors nest here and are regularly seen; two were visible, if distant: one flying and one perched on the steep cliff face opposite. The Andean Condor, a member of the vulture family, is the iconic bird of the Andes and is the largest flying bird in the world by combined measurement of weight and wingspan; it has a maximum wingspan of nearly 11 feet. We were then treated to views of a Spectacled Bear in the vegetation at the base of the cliff; again the views were distant. The Spectacled, or Andean Bear as it is sometimes known, is the only bear found in South America; mid-sized and solitary, the males are larger than the females and can grow to 300 or 400lbs. Whilst technically a carnivore, as they will eat meat, they are mainly herbivorous. Our next stop was a barley field where a small flock of Plain-colored Seedeaters were spotted. A Variable Hawk was also seen in the air, and a American Kestrel was perched in a bush beside the road.

We then stopped on a open exposed hillside, beside a stream in a small ravine. There were several small birds pecking in the grass nearby: Stout-billed and Chestnut-winged Cinclodes (the latter now split from Bar-winged)

and Paramo Ground Tyrants. Iris was determined to find a Paramo Pipit; eventually she did and we all had good views in the scope. A White-tailed Deer appeared at this point and crossed the road behind us. Then a pair of hummingbirds perched briefly on the fence by the stream and then they were gone. I did manage three blurry photographs of the Ecuadorian Hillstar, the male with his violet-blue head: a stunning bird.

We were now getting higher and there were wonderful views of the snow-capped, glacial volcanoes, that this region is famous for. As we continued onwards there were Andean Lapwings in the fields on both sides of the van, another smart-looking bird, with its long, pink legs; then we saw Black-faced (Andean) Ibis, a large, quite rare, Paramo specialist of which I counted five .

We then reached the limit of how far we could go in the van: several brick buildings and a park ranger to check our paperwork. We continued on foot a short distance towards a large lake; we didn't get too close to avoid disturbing the birds. We saw Silver Grebe, Andean Duck (now recognised as separate from Ruddy Duck), Andean Coot, and a small, hard-to-identify wader we believe was a Pectoral Sandpiper. There were also a few Llamas standing in the shallows.

Iris was looking for an Antpitta, and with the help of her tape machine, we saw a Tawny Antpitta a little way above us on a slope; a funny-looking bird with its long legs. We saw several more small birds and a hummingbird with a nest under the eaves of one of the buildings.

We returned the same way we had come up, seeing much of the same. Our driver spotted two Condors flying close by and he stopped for us to enjoy much closer views than we had before. We then stopped for lunch, close to the Condor viewpoint we had stopped at on the way up. It was hard to concentrate on lunch as there was a lot bird activity outside. Giant Hummingbirds, Shining Sunbeams, Black Flowerpiercers and the ubiquitous Rufous-necked Sparrow were all seen. We then walked in the garden, itself a mini nature reserve with feeders, to a cottage with a balcony overlooking a spectacular ravine at the head of a large lake or reservoir. Again, there were several birds here, but they were active and hard to see; there was one distant Andean Gull. As we returned to Quito, the Caracara was still in the same field and we stopped so I could take some photographs. Then it was back to the hotel after a tiring but very enjoyable day.

## Otavalo Option

Those who had decided not to do the Antisana Volcano had a more leisurely start to the day. We met our guide and were driven towards Otavalo, location well known Indigenous Market. En route we stopped on the Equator, marked by a concrete globe, and a line so you can stand with a foot in each hemisphere.

At Otavalo we had a while to explore the labyrinthine market and find all manner of articles for sale. Most stall holders were traditionally dressed indigenous women selling fabrics, shawls, ponchos, embroidery, jewellery or even Guinea Pigs made of Gourds! Haggling was the rule, not the exception.

After enjoying this, we were taken to a weaving workshop and shop. Here we learnt about the very ancient methods of weaving alpaca, wools and cottons, and the natural plant and mineral dyes still used. One loom involved the weaver (always a woman) sitting on the floor, though there were some larger, but still person-powered looms there too.

After this we headed to an interesting Hacienda for lunch and to recover from the “retail therapy”. This was a quite eccentric place adorned with old religious paintings, statues and ecclesiastical vestments...AND a life-sized angel flying in the dome, bearing a disgruntled-looking Guinea Pig. I think said animal is on the menu here, but we didn't sample it. However, the eucalyptus ice cream was rather wonderful! All in all a varied and interesting day.

## Day 12

Friday 24th August

And then there were seven.

