

COLOMBIA WESTERN AND CENTRAL CORDILLERA TOUR

July 12-24, 2011

Day 1 (07/12/11):

The gang's first day in Colombia we rose early, a slight change in the itinerary as I had been birding in the afternoon at Finca La Araucana in days prior and it had been slow. We had decided the night before, arriving at the hotel at 11 pm, that we should rise early to catch the feeding frenzy at La Araucana. The group was tired but did not object to the change of plans, I think owing to the excitement that is felt when one visits a foreign land. After breakfast we met part of the "Mapalina" (non-profit organization I have partnered with www.mapalina.com) crew, our guides for the day would be Jenny (jefer.ave@gmail.com) and Paola Solarte. After introductions we birded for a few minutes near the hotel, and folks were delighted to hear chestnut wood quail in the forest. We then headed to La Araucana, a property that has been in my family for more than 50 years and named after a humongous monkey puzzle tree (native to Chile) that my grandfather planted for my grandmother when he brought the property. As we arrived we were greeted by Johan, a local boy who was full of curiosity and gave us an extremely warm welcome, a great way to start the day. Finca La Araucana produces organic sprouts and vegetables for local restaurants and has an amazing balcony in which to relax and enjoy the birds. We arrived, and began birding immediately as coffee and tea were served. It was a great introduction to Andean tanagers and hummingbirds, and birding from the balcony was quite relaxing. Crimson-rumped toucanet, flame-rumped tanager (endemic), white-lined tanager, blue-necked tanager, hepatic tanager, green honeycreeper, a crimson-rumped toucanet, and a fawn-breasted tanager building a nest in a bromeliad were some of the highlights of the afternoon.

After some productive birding, we headed to Parillao, a local restaurant where we enjoyed a Club Colombia "cerveza" and the whole gang ordered "frijolada", typical Colombian beans served with rice, fried plantains, avocado and the meat of your choice. We accompanied the beer with appetizers consisting of "morcilla" (blood sausage), chorizo, a thin and crunchy "arepa" (typical Colombian corn tortilla that come in many shapes and sizes), and smoked ribs. Also served to accompany the meat was "chimichurri", which is a parsley based sauce invented in Argentina. My father, Alvaro Calonje (alcalonje@yahoo.com), joined us for lunch and entertained the group for a while. Then we headed back to the hotel for a nap and got to meet the rest of the Mapalina crew, Eduardo Luna (jose@mapalina.com) and John Restrepo, who gave us a PowerPoint presentation on Mapalina and its mission. After the presentation, we birded near the hotel. We all had great views of green and black fruiteater and while many folks were able to see blue-winged mountain tanager, some were left wanting better views. After a couple hours of birding we headed back to work on our list as we sipped on hot chocolate with "quajada", a locally made cheese that is made in just 24 hours (one of the fastest made cheeses in the world). After list-making it was dinner and off to bed to get some rest.



Great birding from the balcony at Finca La Araucana!

Species Seen

Cattle Egret	Golden-faced Tyrannulet	Golden Tanager
Black Vulture	Great Kiskadee	Bay-headed Tanager
Roadside Hawk	Rusty-margined Flycatcher	Scrub Tanager
Southern Lapwing	Tropical Kingbird	Blue-necked Tanager
Ruddy Ground-Dove	Green-and-black Fruiteater	Beryl-spangled Tanager
Scarlet-fronted Parakeet	Blue-and-white Swallow	Green Honeycreeper
Squirrel Cuckoo	House Wren	Bananaquit
White-collared Swift	Andean Solitaire	Yellow-faced Grassquit
Green Violetear	Black-billed Thrush	Streaked Saltator
Blue-tailed Emerald	White-lined Tanager	Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch
Steely-vented Hummingbird	Crimson-backed Tanager	Rufous-collared Sparrow
Booted Racket-tail	Flame-rumped Tanager	Hepatic Tanager
Highland Motmot	Blue-gray Tanager	Tropical Parula
Crimson-rumped Toucanet	Palm Tanager	Slate-throated Redstart
Azara's Spinetail	Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager	Three-striped Warbler
Red-faced Spinetail	Fawn-breasted Tanager	Lesser Goldfinch

Species Heard

Chestnut Wood-Quail

Linnateated Foliage-gleaner

Black-billed Peppershrike

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren

Chestnut-breasted Wren

Black-winged Saltator

Day 2 (07/13/11):

We met our guides John and Jose at the hotel at 6:00 am for a day of birding along the road in “El 18”, referring to the distance from Cali, in kilometers, to our birding hotspot. We began birding from the hotel, our destination was world famous Finca Zingara, a hummingbird haven located about three kilometers from the hotel. It was foggy, and we began the morning with the usual southern lapwing and rufous-collared sparrow in the hotel lawn. Much fun was being had by all, beginning with some marvelous views of golden tanager (which we observed throughout the day). The group also got our first look at highland motmot perched on the corner of a sign, and learned about the rol of slate-throated whitestarts as nuclei of mixed foraging groups. A highlight of the day was excellent views of the endemic Colombian chachalaca.

Activity was slow during the day, John and Jose imitated a chestnut-breasted wren to no avail and we also tried to observe a black-billed peppershrike. The highlight of the day was Finca Zingara, where we observed seven different species of hummingbirds, including the diminutive purple-throated woodstar and the abundant white-necked jacobin . We also had great views of a nesting pair of golden-crowned flycatchers. After an hour of experiencing extreme hummingbird close-ups at on the balcony of Finca Zingara, we headed back to the hotel for lunch. After an afternoon nap, we headed back out, first observing a male rusty flowerpiercer on a heliconia leaf in the hotel garden. On our walk, a flock of scarlet-fronted parakeet flew overhead and landed nearby as a dense fog rolled in. Soon enough, a mixed flock, and although the visibility was not great, we enjoyed watching beryl-spangled tanager and blue-winged mountain tanager from a distance. As night fell, we returned to the hotel for list-making and dinner.



The Mapalina Crew putting their brand new scope donated by the American birding association to use!!

