



Field Guides Tour Report

Colombia: Santa Marta Escape 2019

Feb 18, 2019 to Feb 26, 2019

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One of the absolute favorites on this trip is the vivid but skulky Vermilion Cardinal. Found only in Venezuela and a sliver of Colombia, this is a specialty of the region. Photo by guide Tom Johnson.

With a pleasant climate, an easy flight from Miami, a wealth of endemic birds, and breathtaking scenery, the Santa Marta Escape trip had a perfect mix of distractions for the winter that we were all escaping from!

Right off the bat, in the city of Barranquilla, we found a quiet university street that was alive with Chestnut-winged Chachalacas, a species only found in Colombia! Farther along, on Isla Salamanca, we all braved the foot-ferry and were rewarded with an amazing study of Sapphire-throated/Sapphire-bellied Hummingbirds. Even when some of the locals went on strike and closed the road for a little bit, we found a way to see amazing birds and we ended up scoring Buff-breasted Wren, White-winged Becard, and a quick Lance-tailed Manakin at a new spot.

The Guajira Peninsula, extending farther north than any other point of South America, was our destination for a day of birding around Camarones. The dry and scrubby habitats yielded a variety of local specialties like Tocuyo Sparrow, Vermilion Cardinal, Orinocan Saltator, Buffy Hummingbird, Bare-eyed Pigeon, White-whiskered Spinetail, Double-striped Thick-knee, and several others. Even our lunch was scenic, on a sandy beach no less!

However, our home for 4 nights was at the beautiful El Dorado Lodge, nestled at 6300 feet in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. The gardens were constantly humming with activity from several hummingbird species, the local Sierra Nevada Brushfinches, flowerpiercers, and several different species of guans, wrens, thrushes, and doves. Farther uphill, at the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo, we enjoyed a couple of sunrises over some of the most impressive scenery paired with some amazing birding. There, the endemics were well-represented and we added highlights like Santa Marta Warbler, Yellow-crowned Redstart, Black-backed Thornbill, Black-cheeked Mountain-Tanager, Paramo Seedeater, Hermit Wood-Wren, and who could forget that Flammulated Treehunter! The San Lorenzo Station kicked things into high gear with that stunning look at Santa Marta Antpitta and the super rare Santa Marta Parakeets!

We had time to explore farther down the road and birding there was also alive with specialties. White-tipped Quetzals fed a chick, a Golden-breasted Fruiteater sat motionless, and a Long-billed Hermit zoomed around to roadside flowers. We added to our list of endemics with shows from Santa Marta Blossomcrown, Santa Marta Foliage-gleaner, Santa Marta Tapaculo, and a couple of bonus species like Coppery Emerald, Golden-winged Sparrow, and Plumbeous Kites.

It was a pleasure sharing this sliver of Colombia with you all and we hope that you enjoyed your quick escape to South America with us! A huge thanks to Tom for his expertise in guiding, thanks as well to Diana for her local knowledge and willingness to help, and of course a big thanks to all of our drivers who made this adventure as smooth as possible!

Until next time, happy birding!

Cory

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

GRAY TINAMOU (*Tinamus tao*) – Early one morning along the road below El Dorado Lodge, at the spot with the quetzal family, one of these tinamous was heard singing its quivering song. [*]

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – This wintering dabbler was seen in flight at Isla Salamanca pre-tour and then along the cienega on our first day.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

CHESTNUT-WINGED CHACHALACA (*Ortalis garrula*) – This Colombian endemic was heard and then seen at the Universidad del Norte on our very first morning. A fantastic species, albeit rather clumsy in flight. [E]

BAND-TAILED GUAN (*Penelope argyrotis*) – We shared our time at the El Dorado Lodge with these big, fruit-loving birds. This species is found only in Colombia and neighboring Venezuela.