We had breakfast, then we were met by Iris to take us to the airport for our 11am flight to Coca. First we had to make our goodbyes as another member of the group was leaving us. The flight was delayed, maybe 45 minutes, this seems to be normal with TAME, the national airline. Once in Coca we were met by Daniel the Sacha Lodge representative and taken by bus to their office; it wasn't far. Here we were given refreshments and a life jacket. We then made the short walk to the River Napo, a tributary of the Amazon, to board a large covered canoe, with open sides, and twin outboard motors. We then had a 50-mile downstream ride, which took about 90 minutes; the canoe was fast.

The Napo is wide and powerful, a local highway. We saw several riverside villages as we sped along. All sorts of boats and canoes, tugs with very low draughts, moving lorries and trucks, several at a time, on low lying barges.

We reached our destination, several moored canoes, and two small buildings. We disembarked, handed in our life jackets, and began the walk into the jungle. This was about 20-25 minutes, along a path to start with and then a boardwalk. Several troops of leaf-cutter ants, with their leafy booty, were crossing the path. You had to be careful not to tread on them. Two guides with a small wooden canoe were waiting to take us onwards. We continued along a narrow watery channel in the jungle, eventually coming out onto Lake Pilchicocha and Sacha Lodge.

Sacha Lodge. the brainchild of Swiss Arnold Ammeter, first opened in 1992, with six rooms. It now has 26 lodges and is set in 5,000 acres of jungle, and 90% of the staff are from local communities. In addition it provides a free water taxi to Coca, school supplies for five local communities, and contributes to the wages of two of the local teachers. They have also started a medical assistance program, performing twice annually health clinics in the adjacent communities. They are dedicated to conservation and providing a non-destructive income source in the region.

As we approached the lodge, the loud calls of Yellow-rumped Caciques could be heard - a lovely welcome - and a Hoatzin was sitting in the vegetation nearby. We were given a briefing, allocated our lodges and got to meet our guides for the next three days. We split into two groups, one more hardcore and one more general. We were told to check out our rooms and then meet for our first trip. The rooms were large and comfortable, no air-con but a large ceiling fan. There was also a large balcony with seating and two hammocks.

Our first trip with Oscar and Walter, our guides, was in a canoe exploring the various channels leading in and out of the lake. There were lots of things to see; the highlights were a juvenile Zigzag Heron and an Agami Heron, both reclusive and inconspicuous, perched beside the channel.

It is very hot and humid in the jungle; it was nice to shower and change. Dinner was in the restaurant, a large wooden, thatched building with a bar on the first floor. The food was excellent, international cuisine, very good. Once it got dark, the noise was unbelievable as insects and frogs all tried outdo each other. You had to hear it to believe it. There were some ridiculously loud frogs, they made me laugh. We got out our torches and saw what we could find: several frogs, one really tiny one, and some immature Caiman, two to three feet long, skulking beneath the restaurant building, which slowly slid away from the light.

## Day 13

## Saturday 25th August

You are given a pre-arranged wake up knock on your door, 5am this time, then 5.30 breakfast and 6am start in the canoe: five of us and our two guides. We paddled across the lake and up a channel eastwards into the jungle. We eventually left the canoe and continued the short trail on foot. This brought us to a large Kapok tree. A walkway, climbing 135ft, beside the tree, led to two platforms joined by a short bridge. There were even more steps, leading a small platform a few feet higher. This was quite a struggle at my age, but well worth it, being level with or higher than the adjacent trees, and giving splendid views in all directions. A small flock of Cobalt-winged Parakeets were noisily chattering in the branches just above our heads. We saw lots of birds, mostly quite distant views, but we did have Oscar's telescope and he tried hard to make sure we all saw everything. After 45 minutes or so, the other two members put in a appearance, slowly climbing the tower beneath us. We stayed here for two to three hours before returning for lunch.

Our next excursion was a 3pm start on foot to the 900-foot-long, three-tower, aerial walkway, suspended 120 feet above the jungle floor. While waiting for the others, a Black Agouti briefly appeared from under one of the lodges. It looked a bit like a large Guinea Pig with longer legs. It was a longish walk, stopping here and there to study the wildlife, which included a large green lizard on a leaf, and a very colourful Wire-tailed Manakin: a small red-and-yellow bird, very active. It appeared to be dancing from branch to branch.

We eventually reached the first tower and began to climb; it was a quite a climb, but I made it. We then set off along the walkway to the middle tower: this is not something for people afraid of heights. From the middle tower there were good views in all directions. We saw lots birds, some close, some distant. We stayed maybe two hours and then walked to the final tower and our descent. A large tarantula was spotted on the descent, a slightly unusual place to see one, half way up a metal tower. It was dark by the time we returned, just time for a shower and then dinner.