Species Seen

- | | | |
|--------------------------|---------------------------|------------------------------|
| Cattle Egret | Smoky-brown Woodpecker | Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager |
| Black Vulture | Azara's Spinetail | Fawn-breasted Tanager |
| Southern Lapwing | Slaty Spinetail | Golden Tanager |
| Band-tailed Pigeon | Red-faced Spinetail | Saffron-crowned Tanager |
| Eared Dove | Streaked Xenops | Scrub Tanager |
| Tawny-bellied Hermit | Montane Woodcreeper | Golden-naped Tanager |
| White-necked Jacobin | Cinnamon Flycatcher | Metallic-green Tanager |
| Brown Violetear | Golden-crowned Flycatcher | Beryl-spangled Tanager |
| Andean Emerald | Tropical Kingbird | Black-capped Tanager |
| Speckled Hummingbird | Golden-winged Manakin | Rusty Flowerpiercer |
| Fawn-breasted Brilliant | Barred Becard | Yellow-faced Grassquit |
| Buff-tailed Coronet | Blue-and-white Swallow | Rufous-collared Sparrow |
| Bronzy Inca | House Wren | Tropical Parula |
| Booted Racket-tail | Andean Solitaire | Slate-throated Redstart |
| Long-tailed Sylph | Black-billed Thrush | Three-striped Warbler |
| Purple-throated Woodstar | Great Thrush | Shiny Cowbird |
| Highland Motmot | Glossy-black Thrush | Yellow-bellied Siskin |
| Crimson-rumped Toucanet | Flame-rumped Tanager | |
| Golden-olive Woodpecker | Blue-gray Tanager | |

Species Heard

Scarlet-fronted Parakeet	Green-and-black Fruiteater	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren
Nariño Tapaculo	Brown-capped Vireo	Chestnut-breasted Wren
Golden-faced Tyrannulet	Black-billed Peppershrike	Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush

Day 3 (07/14/11):

Today we started a bit earlier since we had a half-hour drive to the Bosque de San Antonio. The morning started off beautifully as we drove away from the hotel. Yellow-headed caracara standing on a cow in a pasture adjacent to the hotel. We stopped briefly in search of chestnut wood quail, which we had heard in the vicinity the day before. We had it extremely close to us vocalizing, which was very exciting, still very fun considering we were not able to see it. Off we went to Bosque de San Antonio, where we were greeted by yellow-breasted brush-finch, the whole group got great views of this bird. Almost immediately, a flurry of activity surrounded us, with many tanagers, including metallic-green, golden-naped, and black-capped. Silver-throated tanager was a peculiar find as it is usually found at lower elevations; it was the first record of this bird in the San Antonio Forest. As the mixed flock settled down some of us observed a white-tipped dove in one of the many vacation homes nestled in the hill.

As we passed the last home on the road on our way to the television tower, we enjoyed great views and a perfect combination of sun and clouds. We worked our way up the hill, taking advantage of several good vantage points to observe mixed flocks. We arrived at a vista point near the top of the hill for a rest and a quick snack. We also had our first view of emerald toucanet! It was fun for me to watch some of the group try “granadilla”, a delectable fruit in the passion flower family. “Elephant boogers”, as I used to call them when growing up, was a total hit with everyone who tried it.

The bird of the day arrived about half way down the hill, Nariño tapaculo. We had heard this bird the day before in “El 18”, but this time the entire group had great views of this near-endemic forest skulker. Content with a great morning of birding we headed down the hill on our way to lunch, the much anticipated “sancocho de gallina” (chicken soup with yucca and plantain) accompanied by a frosty cold Pilsener beer and lemonade made with “aguapanela”, a sugary tea made from chunks of brown sugar. Not without first getting to see a group of acorn woodpeckers along the side of the road. We ate Embajada de Ginebra. As we arrived, the appetizers started to hit the table. First, “patacones” (fried green plantain), followed by “ojaldras” (fried dough), and complemented beautifully with a choice of “hogao” (sautéed onions and tomatoes) or “aji” (onion, cilantro and pepper topping). Then we feasted on sancocho, one of Colombia’s most typical dishes that is served with some amazing locally grown avocados. The abundance of food was overwhelming, and we all commented on the salad that was served in tiny fried plantain bowls. As we finished lunch we observed green hermit and speckled hummingbird visiting the feeders.

Our next stop after lunch was the Felidia River, where the activity was slow. We decided to go further, past the towns of Felidia and La Leonera. As we arrived at a small creek in search of crested ant-tanager we had to wait out a strong rain for about ten minutes. As we emerged from the bus the sun came out

and we had an excellent view of a mixed group. Mostly tanagers we had seen before, but the canopy below us was right at eye-level, affording for awesome views. On our way back to the hotel we stopped to drop of some gear for the Mapalina crew and then stop at Rio Felidia again where Bill got to see squirrel cuckoo, which he had missed at La Araucana. Then back to the hotel for an early dinner to prepare for the early (4 a.m.) departure towards the Choco bioregion.



This picture was taken just before the entire group was able to see Narino Tapaculo!

Species Seen

Colombian Chachalaca

Striated Heron
 Black Vulture
 Yellow-headed Caracara
 Southern Lapwing
 Eared Dove
 Ruddy Ground-Dove
 White-tipped Dove
 Squirrel Cuckoo
 White-collared Swift
 White-necked Jacobin
 Brown Violetear
 Steely-vented Hummingbird

Speckled Hummingbird
 Fawn-breasted Brilliant
 Bronzy Inca
 Greenish Puffleg
 Booted Racket-tail
 Green-crowned Woodnymph
 Highland Motmot
 Emerald Toucanet
 Acorn Woodpecker
 Smoky-brown Woodpecker
 Montane Foliage-gleaner
 Montane Woodcreeper
 Nariño Tapaculo

Mountain Elaenia
 Golden-faced Tyrannulet
 Cinnamon Flycatcher
 Rusty-margined Flycatcher
 Golden-crowned Flycatcher
 Green-and-black Fruiteater
 Brown-capped Vireo
 Southern Rough-winged Swallow
 House Wren
 Black-billed Thrush
 Rufous-crested Tanager
 White-lined Tanager
 Blue-gray Tanager