SICKLE-WINGED GUAN (*Chamaepetes goudotii sanctaemarthae*) – This somewhat secretive guan was eventually seen by everyone, sometimes just at the compost pile at the El Dorado Lodge. The blue facial skin really stood out! This species is found from Peru north into Colombia. However, the subspecies in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is well-separated geographically.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

CRESTED BOBWHITE (*Colinus cristatus*) – Scurrying through the dry scrub in Camarones, these quail were glimpsed as they darted across the path.

BLACK-FRONTED WOOD-QUAIL (*Odontophorus atrifrons*) – Trying to see this secretive species is always a challenge but we hit a jackpot when one of our drivers called us over... he had spotted them on the hillside right above us! In the end, we got to hear the birds singing mere feet above us. Wow! This wood-quail is little known and its distribution is restricted to small pockets in northern Colombia and a little bit of Venezuela.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – Seen briefly in the cienega along the road on our first day.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Seen most often in urban areas. However, we also saw one perched up in the forest near a tienda that we all took note of! [I]

PALE-VENTED PIGEON (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Although they didn't stick around for long, we saw some of these in flight near the toll booth/bathroom stop. One eventually perched atop a distant tree but looks weren't prolonged.

BARE-EYED PIGEON (*Patagioenas corensis*) – An attractive pigeon that's found only along the Caribbean coast of Venezuela and Colombia. These were found just in the nick of time at the toll booth stop as we departed the Guajira Peninsula. They have big white wing patches which were very noticeable in flight.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (WHITE-NECKED) (*Patagioenas fasciata albilinea*) – These mountain-loving pigeons were seen from the El Dorado Lodge and above, up along the cuchilla. This subspecies is found from Costa Rica southward through South America.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – A small dove with a short tail, these scaly-looking birds were seen pre-tour and again near the toll booths on our way back through.

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Rather common in the humid lowlands around Barranquilla and Isla Salamanca. We saw some pre-tour, at the Universidad del Norte, and the toll booth stop.

SCALED DOVE (*Columbina squammata*) – This small, long-tailed dove was seen nicely pre-tour and again at Isla Salamanca and the toll booths. It's size and scaly appearance may have reminded you of the Inca Doves found farther north.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – This chunky, ground-loving dove was tallied every day and they were quite common around the El Dorado Lodge.

LINED QUAIL-DOVE (*Zentrygon linearis*) – This secretive species was seen by some at the compost pile at El Dorado Lodge. Later on, we caught glimpses here and there as they scurried along on the ground, often well back in the forest.

EARED DOVE (*Zenaidura auriculata*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A few of these doves were seen in Barranquilla and they may have reminded you of Mourning Doves from farther north.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – This all-black, long-tailed species was seen in grassy areas of Isla Salamanca both pre-tour and then again on our final day.

GROOVE-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. We had a few of these at close range in the scope where we could see the nice ridges, or grooves, in the bill.

STRIPED CUCKOO (*Tapera naevia*) – Along the road above Hotel Minca, one of these cuckoos was singing for quite a while before it unfortunately became silent. [*]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

BAND-WINGED NIGHTJAR (*Systellura longirostris*) – Only a few folks in the first 4x4 saw this species pre-dawn as we climbed up towards the San Lorenzo Ridge.

Apodidae (Swifts).

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – A beautiful, striking, large, and common swift in the airspace above us in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

BAND-RUMPED SWIFT (*Chaetura spinicaudus*) – Just one of these little swifts shot over while we were birding in the town of Minca. Unfortunately, that was the only sighting.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds).

WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN (*Florisuga mellivora*) – A striking and common hummingbird at the feeders at the Hotel Minca.

LONG-BILLED HERMIT (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Phaethornis longirostris susurrus*) – This long-tailed and long-billed hermit was seen a couple of times feeding at flowers along the road near the El Dorado Lodge. We had our best looks near the gate just uphill.

BROWN VIOLETEAR (*Colibri delphinae*) – Although outnumbered by the following species at the El Dorado Lodge, this hummingbird was still quite plentiful and we enjoyed point-blank views!