## Day 14

## Sunday 26th August

Today it was a 4.30am wake up and a 5.30am start in the canoe. This time we were going onto the Napo River for the day. We left the small canoe and walked to the Napo Jetty, given lifejackets and boarded a larger canoe with an outboard motor. We then criss-crossed the river, scanning as we went; our ultimate destination would be a parrot lick, where parrots gather to eat the clay that aids their digestive system. Lots of birds were seen. We eventually arrived at the lick, where we were also joined by another Sacha canoe, with a large party on board. The parrots were cautious at first; lots in the trees and bushes nearby, but none brave enough to land straight away. Slowly in two's and three's Dusky-headed and Blue-headed Parrots began to settle on the clay and, in no time, there were a lot; and then two larger, green Southern Mealy Amazons joined them. We stayed and watched this

spectacle for quite a while. We had quite close views, but we did keep a reasonable distance, so as not to disturb the birds.

We then motored to an island and disembarked on a sandy slope. By now it was beginning to become very hot and humid. We explored: there were small white butterflies everywhere, I have never seen so many. The guides were disappointed as it was very quiet, with not a lot to see; there were some birds: I photographed a Turkey Vulture perched on a bush nearby.

We made our way back to the boat and our next destination, The Yasuni National Park. Several birds were seen on the shoreline, waders and herons, and birds in overhanging trees. A Jacamar, Hoatzins an Umbrellabird, a Nightjar, Kingfishers and one of my favourites, a Great Potoo.

We eventually left the boat and then had a stiffish walk through the jungle to reach the National Park. This is a purpose-built viewpoint, with seating and a roof, overlooking a vegetation-covered cliff with a small spring at the base, surrounded by tall trees. Scarlet Macaws could be seen and heard in the tree tops above us. A Scarlet Macaw was on the ground drinking and another joined it after a while. These birds were very close and seemed to take no notice of us at all. They eventually left; there was a continuous hubub of parakeets in the trees above. One or two Cobalt-winged Parakeets started to appear and then more and more, too many to count: 100 to 200, maybe more. Every so often, something would spook them, and they would all take off at once, some of them flying beneath the roof just above our heads, you almost had to duck to avoid them. They did this several times and then they were gone. We sat and ate our pack lunches and, while eating, more Macaws appeared in front of us. Returning to the boat, we were caught in a torrential downpour and were very glad to put on the ponchos provided; 15 minutes and it was all over. We returned to the boat and more cruising up and down the river, and then back to the Sacha Jetty.

We transferred into the small canoe and took a final paddle along Anaconda Creek to see what we could find. Oscar spotted a Cream-coloured Woodpecker, a very yellow bird. He also pointed out a snake in the trees above. I'm not a fan of snakes, but apparently this one eats other snakes; that doesn't seem quite so bad. We also saw Howler and Squirrel Monkeys and Black-mantled Tamarin. This was a very long, but very enjoyable, 12-hours-plus day.

Dinner this night, was a barbecue, in the floating "Balsa" where we had breakfast and lunch. We were introduced to all the staff and our guides joined us for this meal.

(Days 13/14

Saturday 25th / Sunday 26th August)

### Sacha Generalists

To say the "generalists" weren't interested in birds is not true, but perhaps wanted a slightly wider focus of life in the Rainforest. We did go looking for birds and got a pretty good list, but fewer than the dedicated birders. We saw three species of monkey, namely Squirrel, Tufted Capuchin and Red Howler. Unfortunately, the Marmosets didn't show up. As well as that, we found frogs, some very colourful, including a red-and-black Poison Dart Frog and a strangely named Christmas Frog which was a delicate mixture of orangey-pink and green. All the frogs we saw were tiny. There were countless dragonflies and butterflies, including the impressive Blue Morpho, and at the other end of the spectrum we noted a rather splendid Caiman, very near the Balsa.

I enjoyed a night walk into the mysteries of the Forest, encountering many weird and wonderful crickets, ladybirds, huge moths the size of blackbirds, and some very large spiders. This walk is NOT for arachnophobes! There is more invertebrate life around at night, because the diurnal birds and monkeys would soon eat them if they were too visible by day.

As well as going up the Kapok tree and visiting a Parrot clay lick on the Napo we also took in an Indigenous Village, where we met two women who told us lots about their life here in the Rainforest and their foods, many collected around their homes, including a massive beetle grub about the size of a middle finger. The women seem to have a lot of knowledge about the medicinal and culinary uses of the plants found nearby and are pretty self-sufficient when it comes to events like childbirth and many illnesses. They know what helps pain and bleeding for instance, so conventional medical intervention is only for emergencies.

Sacha Lodge are good at offering ideas and trips to suit all interests and abilities, and on a personal note I really enjoyed the food!!