Palm Tanager	Beryl-spangled Tanager	Hepatic Tanager
Blue-capped Tanager	Black-capped Tanager	Tropical Parula
Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager	Green Honeycreeper	Slate-throated Redstart
Golden Tanager	White-sided Flowerpiercer	Three-striped Warbler
Silver-throated Tanager	Blue-black Grassquit	Shiny Cowbird
Saffron-crowned Tanager	Yellow-faced Grassquit	Orange-bellied Euphonia
Bay-headed Tanager	Streaked Saltator	Yellow-bellied Siskin
Scrub Tanager	Saffron Finch	Blue-naped Chlorophonia
Metallic-green Tanager	Yellow-bellied Seedeater	
Blue-necked Tanager	Rufous-collared Sparrow	

Species Heard

Chestnut Wood-Quail	Azara's Spinetail	Andean Solitaire
Green Hermit	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	
Red-headed Barbet	Chestnut-breasted Wren	

Day 4 (07/15/11):

We rose extremely early as our goal was to leave the hotel by 4:00 am with a packed breakfast. I arrived with my father and we got to visit with him while we waited for the bus to show up. This morning we met Richard Johnston (rjohnston@calidris.org.co), our local guide for the remainder of the trip. Richard works for Calidris, a local non-profit organization that supports conservation of shorebirds in Colombia. We arrived at Cordoba, a town named after the engineer that built the railroad to Cali. Waiting on the railroad were the "brujitas" (little witches, motorcycle-powered wooden carts that ride on the railroad), our vehicle into the next great birding spot of the trip. We could not help ourselves, so we birded for a while and got to know blue-headed parrot and dusky pigeon. We met Arley, a young boy that showed interest in birds and visited with us throughout the day. We loaded up the "brujitas", some of the group with worried expressions, and off we went. We all enjoyed the ride, consisting of spectacular scenery, a bit of adrenaline, and a few stops for birding. One stop was quite exciting, with excellent views of a pair of spot-crowned barbet, black-breasted puffbird and flying chestnut-mandibled toucan.

As we arrived in the town of San Cipriano, we had good views of cinnamon becard and tody flycatcher. We then crossed town and had excellent views of masked tityra just before we got on the trail upriver. We saw our first group of tawny-crested tanager on our way out of town, a species that is very noisy and tends to travel in large groups of males and females. Then the search was on for antbirds, not without first getting a great but demanding view of bay wren. The day included dot-winged antwren, chestnut-backed antbird and western-slaty antshrike. We also tried for white-throated crake, heard it very close but its quick escape was too fast for any of us to see. On our way to the swimming hole we were delighted by both male and female white-bearded manakin, and then a relaxing rest on the edge of one of the most pristine tropical rivers in the world (with a rope-swing show by the guides). Hunger was in the air, so we headed back to town for a delicious fish "sanchocho" served with fried sierra. Not without the whole group being able to vie purple-throated fruitcrow, a species we had been trying to find all morning. After lunch it was back on the "brujitas", then a 3 hour drive to Buga. Some of the folks birded

near the hotel before we had a pleasant dinner by the pool, recalling the great but tiring day we all had.



Everyone enjoyed the adrenaline pumping “brujita” ride!

Species Seen

Neotropic Cormorant

Great Egret

Snowy Egret

Cattle Egret

Bare-faced Ibis

Black Vulture

Turkey Vulture

Roadside Hawk

Yellow-headed Caracara

White-throated Crake

Rock Pigeon

Ruddy Pigeon

Dusky Pigeon

Eared Dove

Ruddy Ground-Dove

Blue-headed Parrot

Amazon Kingfisher

Black-breasted Puffbird

Spot-crowned Barbet

Collared Aracari

Chestnut-mandibled Toucan

Red-crowned Woodpecker(exotic)

Black-cheeked Woodpecker

Western-slaty Antshrike

Dot-winged Antwren

Chestnut-backed Antbird

Olive-striped Flycatcher

Cattle Tyrant

Common Tody-Flycatcher

Olive-sided Flycatcher

Vermilion Flycatcher

Great Kiskadee

Rusty-margined Flycatcher

Tropical Kingbird

Purple-throated Fruitcrow

White-bearded Manakin

Masked Tityra

Blue-and-white Swallow

Southern Rough-winged Swallow

Bay Wren

House Wren

Scarlet-browed Tanager

Tawny-crested Tanager

Lemon-rumped Tanager

Blue-gray Tanager

Palm Tanager

Bananaquit

Buff-rumped Warbler

Chestnut-headed Oropendola

Species Heard

Little Tinamou
Laughing Falcon
Black-chested Jay

Day 5 (07/16/11):

We had a light breakfast with some local grape juice and headed to the Laguna de Sonso, and began birding seconds after we stepped out of the van. It was a good show with many individuals of great egret, snail kite, black vulture, glossy and bare-faced ibis, black-crowned night-heron, cocoi heron, blue-headed parrot and black-necked stilt. We spent some time there and then began our walk on a road adjacent to the Cauca River. Fulvous and black-bellied ducks were fun to watch, and we enjoyed observing aquatic birds such as purple gallinule, common moorhen, wattled jacana and neotropic cormorant. We arrived at La Isabela, the reserve headquarters, where we met Dario, the caretaker. We got news that the trail towards the lookout was muddy but walk able, so we began our journey.

As we started on the trail, we heard bar-crested antshrike and began the hunt. The entire group was able to have good looks at both the female and male. Then we continued on the trail and were lucky enough to have jet antbird and lined woodpecker to add to our list. We followed the trail to the first lookout trail, where we had to be careful not to disturb the wasp nests in the “guadua” construction. Guadua became familiar to us as the group learned that it is a plant in the bamboo family that is native to Colombia. It is incredibly strong, fast-growing and occupies a small amount of space to grow. From the tower we observed osprey for the first time, and also enjoyed the very cute spectacled parrotlets that posed for us the entire time. Other species we watched from the tower included cattle tyrant and masked cardinal, an escaped cage bird from the Caribbean coast that has become established in the Cauca Valley. We also had great views of the Sonso Lagoon, and talked about the problems caused by the invasive “buchon”, a water hyacinth that has become established in the lagoon and is slowly reducing the size of it.