LESSER VIOLETEAR (*Colibri cyanotus*) – An abundant hummingbird species at the El Dorado Lodge feeders. Several years ago, Green Violetear was split into two species; Mexican Violetear and Lesser Violetear. The latter is the only one found in South America.

BLACK-THROATED MANGO (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) – These were present at the Hotel Minca feeders although they were usually outnumbered by competitors.

BLACK-BACKED THORNBILL (*Ramphomicron dorsale*) – This tricky-to-find hummingbird is endemic to the higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Fortunately for us, we had point-blank views of many during our visit to the cuchilla! [E]

TYRIAN METALTAIL (SANTA MARTA) (*Metallura tyrianthina districta*) – The endemic subspecies of this fairly widespread hummingbird has a distinctly blue-colored tail! The trees up along the cuchilla were alive with these small hummingbirds and a few times, some were seen farther downhill towards the lodge.

WHITE-TAILED STARFRONTLET (*Coeligena phalerata*) – An attractive hummingbird that's found only in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, this endemic was seen only briefly up along the cuchilla; a female with a buffy breast and belly. [E]

MOUNTAIN VELVETBREAST (*Lafresnaya lafresnayi*) – Good looks were had at this hummingbird at the San Lorenzo Station where one was perched on a power line. The bill of this velvetbreast is distinctly curved downward.

RED-BILLED EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon gibsoni nitens*) – A few of these mostly-green hummingbirds were seen in the dry scrub around Camarones. This species is only found in Colombia and Venezuela.

COPPERY EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon russatus*) – A reliable female was feeding at flowers at the eco-tienda downhill from El Dorado Lodge. On our second visit, a male was also present. This specialty species is very nearly endemic to Colombia but just barely reaches northwestern Venezuela.

SANTA MARTA BLOSSOMCROWN (*Anthocephala floriceps*) – A prized specialty of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, this tiny hummingbird was seen nicely at the tienda downhill from the El Dorado Lodge. In fact, this bird was seen repeatedly and for good amounts of time, a successful sighting! [E]

WHITE-VENTED PLUMELETEER (*Chalybura buffonii*) – A medium-sized hummingbird with a downcurved bill and bright white undertail coverts. This species was seen mostly from the Hotel Minca feeders.

CROWNED WOODNYMPH (COLOMBIAN VIOLET-CROWNED) (*Thalurania colombica colombica*) – A drop-dead gorgeous hummingbird that was thankfully common at the El Dorado Lodge feeders! Note that this is the nominate colombica subspecies despite Colombia hosting 4 different subspecies of this variable hummingbird.

BUFFY HUMMINGBIRD (*Leucippus fallax*) – A range-restricted specialty of the Guajira Peninsula and neighboring Venezuela, this somewhat-bland species was eventually seen nicely in the dry scrub around Camarones.

STEELY-VENTED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia saucerrottei*) – An abundant species at the Hotel Minca feeders, these were the smallest hummingbirds present there.

RUFOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – An aggressive and common hummingbird through much of the New World tropics. We saw these very nicely at the Hotel Minca feeders.

SAPPHIRE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lepidopyga coeruleogularis*) – Across the canal on Isla Salamanca, we came across a couple of great hummingbirds including a solid Sapphire-throated. We noted the sharp demarcation of the blue at the bottom of the bib.

SAPPHIRE-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lepidopyga lilliae*) – This tour is special in that it visits an area long-known for hosting some mysterious hummingbirds. The Sapphire-bellied is a probable species that is seemingly only present in a small area of Isla Salamanca and no where else on the planet! A confounding factor though is that the very similar Sapphire-throated can be seen nearby as well. Many of the birds seen these days show traits of both. Are they hybrids? Or intergrades of a variable species? There is still uncertainty so it will be interesting to see where studies go from here. For us, we visited a new location on Isla Salamanca with help from a local guide we picked up from the HQ area. He took us across the canal to a spot that these very questions are being studied. This inside info netted us great looks at what looked to be a pure Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird! This was completely outstanding and unexpected! [E]

SHINING-GREEN HUMMINGBIRD (*Lepidopyga goudoti*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A couple of these were feeding in a tree right above us near the parking area/farm on Isla Salamanca. This somewhat confusing hummingbird is only found in Colombia and Venezuela.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots).