## Day 15

Monday 27th August

### Departure

Today we had a 6.30am wake-up call, so a lie in! We retraced our steps to Coca, and our flight to Quito. The onward flight to Schiphol was at 4pm, this time via Guayaquil, where we had to de-plane and spent an hour or so while the plane was serviced and re-fuelled. Then followed a long overnight flight to Schiphol, more farewells, and a 4-hour connection for our short hop to Norwich. Finally landing at 4.50pm on Tuesday 28th, it had been a long tiring journey, but it was nice to finally be home, after an amazing trip.

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## Species Lists

The bird names follow the International Ornithological Congress list of the birds of the world (version 8.2, 2018).

### Galapagos Islands

#### Birds

- Galapagos Penguin (*Spheniscus mendiculus*) – Seen most days, in small numbers, in the channel between Isabela and Fernandina Islands and then on Bartholomew Island
- Waved Albatross (*Phoebastria exulans*) – About seven seen in the Isabela and Fernandina channel, flying past and resting on the sea close to the boat.
- Galapagos Petrel (*Pterodroma phaeopygia*) - Several seen as rounded the northern end of Isabela island.
- Galapagos Shearwater (*Puffinus subalaris*) – Most numerous seabird; common everywhere
- Elliot's Storm Petrel (*Oceanites gracilis*) – very common; always a few following in the wake of the boat.
- Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel (*Oceanodroma tethys*) – Occurred sporadically; always heavily outnumbered by the previous species.
- Red-billed Tropicbird (*Phaethon aethereus*) – A few pairs nesting on the cliffs of North Seymour island being harassed by the frigatebirds.
- Magnificent Frigatebird (*Fregata magnificens*) – Most of the birds which followed the boat seemed to be of this species.
- Great Frigatebird (*Fregata minor*) – All or at least most of the birds nesting on North Seymour were this species.
- Blue-footed Booby (*Sula nebouxi*) – By far the commonest Booby and seen in large numbers.
- Nazca Booby (*Sula granti*) – Seen regularly but always single birds.
- Flightless Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax (Nannopterum) harrisi*) – Seen in reasonable numbers on the west coast of Isabela and on Fernandina. Seen below water on snorkelling trips.
- Brown Pelican (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – Common in small numbers close to land everywhere.
- White-cheeked Pintail (*Anas bahamensis*) – Seen 3 times on fresh and brackish ponds; first time at the Charles Darwin research station on Santa Cruz
- American Flamingo (*Phoenicopterus ruber*, split from Greater) – several in the mangrove ponds on Isabela
- Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias*) - A few seen on the trip – first one was at the Charles Darwin research station.
- Great Egret (*Egretta alba*) – One seen flying on the last morning near Baltra
- Western Cattle Egret (*Bulbulcus ibis*) – several feeding with cattle on the way up to the caldera of Sierra Negra volcano.
- Striated Heron (*Butorides striata*) – several at the mangrove lagoons on Isabela.
- Lava Heron (*Butorides sundevalli*) – A few present at most sites on Isabela, Fernandina and Bartholomew.
- Yellow-crowned Night Heron (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Two on Fernandina with the fur seals.
- Galapagos Hawk (*Buteo galapagoensis*) – Away from populated areas normally a pair close to most landing sites.

- Common Gallinule (*Gallinula galeata* was *G chloropus*) – Most fresh or brackish water ponds had at least a pair.
- Whimbrel (*Numenius phaeopus*) – Common on rocky shorelines.
- Wandering Tattler (*Tringa incana*, was *Heteroscelus incanum*) – Common on rocky shorelines.
- Ruddy Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*) – A few small flocks seen on rocky shorelines.
- Sanderling (*Calidris alba*) – A small flock seen on beach on the last morning.
- Red-necked Phalarope (*Phalaropus lobatus*) – Flocks of around hundred covered the sea in the channel between Isabela and Fernandina; thousands seen in total.
- American Oystercatcher (*Haematopus palliatus*) – Few pairs seen on rocky shorelines.
- Black-necked Stilt (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – A few pairs in the mangrove lagoons on Isabela.
- Semipalmated Plover (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – A few small flocks on sandy beaches.
- Lava Gull (*Leucophaeus fuliginosus*) – Singles flying around the inhabited areas except for the five who posed right in front of the beach bar on Isabela
- Swallow-tailed Gull (*Creagrus furcatus*) – Several breeding pairs on the cliffs of North Seymour.
- Brown (Common) Noddy (*Anous stolidus*) – Common nearly everywhere.
- Galapagos Dove (*Zenaida galapagoensis*) – Seen sparingly and fleetingly except at the airport, where common and confiding.
- Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) - a few groups seen, most notably at Charles Darwin research centre where harassing the tortoises.
- Darwin's (Vermilion) Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus nanus* – a recent split) - Seen by those in the front of the truck going up Sierra Negra on Isabela.
- Galapagos Flycatcher (*Myiarchus magnirostris*) - Widespread but in small numbers.
- Galapagos Mockingbird (*Mimus parvulus*) - Seen at most stops, sometimes more confiding than others.
- Galapagos Martin (*Progne modesta*) - Seen at the caldera of Sierra Negra on Isabela
- Large Ground Finch (*Geospiza magnirostris*) – Seen at the Charles Darwin research centre on Santa Cruz
- Medium Ground Finch (*Geospiza fortis*) – Seen and identified at the airport then this and/or the following species seen everywhere in numbers.
- Small Ground Finch (*Geospiza fuliginosa*) – Seen and identified at the airport, then as above species
- Mangrove Warbler (Galapagos) (aka Galapagos Yellow Warbler, *Setophaga (Dendroica) petechia aureola*) – Everywhere any terrestrial habitat.