We continued on the trail towards a levee, where we all had to help each other crossing under a barbed-wired fence. The majority of the group decided to walk the levee towards another flooded area, but Dorothy decided to sit in the shade under a huge tree while the group walked the levee. I decided to stay along with her and we took the seat on the roots of a large “ceiba” tree. As we took a seat, grayish piculet, one of our target species, made an appearance. We then played for apical flycatcher and it showed up right in front of us. Incredible! Two target, endemic species in less than five minutes. We decided to wait and try for these species once the group showed up. When the group arrived we had a mixed flock with many tanagers, and tried for the grayish piculet with success. Everybody had great views of this endemic species. Our luck was not the same with apical flycatcher, but we were not about to give up.

We decided to head back to the visitors center, and were able to observe two new species: cocoa woodcreeper and little cuckoo. I had seen this bird during a January tour, but Richard had been skeptical

this whole time about the sighting. After we all saw it he believed what I had been telling him for a year, it felt good to be right about that. About one hundred meters from the visitor center, we figured we would give apical flycatcher one more chance, and boy was that a good decision. A group of three individuals gave us a show we will never forget! We arrived at the bus and immediately raided the cooler for cold drinks and snacks. Exhausted and hot, we headed towards the hotel with enough time to stop along the road for “chontaduro” (orange fruit palm eaten with honey and salt). People were excited to try it, some liked it and others not so much. We had lunch and had a few hours to relax, get cleaned up and enjoy the pool and prepared for our trip to Pereira. We left the hotel at 3 pm, and arrived in Pereira at 6 to meet our next guide, Sergio Ocampo (socampo@aguasdemanizales.com.co). Sergio is the director of the Rio Blanco reserve, and serves as president of the Colombian Ornithological Society and the Colombian civil reserve system. Everybody was exhausted, so the group got some rest as we headed to La Suiza lodge in the Otun Quimbaya Sanctuary and arrived just in time for dinner.



A hot day but a lot of new birds for our list. Being able to soak in the hotel pool after hot birding was a godsend.

Species Observed

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck
Fulvous Whistling-Duck
Cinnamon Teal
Neotropic Cormorant
Anhinga

Cocoi Heron
Great Egret
Snowy Egret
Cattle Egret
Striated Heron

Black-crowned Night-Heron
Glossy Ibis
Bare-faced Ibis
Black Vulture
Osprey

Snail Kite	Amazon Kingfisher	Great Kiskadee
Roadside Hawk	Ringed Kingfisher	Rusty-margined Flycatcher
Crested Caracara	Grayish Piculet	Streaked Flycatcher
Yellow-headed Caracara	Spot-breasted Woodpecker	Tropical Kingbird
Blackish Rail	Lineated Woodpecker	Red-eyed Vireo
Purple Gallinule	Plain-brown woodcreeper	Southern Rough-winged Swallow
Common Moorhen	Cocoa Woodcreeper	House Wren
Southern Lapwing	Great Antshrike	Black-billed Thrush
Black-necked Stilt	Bar-crested Antshrike	Blue-gray Tanager
Wattled Jacana	Jet Antbird	Scrub Tanager
Pale-vented Pigeon	Immaculate Antbird	Bananaquit
Ruddy Ground-Dove	Mouse-colored Tyrannulet	Blue-black Grassquit
Yellow-crowned Amazon	Streak-necked Flycatcher	Saffron Finch
Spectacled Parrotlet	Apical Flycatcher	Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Blue-headed Parrot	Slate-headed Tody-flycatcher	Tropical Parula
Little Cuckoo	Common Tody-Flycatcher	Yellow Oriole
Dwarf Cuckoo	Vermilion Flycatcher	Red-capped Cardinal
Rufous-tailed Hummingbird	Pied Water-Tyrant	

Day 6 (1/15/11):

We birded in the hotel grounds while we waited for breakfast, the first nice bird of the day for the group was red-ruffed fruitcrow, which we observed from just in front of the lodge cafeteria. Another nice bird, a group of green jay graced our presence with their electric calls. Vivienne later commented that this was her bird of the day because she knew it could be seen in the US and had always wanted to see it. The group had expressed interest in torrent duck, so after breakfast we headed towards a bridge on the Otun River. Being a Sunday, we enjoyed getting to experience Colombians living life, taking a leisurely day-off to go exercise and enjoy nature. On the way to the river, we stopped at a small garden loaded with bleeding heart flowers to search for hummingbirds . We were able to see speckled hummingbird and Andean emerald, and soon we were trying for orange-billed nighthale thrush (with no success). Then to the river; no torrent duck but we saw ringed kingfisher on a wire and blackish rail protecting a juvenile in a nearby wetland. We also saw torrent tyrannulet, a first for the group. As we walked, both white-collared and chestnut-collared swifts flew above us. On our way back to the lodge we got our first look at collared trogon, long overdue as it is usually easy to see in the km 18 area. Lunch came with a delicious vegetable soup and off for a short nap it was.

In the afternoon we took a loop trail from the lodge and some of us posed for some trip cameras set up to trap a family of foxes. The highlight of the day was a mixed flock that yielded the long-awaited multicolored tanager. The flock was high in the canopy and the light was bad, but a majority of the group got decent views of one of our target species. Other species in the flock included white-winged beccard, Canada warbler, and fawn-breasted tanager. At one point half of the group saw the endemic chestnut wood-quail run across the trail while the remainder saw a pauraque take off from the ground

right next to the trail. Birding along the trail was tough, and it was great that the entire group was able to see green hermit perched in a very difficult spot. Satisfied with the afternoon, we returned to the hotel for pre-dinner list making accompanied by some Chilean white wine and talked about the day.



Observing torrent duck and white-capped dipper from the bridge over the Otun River.