SORA (*Porzana carolina*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This wintering species of rail actually came out into the open! Several more were heard nearby in the cattails as well.

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Seen nicely in the wetland area we visited at Isla Salamanca.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinica*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This colorful species was alongside the previous gallinule near the parking area on Isla Salamanca.

Aramidae (Limpkin).

LIMPKIN (*Aramus guarauna*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. The distant wailing calls of this snail-eating specialist were heard at Isla Salamanca. [*]

Burhinidae (Thick-knees).

DOUBLE-STRIPED THICK-KNEE (*Burhinus bistriatus*) – We pulled off the highway to enjoy great looks at two of these large shorebirds south of Camarones. Midday, they were just chilling in the shade.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets).

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – These distinctive shorebirds were seen at Isla Salamanca before the tour and on the final day of the tour.

Haematopodidae (Oystercatchers)

AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER (*Haematopus palliatus*) – A bold, black-and-white species, one of these was seen distantly at the lagoon in Camarones.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SOUTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus chilensis*) – Seen a few times before the tour and on our first day on Isla Salamanca. These really are attractive shorebirds!

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – A small flock of these had gathered at the lagoon in Camarones during our brief visit there. This species, which breeds in the Arctic, only winters in Colombia.

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

WATTLED JACANA (*Jacana jacana*) – This really is the standard jacana (note the scientific name). We saw these pre-tour and again at Isla Salamanca on our final day.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

WHIMBREL (*Numenius phaeopus*) – Our first glimpse at this curlew was at Los Flamencos in Camarones but we saw even more on our final day at Isla Salamanca. Those were even perched on trees in the marsh!

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – A few of these were present at Los Flamencos in Camarones. At one point, one landed right in front of us with another, larger peep.

WESTERN SANDPIPER (*Calidris mauri*) – Many of the small shorebirds at Los Flamencos were these. However, most were distant which made studying them difficult.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – A distinctive, wintering species that we encountered several times. And yes, without the spots!

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (*Tringa solitaria*) – Seen on Isla Salamanca twice, pre-tour and again on our final day of birding.

GREATER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – A few of these tall and sturdy *Tringas* were feeding on the flats at Los Flamencos in Camarones during our visit there.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – A more slender version of the previous species, this dainty shorebird was also seen at Los Flamencos in Camarones.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Large numbers of these were gathering at Los Flamencos in Camarones during our visit there. A few were walking around on the flats quite a bit closer to us which was nice to see.

CASPIAN TERN (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – This large tern species was seen out in the lagoon at Los Flamencos. In flight, the black in the primaries was visible even at a distance.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – This is another large species of tern that we saw distantly at Los Flamencos. Compared to the previous species, this tern doesn't have as much black in the wings.

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – Barely flapping at all, these ocean-loving birds were seen gliding alongside us as we drove back towards Barranquilla along the cienega.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – Seen a few times on Isla Salamanca and at Los Flamencos in Camarones.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – We added this species on our final day as we drove along the cienega back towards Barranquilla.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – This big heron was seen by a few as we drove alongside the cienega on our final day. This is only a wintering species here.

COCOI HERON (*Ardea cocoi*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A big and pale heron, these were scoped nicely on our pre-tour birding trip to Isla Salamanca.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Fairly common in wetlands and marshes.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – A few of these herons were seen on Isla Salamanca and as we drove alongside the cienega.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – Seen on both the pre-tour outing to Isla Salamanca and then at Las Acacias during our first lunch.

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*) – A slender and attractive heron, these were seen pre-tour and a couple of times at Isla Salamanca and Los Flamencos.