## Mammals

- Galapagos Sea Lion (*Zalophus wollebacki*) – Common, seen everyday, interacted with you when snorkelling; one of the highlights of the trip.
- Galapagos Fur Seal (*Arctocephalus galapagoensis*) – 3 seen hauled out, but keeping out the sun on Fernandina
- Bottlenose Dolphin (*Tursiops truncatus*) – 2 small pods competed for attention with erupting volcano Sierra Negra at first light on west coast of Isabela.

- Minke Whale\* (*Balaenoptera acutorostrata*) – A small whale which put in a brief appearance at the same site as the Dolphins was probably this species.
- Bryde's/Sei Whale\* (*Balaenoptera edeni/borealis*) – Whales spotted by Johan as travelled in the channel between Isabela and Fernandina were probably one of these two similar species.

## Quito and Antisana

### Birds

- Andean Teal (*Anas andium*) – A few seen at the top lake on Antisana
- Yellow-billed Pintail (*Anas georgica*) – Several on the lake near to the Condor cliffs
- Andean (Ruddy) Duck (*Oxyura ferruginea* - split) - Several on the top lake.
- Silvery Grebe (*Podiceps occipitalis*) – Several, including adults with young on the top lake.
- Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – one flew over the airport hotel.
- Andean (Black-faced) Ibis (*Theristicus branickii*) – 5 seen in total near to the top lake.
- Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common in Quito and on the way up to Antisana.
- Andean Condor (*Vultur gryphus*) – Pair on the nesting cliff and a pair much closer flying low along a valley.
- Variable Hawk (*Geranoaetus polysoma*) – Several seen hunting over the Paramo.
- Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (*Geranoaetus melanolleucus*) – A pair of juveniles and then an adult seen on the way up Antisana.
- Carunculated Caracara (*Phalco boenus carunculatus*) - Several seen mainly sitting in fields.
- American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*) - one on the way to Antisana and one in the airport hotel garden.
- Purple Gallinule (*Porphyrio martinica*) – Confiding juvenile in the botanical gardens.
- Andean Coot (*Fulica ardesiaca*) – About 30 on the top lake.
- Andean Lapwing (*Vanellus resplendens*) About 50 spread out on the Paramo.
- Pectoral Sandpiper (*Calidris melanotos*) – Wader on the edge of the Paramo was almost certainly this species but had an uncharacteristic, indistinct pectoral band.
- Andean Gull (*Chroicocephalus serranus*) – One on the lake near the Condor cliffs
- Eared Dove (*Zenaida auriculata*) - Very common in Quito and lots at the lunchtime restaurant near the Condor cliffs.
- Black-winged Ground Dove (*Metriopelia melanoptera*) – Several seen mainly resting by the road on Antisana.
- Sparkling Violetear (*Colibri coruscans*) – common everywhere in Quito.
- Ecuadorian Hillstar (*Oreotrochilus chimbarazo*) - A few seen on the Paramo including a stunning perched male.
- Shining Sunbeam (*Aglaeactis cupripennis*) - Several seen on the hummingbird feeders at the lunchtime restaurant.
- Black-tailed Trainbearer (*Lesbia victoriae*) – Seen in the Quito botanical gardens and on Antisana.
- Tyrian Metaltail (*Metallura tyrianthina*) – One seen on the feeders at the lunchtime restaurant.