Species Observed

Cauca Guan

Chestnut Wood-Quail

Cattle Egret

Bare-faced Ibis

Black Vulture

Turkey Vulture

Roadside Hawk

Blackish Rail

Southern Lapwing

Pale-vented Pigeon

Band-tailed Pigeon

Eared Dove

Scarlet-fronted Parakeet

Bronze-winged Parrot

Blue-headed Parrot

Squirrel Cuckoo

Chestnut-collared Swift

White-collared Swift

Green Hermit

Blue-tailed Emerald

Andean Emerald

Speckled Hummingbird

Fawn-breasted Brilliant

Bronzy Inca

Booted Racket-tail

Collared Trogon

Highland Motmot

Ringed Kingfisher

Emerald Toucanet

Golden-olive Woodpecker

Azara's Spinetail

Streaked Xenops

Montane Woodcreeper

Olive-backed Woodcreeper

Chestnut-crowned Antpitta

Mountain Elaenia

Torrent Tyrannulet

Streak-necked Flycatcher

Marble-faced Bristle-tyrant

Golden-faced Tyrannulet

Black Phoebe

Brown-backed Flycatcher

Slaty-backed Chat-tyrant

Dusky-capped Flycatcher

Pale-edged Flycatcher

Great Kiskadee

Golden-crowned Flycatcher

Streaked Flycatcher

Tropical Kingbird	Blue-gray Tanager	Rufous-collared Sparrow
Red-ruffed Fruitcrow	Palm Tanager	Hepatic Tanager
White-winged Beccard	Fawn-breasted Tanager	Tropical Parula
Brown-capped Vireo	Multicolored Tanager	<i>Canada Warbler</i>
Scrub Greenlet	Golden Tanager	Slate-throated Redstart
Green Jay	Blue-necked Tanager	Three-striped Warbler
Blue-and-white Swallow	Black-capped Tanager	Giant Cowbird
Southern Rough-winged Swallow	Guira Tanager	Shiny Cowbird
House Wren	Black-winged Saltator	Orange-bellied Euphonia
Black-billed Thrush	Yellow-bellied Seedeater	Yellow-bellied Siskin
Ashy-throated Bush-Tanager	Slaty Brush-Finch	
Flame-rumped Tanager	Yellow-throated Brush-Finch	

Species Heard

Grey-necked Wood-rail	Black-billed Peppershrike	Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush
Common Parauque	Whiskered Wren	Common Bush-Tanager
Bar-crested Antshrike	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	Saffron Finch
Common Tody-Flycatcher	Chestnut-breasted Wren	

Day 7 (7/18/11):

Another morning birding in Otun-Quimbaya was very productive. We again attempted to see chestnut-breasted wren and a few people in the group were able to see it. We then had a mixed group that yielded male and female multicolored tanager for everybody. Scott Robertson, a University of Florida professor travelling around Colombia with some of his graduate students had talked to us the night before and given us a heads up on the tanager. We continued on with one bird in our minds, torrent duck. After birding for several hours Luis picked us up and we headed towards the end of the road, to a bridge where I have seen torrent duck numerous times. As we arrived at the end of the road it started to rain, so we took refuge in a small local store. We waited out the rain with a cup of hot "aguapanela" (hot drink made with water and blocks of brown sugar served with locally made cheese. As the rain stopped and the sun came out, we headed towards the Otun River, where Kathy spotted a male torrent duck. Alas! We were all excited to see it, and even more excited when on the other side of the river we saw white-capped dipper. It was a truly epic way to end the morning of birding as we headed back to the lodge for lunch.

We left the sanctuary soon after lunch with one stop in mind, Balso Lake. The sun was out in full force, and the lake was not as birdy I remembered it but we saw some cool stuff. Masked duck was probably my favorite bird of the day. We also saw, common moorhen, wattled jacana, blackish rail, American coot (first of the trip), Southern lapwing, and least and pied-billed grebe. It was hot, so we loaded up the van and made a quick ice cream/restroom stop. I suggested "guanabana" (sour sop), and all who followed my advice were happy they did it.

In Manizales we stopped briefly for some supplies (including road sodas), and headed up the hill. We arrived to meet Celene, Albeiro and Kelly, our host family. We got settled in and met for dinner after relaxing for a bit. Chef Celene had prepared for us one of my favorite Colombian dishes, “ajiaco”. It is a chicken and potato soup with three kinds of potatoes, seasoned with “guasca”, a herb native to Colombia. It was served with cream and, and during dinner the main topic of conversation was the deliciousness of “ajiaco”. For dessert we had candied “brevas”, or figs.



The small detour to the lake turned out to be incredibly productive. We also got to enjoy delicious homemade ice cream.

Species Observed

- | | | |
|---------------------|--------------------------|-------------------------|
| Torrent Duck | Roadside Hawk | Spectacled Parrotlet |
| Masked Duck | Blackish Rail | Bronze-winged Parrot |
| Cauca Guan | Common Moorhen | Tropical Screech-owl |
| Least Grebe | American Coot | Chestnut-collared Swift |
| Pied-billed Grebe | Southern Lapwing | Green Hermit |
| Neotropic Cormorant | Wattled Jacana | Sparkling Violetear |
| Snowy Egret | Rock Pigeon | Black-throated Mango |
| Cattle Egret | Pale-vented Pigeon | Buff-tailed Coronet |
| Striated Heron | Band-tailed Pigeon | Tyrian Metaltail |
| Bare-faced Ibis | Eared Dove | Long-tailed Sylph |
| Black Vulture | Ruddy Ground-Dove | Collared Trogon |
| Sharp-shinned Hawk | Scarlet-fronted Parakeet | Masked Trogon |

Highland Motmot	Brown-backed Flycatcher	Palm Tanager
Ringed Kingfisher	Slaty-backed Chat-tyrant	Blue-capped Tanager
Emerald Toucanet	Golden-crowned Flycatcher	Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager
Golden-olive Woodpecker	Tropical Kingbird	Fawn-breasted Tanager
Azara's Spinetail	Red-ruffed Fruitcrow	Multicolored Tanager
Montane Foliage-gleaner	Scrub Greenlet	Golden Tanager
Streaked Xenops	Green Jay	Blue-necked Tanager
Tyrannine Woodcreeper	Blue-and-white Swallow	Black-capped Tanager
Strong-billed Woodcreeper	Southern Rough-winged Swallow	White-sided Flowerpiercer
Spillman's Tapaculo	Chestnut-breasted Wren	Masked Saltator
Torrent Tyrannulet	White-capped Dipper	Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Streak-necked Flycatcher	Andean Solitaire	Yellow-throated Brush-Finch
Golden-faced Tyrannulet	Black-billed Thrush	Rufous-collared Sparrow
Cinnamon Flycatcher	Great Thrush	Hepatic Tanager
Black Phoebe	Superciliaried Hemispingus	Slate-throated Redstart
Vermilion Flycatcher	Flame-rumped Tanager	Three-striped Warbler
Pied Water-Tyrant	Blue-gray Tanager	Orange-bellied Euphonia

Species Heard

Chestnut Wood-Quail	Pale-edged Flycatcher	House Wren
Squirrel Cuckoo	Great Kiskadee	Mountain Wren
Pale-breasted Spinetail	Handsome Flycatcher	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren
Moustached Antpitta	White-winged Beccard	White-capped Tanager
Chestnut-crowned Antpitta	Brown-capped Vireo	Black-winged Saltator
Brown-banded Antpitta	Black-billed Peppershrike	Black-crested Warbler
Ocellated Tapaculo	Sharpe's Wren	Yellow-billed Cacique
Common Tody-Flycatcher	Whiskered Wren	Giant Cowbird

Day 8 (7/19/11): We started the morning off with breakfast at 5:30 am, and proceeded to bird from the balcony of the lodge for about an hour. Masked flowerpiercer, rusty-faced parrot, masked saltator, and barred beccard graced our presence. . There was action at the hummingbird feeders, including long-tailed sylph, tourmaline sunangel and buff-tailed coronet, displaying a typical behavior of leaving their wings extended for a brief moment after perching. We were all excited about antpitta feeding time, so we headed to the first feeder. We followed Albeiro, the worm man, to the feeder and it was exciting because we saw our first antpitta of the tour. Chestnut-crowned antpitta and the endemic brown-banded antpitta gave us a show. As we walked away from the feeders we heard chestnut-naped antpitta, so we returned to the feeder and had great looks at this bird.

Then to the next feeder, where after some great views of bicolored antpitta we had to deal with a koati stealing the worms. Albeiro, a national "tejo" (game similar to horseshoes that is played by exploding firecrackers with a steel puck) showed us how to play the game. We then attempted slate-crowned antpitta at a different feeder to no avail. We returned to the lodge for lunch and a short siesta before heading out for more birding.

We drove up the hill to the “tejo” field, then took a trail from there. The highlight of the afternoon was a mixed group with over twenty species, we must have spent an hour enjoyed this group. A great day for woodcreepers, interesting finds included pearled treerunner, streaked tuftedcheek, brown-bellied scythebill and olive-backed woodcreeper. We also observed many species of hemispingus, including superciliated, oleaginous and black-eared. The group continued on as I walked Kathy back to the van because she was not feeling well. We had a quiet dinner and enjoyed “arequipe” for dessert, a smooth caramel that I explained to the group could be made by boiling a can of sweetened condensed milk.



Anxiously waiting for the antpitta show at the feeders!

Species Observed

Black Vulture	Collared Inca	Brown-billed Scythebill
Hook-billed Kite	Tourmaline Sunangel	Long-tailed Antbird
Crested Caracara	Tyrian Metaltail	Chestnut-crowned Antpitta
Band-tailed Pigeon	Long-tailed Sylph	Bicolored Antpitta
Scarlet-fronted Parakeet	Masked Trogon	Chestnut-naped Antpitta
Rusty-faced Parrot	Highland Motmot	Brown-banded Antpitta
Scaly-naped Parrot	Crimson-mantled Woodpecker	Mountain Elaenia
Chestnut-collared Swift	Azara's Spinetail	Rufous-headed Pygmy-tyrant
Green Violetear	Streaked Tuftedcheek	Rufous-breasted Flycatcher
Speckled Hummingbird	Pearled Treerunner	Black-capped Tyrannulet
Mountain Velvetbreast	Streaked Xenops	Rufous-crowned Tody-Flycatcher
Buff-tailed Coronet	Montane Woodcreeper	Cinnamon Flycatcher

Alder Flycatcher	Black-eared Hemispingus	Masked Flowerpiercer
Pale-edged Flycatcher	Oleaginous Hemispingus	Masked Saltator
Barred Becard	Gray-hooded Bush Tanager	Yellow-breasted Brush-Finch
Brown-capped Vireo	Blue-capped Tanager	Slaty Brush-Finch
Brown-bellied Swallow	Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager	Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch
Blue-and-white Swallow	Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager	Yellow-throated Brush-Finch
Sharpe's Wren	Grass-green Tanager	Stripe-headed Brush-Finch
Mountain Wren	Fawn-breasted Tanager	Rufous-collared Sparrow
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	Beryl-spangled Tanager	Yellow-billed Cacique
Great Thrush	Blue-and-black Tanager	Yellow-bellied Siskin
Black-capped Hemispingus	Capped Conebill	
Superciliaried Hemispingus	White-sided Flowerpiercer	

Species Heard

Chestnut Wood-Quail	Ash-colored Tapaculo	Green-and-black Fruiteater
Sharp-shinned Hawk	Ocellated Tapaculo	Black-billed Peppershrike
Rufous-banded owl	Blackish Tapaculo	White-capped Tanager
Powerful Woodpecker	Spillman's Tapaculo	Black-crested Warbler
Slate-crowned Antpitta	Brown-backed Flycatcher	Russet-crowned Warbler

Day 9 (7/20/11):

After an early breakfast we started of the day hiking down the hill, where we observed Sharpe's wren and masked saltator, as well as the rescued spectacled bear they keep alongside the road. I left the group at 7 am as I had arranged to take Kathy down to Manizales for some blood work, which we easily accomplished considering it was a holiday, Colombian independence day. We enjoyed breakfast with coffee and "almohabanas", a cheesy bread typical of the area. We were also able to watch the independence day parade while we waited for the lab results. We headed back up to Rio Blanco for lunch and picked up the crew on the way up. We had "frijoles verdes" (fresh beans that have never been dehydrated) for lunch, Sergios moms recipe, which we all enjoyed. Then "manjarblanco" for dessert, a caramel candy served in "totumo", the large round fruit we had observed in the Sonso Lagoon that used as a container for the "manjarblanco". While the group napped, Kathy had a doctor's visit to look at her lab results and symptoms.