- Giant Hummingbird (*Patagona gigas*) – Several seen on Antisana, including a perched bird at the lunch stop.
- Stout-billed Cinclodes (*Cinclodes excelsior*) – Common in the Paramo on Antisana.
- Chestnut-winged Cinclodes (*Cinclodes albidiventris*, split from Bar-winged) – first cinclodes seen on the paramo were a pair of this species.
- Many-striped Canastero (*Asthenes flammulata*) – Several of these species seen and heard in the vegetation around the top lake.
- Tawny Antpitta (*Grallaria quitensis*) – One showed well next to the road near the top lake.
- Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus / obscurus*) – Pair in the garden of the airport hotel
- White-crested Elaenia (*Elaenia albiceps*) – One in the botanical gardens
- Red-crested Cotinga (*Ampelion rubrocristatus*) – A couple seen at the first stop on the way up Antisana.
- Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant (*Ochthoeca fumicolor*) – Common on the stops going up Antisana.
- Paramo Ground Tyrant (*Musisaxicola alpinus*) – One pair seen on the Paramo going up Antisana.
- Great Thrush (*Turdus fuscater*) – Very common in Quito and on the lower slopes of Antisana.
- Brown-bellied Swallow (*Notiochelidon murina*) – seen in Quito and on Antisana.
- Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*) – Seen on wires as leaving Quito.
- Paramo Pipit (*Anthus bogotensis*) – one calling bird seen on the Paramo.
- Tropical Mockingbird (*Mimus gilvus*) – Recent coloniser of Ecuador; small group seen in the centre of Quito.
- Cinereous Conebill (*Conirostrum cinereum*) – One seen in the botanical gardens
- Black Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa humeralis*) – One in the botanical gardens and on the hummingbird feeders at the lunch stop on Antisana.
- Masked Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa cyanea*) – Pair in the botanical gardens.
- Blue-grey Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) – Several in the gardens of the airport hotel
- Plumbeous Sierra Finch (*Phrygilus unicolor*) – Common in the Paramo
- Yellow-breasted Brushfinch (*Atlapetes latinuchus*, formerly Rufous-naped Brush-finch *A. rufinucha*) – Pair with a nest near lunch stop on Antisana
- Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – Abundant everywhere
- Southern Yellow Grosbeak (*Pheucticus chrysogaster*) – One in botanical gardens with Hooded Siskin
- Plain-colored Seedeater (*Catamenia inornata*) – Small flocks in the fields of wheat at the edge of the Paramo.
- Hooded Siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*) – Small flocks seen on Antisana, in the botanical gardens and in the airport hotel.

## Mammals

- Spectacled Bear (*Tremarctos ornatus*) – One of the wildlife highlights of the trip a bear eating bromeliads on the slope under the Andean Condor nesting cliff.
- White-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – A few small groups of this deer species seen on the Paramo.

- Brazilian Rabbit / Tapeti (*Sylvilagus brasiliensis*) – Several of this species around the buildings at the top lake.

## Sacha Lodge

### Birds

- Zigzag Heron (*Zebrilus undulatus*) – One juvenile of this almost mythical bird seen at the nest on 2 days.
- Rufescent Tiger Heron (*Tigrisoma lineatum*) - One adult seen on the way to the Kapok tree canopy platform.
- Cocoli Heron (*Ardea cocoi*) –A few seen along the river Napo.
- Great Egret (*Ardea alba*) –Common along the river Napo.
- Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*) – One seen flying along the river Napo.
- Striated Heron (*Butorides striata*) – A few seen along the river Napo.
- Agami Heron (*Agamia agami*) – One bird perched in the open, uncharacteristically for this shy species. First one seen at the lodge for 8 months.
- Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common near the river.
- Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*) – Several seen on the river island.
- Greater Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes melambrotus*) – Common soaring over the rainforest.
- Grey-headed Kite (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – One gave very good flight views soaring close to the Kapok tower.
- Slender-billed Kite (*Helicolestes hamatus*) – One sitting in the canopy seen from the Kapok tower.
- Plumbeous Kite (*Ictinia plumbea*) – One using the steel cables of the walkway towers as a perch.
- Slate-colored Hawk (*Buteogallus schistaceus*) –One sitting in the canopy seen from Kapok tower.
- Roadside Hawk (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – Seen from Kapok canopy tower and along the river Napo.
- Black Caracara (*Daptrius ater*) – Four seen together on a river island.
- Red-throated Caracara (*Ibycter americanus*) – Two seen in the tree canopy from walkway tower.
- Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – One seen along the river Napo.
- Speckled Chacalaca (*Ortalis guttata*) – Seen from canopy towers and along the Napo river.
- Spix's Guan (*Penelope jacquacu*) – One in the trees above the lodges just before dusk.
- Greater Yellowlegs (*Tringa melanoleuca*) - One on sandbank along Napo river.
- Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularius*) – A few seen along Napo river.
- Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Common along the river.
- Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) – One seen in the canopy from the walkway tower.
- Blue-and-yellow Macaw (*Ara ararauna*) – A pair flew across the river Napo.

- Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) – Several birds came down to drink at second clay lick.
- Chesnut-fronted Macaw (*Ara severus*) – 3 birds feeding in a tree along the Napo river.
- Red-bellied Macaw (*Orthopsittaca manilatus*) – A few pairs flying across the canopy from the Kapok tower.
- Dusky-headed Parakeet (*Aratinga weddellii*) – The most common species at the first clay lick.
- Maroon-tailed Parakeet (*Pyrrhura melanura*) – Two flew across the lake as we left the lodge on last day.
- Cobalt-winged Parakeet (*Brotogeris cyanoptera*) – Several seen in the rainforest and hundreds at the second clay lick.
- Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*) – A few seen along the river then several at first clay lick.
- Orange-winged Amazon (*Amazona amazonica*) – A few pairs seen flying around the lake.
- Southern Mealy Amazon (*Amazona farinosa*, now separated from Northern Mealy Amazon) – Commonest big parrot several at first clay lick.
- Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*) – One seen from walkway tower.
- Black-bellied Cuckoo (*Piaya melanogaster*) – One of the star birds; one seen well from the Kapok tower.
- Greater Ani (*Crotophaga major*) – Seen along the river Napo and the lake in front of Sacha lodge.
- Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*) – Regularly seen around the Oxbow lake.
- Hoatzin (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) – Common around all water areas, including just outside Sacha restaurant.
- Great Potoo (*Nyctibius grandis*) – One on an side channel of the river Napo.
- Ladder-tailed Nightjar (*Hydropsalis climacocerca*) – Roosting bird seen on branch overhanging the river. Another one seen on a river island.
- Grey-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – Several flying over river island.
- Neotropical Palm Swift (*Tachornis squamata*) – Several seen overflying water, including around lodge.
- Great-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis malaris*) – One seen in the undergrowth of the rainforest.
- Fork-tailed Woodnymph (*Thalurania furcata*) - One seen in the canopy from walkway tower.
- Black-tailed Trogon (*Trogon melanurus*) – One seen from the Kapok tower.
- Ringed Kingfisher (*Megaceryle torquata*) – Common on the river Napo and on the lake.
- Green-and-rufous Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle inda*) – About 5 seen on the narrow channels leading off the lake.
- Amazonian (Blue-crowned) Motmot (*Momotus momota*) – One seen on the walk between the river and lake.
- White-eared Jacamar (*Galbalcyrynchus leucotis*) – Pair seen along the river Napo.
- White-chinned Jacamar (*Galbula tombacea*) – One in the vine tangle by the lake.
- White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) – One seen from the Kapok tower.
- White-fronted Nunbird (*Monasa morphoeus*) – One seen from the walkway tower.
- Black-fronted Nunbird (*Monasa nigrifrons*) - One seen on side channel of river Napo.

- Gilded Barbet (*Capito auratus*) – One seen from Kapok tower and pair seen from walkway tower.
- Many-banded Aracari (*Pteroglossus pluricinctus*) – Common several seen from both towers.
- Ivory-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus azara*) – A few seen from the Kapok tower.
- White-throated Toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*) – One seen sitting in the canopy from walkway tower.
- Spot-breasted Woodpecker (*Colaptes punctigula*) – One seen peering out of its nest hole along the river Napo.
- Cream-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus flavus*) – One seen in tree overhanging narrow channel.
- Yellow-tufted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes cruentatus*) – Pair seen in the canopy from the Kapok tower.
- Crimson-crested Woodpecker (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) – One seen on the walk to the second clay lick.
- Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper (*Dendrexetastes rufigula*) – One seen from canoe on the way back from Kapok tower.
- Long-billed Woodcreeper (*Nasica longirostris*) - Very vocal bird seen in same area as previous species.
- Straight-billed Woodcreeper (*Dendroplex picus*) – One bird seen on walk to Kapok tower.
- Silvered Antbird (*Sclateria naevia*) – Pair seen very close to water on side channel from the oxbow lake.
- Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet (*Tyrannulus elatus*) – Pair seen in the canopy from the walkway tower.
- Mottle-backed Elaenia (*Elaenia gigas*) – One on a river island.
- Drab Water Tyrant (*Ochthornis littoralis*) – Common along the river Napo.
- Cinnamon Atilla (*Atilla cinnamomeus*) – One seen in the canopy from the walkway tower. It caught and ate a tree frog.
- Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – One seen on the oxbow lake in front of lodge.
- Lesser Kiskadee (*Philohydor lictor*) – several seen around the oxbow lake and around accommodation
- Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarhynchus pitangua*) – one seen by the lodge canopy landing.
- Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*) – A few pairs seen along the river Napo.
- Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – One seen on last day by lodge canoe landing.
- Crowned Slaty Flycatcher (*Griseotyrannus aurantioatrocristatus*) One seen from Kapok tower and another from walkway tower.
- Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Pair nesting by lodge restaurant and several seen along river Napo.
- Black-tailed Tityra (*Tityra cayana*) – Several seen from Kapok tower.
- White-browed Purpletuft (*Iodopleura isabellae*) – Distant pair seen from Kapok tower.
- Purple-throated Fruitcrow (*Querula purpurata*) – At least one pair seen from the Kapok tower.
- Amazonian Umbrellabird (*Cephalopterus ornatus*) – A pair seen well in trees along river Napo.
- Purple-throated Cotinga (*Porphyrolaema porphyrolaema*) – Distant male seen from Kapok tower.
- Spangled Cotinga (*Cotinga cayana*) – Male and female seen separately from Kapok tower.