We checked out of the lodge and birded at the gate, the highlight being white-capped dipper. Then off to Termales del otono, where most of the group enjoyed relaxing in the mineral-rich hot springs before dinner. We loaded up on pasta, salad and bread to prepare for our ascent to 14,000 feet the following day.



With Kelly and Sergio looking at the guide.

Species Observed

- | | | |
|----------------------------|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Sickle-winged Guan | Azara's Spinetail | Black-collared Jay |
| Cattle Egret | Streaked Tuftedcheek | Brown-bellied Swallow |
| Black Vulture | Flammulated Treehunter | Blue-and-white Swallow |
| Roadside Hawk | Striped Treehunter | Sharpe's Wren |
| Band-tailed Pigeon | Streaked Xenops | Mountain Wren |
| Rusty-faced Parrot | Strong-billed Woodcreeper | White-capped Dipper |
| Scaly-naped Parrot | Mountain Elaenia | Great Thrush |
| Chestnut-collared Swift | Rufous-headed Pygmy-tyrant | Superciliaried Hemispingus |
| Green Violetear | Rufous-breasted Flycatcher | Gray-hooded Bush Tanager |
| Speckled Hummingbird | Golden-faced Tyrannulet | Blue-capped Tanager |
| Buff-tailed Coronet | Cinnamon Flycatcher | Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager |
| Bronzy Inca | Alder Flycatcher | Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager |
| Collared Inca | Smoke-coloured Pewee | Fawn-breasted Tanager |
| Tourmaline Sunangel | Slaty-backed Chat-tyrant | Metallic-green Tanager |
| Tyrian Metaltail | Pale-edged Flycatcher | Beryl-spangled Tanager |
| Long-tailed Sylph | Golden-crowned Flycatcher | Blue-and-black Tanager |
| Wedge-billed Hummingbird | Barred Becard | White-sided Flowerpiercer |
| Masked Trogon | White-winged Beccard | Bluish Flowerpiercer |
| Highland Motmot | Brown-capped Vireo | Masked Saltator |
| Crimson-mantled Woodpecker | Black-billed Peppershrike | Slaty Brush-Finch |

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch
Yellow-throated Brush-Finch
Rufous-collared Sparrow

Red-hooded Tanager
Slate-throated Redstart
Golden-fronted Redstart

Russet-crowned Warbler
Yellow-bellied Siskin

Species Heard

Chestnut Wood-Quail
Squirrel Cuckoo
Golden-headed Quetzal
Golden-olive Woodpecker

Powerful Woodpecker
Tyrannine Woodcreeper
Chestnut-crowned Antpitta
Ocellated Tapaculo

Blackish Tapaculo
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren
Yellow-billed Cacique

Day 10 (7/21/20)

We started our big elevation day with a packed breakfast and much anticipation about our ascent to 14,000 feet. We climbed for a good while, taking it very slow to ensure we would not suffer from altitude sickness. Our first stop provided close views of paramo seedeater and pale-naped brush-finch, high elevation specialists that were both new for the trip. The wind was blowing hard, so we continued up the hill in search of refuge from the wind. Our first stop out of the wind provided spectacular views of scarlet-bellied mountain-tanager, the group was very excited and it made us forget about the cold. We continued to a small canyon where we worked hard to see rainbow-bearded thrushbill, although only the female showed herself. As we headed up the road we had another target tanager on our mind, and we were lucky enough to get views of the spectacular golden-crowned tanager. As we ascended, some of us were able to get a quick glimpse of what we thought was a soaring black-chested buzzard eagle.

Our next stop was Laguna Negra, the remnants of a glacier that provided us with good views of ruddy duck and Andean teal. We sipped on some coca tea and continued our ascent. Just before our final destination we the group got to see a female bearded helmetcrest, another of our targets. We continued to the lodge, in search of our last target species of the day, tawny antpitta. We could hear it vocalizing nearby, but it wasn't until we reached the lodge that we were able to get magnificent views of our target bird from the lodge balcony. Very content with the day, we descended to Manizales to have lunch at a very quaint, cozy restaurant in the middle of town. Then up to the hot springs for some relaxation.

Dinner was scheduled at a nearby restaurant, and Sergio mentioned that workers at a nearby water purifying plant had observed swallow-tailed nightjar in one of the boiler rooms. We decided to check it out, and with VIP access to the property, we got to get incredibly close views of the bird in one of the machine rooms. On our way to the restaurant we saw a large group of sickle-winged guan and then enjoyed a delicious dinner before returning to the hotel. We also saw black flowerpiercer and viridian metal tail.



In search of paramo tapaculo.