- Wire-tailed Manakin (*Pipra filcauda*) – One male seen dancing at its lek site.
- Violaceous Jay (*Cyanocorax violaceus*) – Commonly seen flying near the lodge and along the banks of the Napo river.
- Brown-chested Martin (*Progne tapera*) – Several flying over the river as we left Coca.
- Grey-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*) – Pair resting on the roof of the lodge restaurant.
- White-banded Swallow (*Atticora fasciata*) – Several seen flying over river island.
- Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) - a few flying around the lake in front of the lodge.
- White-winged Swallow (*Tachycineta albiventer*) – common next to the lodge and along the river.
- Black-capped Donacobius (*Donacobius atricapilla*) – A few seen around the oxbow lake on three or four occasions.
- Lawrence's Thrush (*Turdus lawrencii*) – One seen and heard from the Kapok tower.
- Black-billed Thrush (*Turdus ignobilis*) – One seen at first light near the oxbow lake.
- Silver-beaked Tanager (*Ramphocelus cardo*) – One seen flying over channel on the first day.
- Masked Crimson Tanager (*Ramphocelus nigrogularis*) – One seen briefly from the Kapok tower.
- Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Seen in in the canopy and on the structure of the tower from the walkway tower.
- Blue-and-grey Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*) – A few around the lodge restaurant
- Masked Tanager (*Tangara nigrocincta*) – One seen briefly from the Kapok tower.
- Green-and-gold Tanager (*Tangara schrankii*) – One seen in the fig tree from the Kapok tower.
- Opal-rumped Tanager (*Tangara velia*) – A few seen from Kapok tower, including one very close in the Kapok tree
- Opal-crowned Tanager (*Tangara callophrys*) – As with the previous species, a few came into the Kapok tree, giving very close views.
- Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia laniirostris*) – One bird seen in the Kapok tree.
- Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – First bird seen from the Kapok tower.
- Yellow-bellied Dacnis (*Dacnis flaviventer*) – One male seen from Kapok tower.
- Black-faced Dacnis (*Dacnis lineata*) – A few seen really well from Kapok tower.
- Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*) – One seen from the Kapok tower.
- Greyish Saltator (*Saltator coerulescens*) – Pair seen in riverside village farmland.
- Chestnut-bellied Seedeater (*Sporophila castaneiventris*) – A small flock feeding in the crops of riverside village.
- Chestnut-bellied (Lesser) Seed Finch (*Oryzoborus angolensis*) – Pair seen on long grass area of a river island.
- Yellow-rumped Caique (*Cacicus cela*) – Several pairs nesting by the lodge restaurant.

- Crested Oropendula (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – Common in the trees surrounding the lodge.
- Russet-backed Oropendula (*Psarocolius angustifrons*) – Colony of this species where the lodge path met the Napo river.
- Oriole Blackbird (*Gymnomystax mexicanus*) – One male of this species seen on a river island.
- Shiny Cowbird (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – One bird seen on a river island.

## Mammals

- Red Howler monkey (*Alouatta seniculus*) – A few family groups seen mainly in the canopy but once low down close to the oxbow lake.
- Tufted Capuchin (*Cebus apella*) – One seen close to the start of the walk to Kapok tower.
- Common Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*) – Commonest monkey species several groups seen.
- Black-mantled Tamarin (*Saguinus nigricollis*) – Group seen on walk between river and oxbow lake.
- Black Agouti (*Dasyprocta fuliginosa*) – A few seen around the accommodation blocks of the lodge.

## Guayaquil Airport

- White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) – One seen hunting over the outfield of the airport during stopover.

## Acknowledgments

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Pahoehoe Lava at Sullivan Bay



Scarlet Macaw