Species Observed

- | | | |
|-----------------------------|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Andean Teal | Rainbow-bearded Thornbill | Great Thrush |
| Ruddy Duck | White-bellied Woodstar | Superciliaried Hemispingus |
| Sickle-winged Guan | Highland Motmot | Black-backed Bush Tanager |
| Andean Condor | Acorn Woodpecker | Blue-gray Tanager |
| Black-chested Buzzard Eagle | Stout-billed Cinclodes | Palm Tanager |
| Crested Caracara | Andean Tit-Spinetail | Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager |
| Southern Lapwing | Tawny Antpitta | Golden-crowned Tanager |
| Rock Pigeon | Ash-colored Tapaculo | Black-capped Tanager |
| Band-tailed Pigeon | Paramo Tapaculo | Black Flowerpiercer |
| Eared Dove | White-throated Tyrannulet | Plumbeous Sierra-Finch |
| Swallow-tailed Nightjar | Black Phoebe | Plain-colored Seedeater |
| White-collared Swift | Brown-bellied Swallow | Paramo Seedeater |
| Sparkling Violetear | Blue-and-white Swallow | Pale-naped Brush-Finch |
| Tyrian Metaltail | House Wren | Rufous-collared Sparrow |
| Bearded Helmetcrest | Mountain Wren | Black-crested Warbler |
| Viridian Metaltail | Sedge Wren | Andean Siskin |

Day 11 (7/22/11)

We checked out of our hot spring hotel with a packed breakfast on our way to Alcazares Park, a very birdy spot in the outskirts of Manizales. One bird we had not seen during the trip was red-headed barbet, so we were all excited about the chance to see this bird. We arrived as the gates opened but did about an hour of birding outside the gate, we could not help ourselves! We got a great review of species seen throughout the trip, and headed into the park to the observation tower. Julian, or “pocopelo” (not much hair), the caretaker of the reserve arrived on his motorcycle to greet us. We climbed the “guadua” structure, and enjoyed a close-up of a blue-and-white swallow nest hanging from the roof. It seemed as though it was made of feathers, but we later learned the nest was made from the feather-like seeds of a native tree, part of an ingenious seed dispersal strategy. We made our way to the bottom of the hill to an amphitheatre in search of red-headed barbet. And they appeared, very vocal and territorial, which allowed outstanding views of one of the birds we had not yet seen. We slowly walked up the hill, had a snack and the bus and started our journey back to Cali. We stopped along the road for some lunch and listmaking, as we were to drop of Sergio in Pereira. With an ice cream stop along the way, we arrived in Cali in time for the group to get cleaned up and have dinner at the hotel. The idea of a 9 a.m. start to sightsee in Cali and head to the Dolmetsch Arboretum was well-welcomed.



Our group pictures was taken at the bottom of Alcazares Park.

Species Observed

Sickle-winged Guan

Cattle Egret

Roadside Hawk

Southern Lapwing

Band-tailed Pigeon

Eared Dove

Ruddy Ground-Dove	Golden-faced Tyrannulet	Green Honeycreeper
Andean Emerald	Common Tody-Flycatcher	Bananaquit
Steely-vented Hummingbird	Tropical Kingbird	Streaked Saltator
Red-headed Barbet	Blue-and-white Swallow	Black-winged Saltator
Crimson-rumped Toucanet	Whiskered Wren	Saffron Finch
Acorn Woodpecker	Black-billed Thrush	Slate-colored Seedeater
Lineated Woodpecker	Flame-rumped Tanager	Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Slaty Spinetail	Blue-gray Tanager	Rufous-collared Sparrow
Red-faced Spinetail	Palm Tanager	Tropical Parula
Montane Woodcreeper	Bay-headed Tanager	Slate-throated Redstart
Mouse-colored Tyrannulet	Scrub Tanager	Yellow-bellied Siskin
Mountain Elaenia	Black-capped Tanager	

Species Heard

Spectacled Parrotlet	Great Antshrike	Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush
Squirrel Cuckoo	Bar-crested Antshrike	Yellow-faced Grassquit
Grayish Piculet	House Wren	
Golden-olive Woodpecker	Gray-breasted Wood-Wren	

Day 12 (7/23/11):

We met at the hotel at 9 a.m. for breakfast, and it was good to find the group fresh and ready for another great day. We headed up to Cristo Rey, a statue built in the foothills of the western cordillera and designed by the same sculptor that created the infamous Rio de Janeiro statue. We were looking forward to some great views of Cali and checking out some outstanding roadside art. A local artist has taken it upon himself to carve figures out of roadside cut-banks, adding plaster and acrylic paint to create amazing 3D sculptures with various themes. Unfortunately, many of them have been vandalized, which was very sad to see. However, we found the artist hard at work on a new project, now guarded by local police and with a religious theme to complement Cristo Rey.

We talked to the artist and gave him a donation for his amazing work, and then enjoyed views of Cali as we talked about the history of drug-trafficking and, kidnapping and the FARC in Colombia. We headed down the hill, then towards the Dolmetsch Arboretum to meet my dad, who had been hard at work all morning cooking us a vegetarian meal. We arrived and sat in the amazing living room as we drank fresh pineapple juice and learned about Francois, my father's business partner and owner of the arboretum. Unfortunately he was on vacation in London so we did not get to meet him in person.

We did a pre-lunch tour of the arboretum, and it was fun for me to see everyone's jaws drop constantly as we toured the grounds. Constant ohhh's and ahhhh's made me very proud of my father's lifelong project. We learned about plants from all corners of the world, and then enjoyed a delicious vegetarian lunch with lentils, brown rice, and an organic salad made with locally grown produce. For dessert we enjoyed cinnamon rolls, made locally by Emily, a Dutch woman who has been living in Colombia for more than three decades. The group wanted one more chance to bird at La Araucana, so we purchased

some bananas and returned to sit at the balcony. It only took a few minutes for the birds to start arriving, and although we did not see any new species we had incredible, close-up views of many of the species we had observed during the trip. Still full from lunch, we headed down the hill for the long-awaited “empanadas” (a fried delicacy made of corn “masa” stuffed with yellow potatoes and meat, served with lime and “aji”). We enjoyed these with a “lulada”, which is “lulo” (small, fuzzy fruit) juice with chunks of the fruit and sugar added. We reminisced about the good times had and headed to the hotel very content.



Everybody enjoyed the Dolmetsch Arboretum with my father.

Day 13 (7/24/11):

The crew had our last morning to explore Cali and do some shopping, so we met at the hotel at noon for goodbyes. It was good to hear again and again how great the trip went, but sad to say goodbye. The group was excited about their next adventure in Bogota, but I will have to hear the stories next time we meet as I did not accompany the group to Bogota.