REDDISH EGRET (*Egretta rufescens*) – One or two of these were well out into the lagoon at Los Flamencos. With the afternoon heat shimmer, it was tough to see much on them. This is a tough and local species to find in Colombia.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Seen several times in a variety of grassy and grazed habitats.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – A small, compact heron that might remind you of Green Heron. We saw one nicely on our final day of birding at Isla Salamanca perched alongside the kingfishers and Whimbrel.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

WHITE IBIS (*Eudocimus albus*) – A few of these, including a potential Scarlet Ibis hybrid, were seen out in the lagoon at Los Flamencos in Camarones.

BARE-FACED IBIS (*Phimosus infuscatus*) – This is a dark, dull ibis that we saw along Isla Salamanca pre-tour and on our first day. The short legs gave this species a distinctive silhouette!

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

KING VULTURE (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – It's always a treat to see this huge, striking, and uncommon species! We were surprised to find a couple of these as we birded the road just up from Hotel Minca on our final day.

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common and tallied nearly every day.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Common and tallied every day.

LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE (*Cathartes burrovianus*) – We had great views of this interesting vulture pre-tour when one perched on a fence post just down the road! We saw another one fly by on our final day at Isla Salamanca.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – This fish-eating raptor was spotted a couple of times including pre-tour at Isla Salamanca and again as a high-flyover.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

PEARL KITE (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) – A few folks towards the front of the van caught a glimpse of one of these in Camarones.

BLACK-COLLARED HAWK (*Busarellus nigricollis*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. We scoped a distant perched hawk at Isla Salamanca that turned out to be this species. These are denizens of marshes and they catch and eat fish, like Osprey.

SNAIL KITE (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) – Quite common at Isla Salamanca, especially on our pre-tour birding outing.

PLUMBEOUS KITE (*Ictinia plumbea*) – Soaring with the swifts high above the eco-tienda, a couple of these graceful raptors were spotted towards the end of our tour.

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (PLAIN-BREASTED) (*Accipiter striatus ventralis*) – This small *Accipiter* zoomed overhead as we were birding the road near the San Lorenzo station. However, as is often the case with these hawks, it didn't stick around for long.

HARRIS'S HAWK (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – This hawk prefers the dry, scrubby habitats near Camarones and our only sighting came from our morning there.

WHITE-RUMPED HAWK (*Parabuteo leucorrhous*) – This is a small, uncommon hawk of humid montane forests. Seeing them is tough enough but we couldn't believe our luck when one of these flew in and perched right in front of us along the San Lorenzo Ridge! Outstanding!

BROAD-WINGED HAWK (*Buteo platypterus*) – A wintering species in Colombia, these small buteos were spotted a few times including some that were perched within the forests (this is a forest raptor more than an open landscape hunter).

SHORT-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo brachyurus*) – Seen on about half of our days, and always in flight, this widespread raptor has a knack for having wingtips that are flared up when soaring.

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – Always a welcome surprise, this uncommon raptor soared over up the road from Minca on our way down the mountain. At a glance, these look quite similar to Turkey Vultures and it's always a good idea to check vultures carefully for these.

Strigidae (Owls)

SANTA MARTA SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops gilesi*) – As a testament to the remoteness and relatively poorly-known avifauna still present in some hard-to-reach locations, this fascinating owl wasn't formally described to science until 2017! Still, before that, this owl was known to exist and it was assumed that it was probably a separate and endemic species. We had an incredible encounter with one near the El Dorado Lodge one evening. Not only did it sit tight, it remained there until we eventually just walked away! What a memorable experience to be able to witness this fascinating endemic. [E]

FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – Tom's tooting brought one of these in on our morning walk into the town of Minca. Great views!

BLACK-AND-WHITE OWL (*Ciccaba nigrolineata*) – What a treat this was! On our way down the mountain on our final day, our drivers knew of a spot for this handsome owl and sure enough, it was perched out in the open!

Trogonidae (Trogons)

WHITE-TIPPED QUETZAL (*Pharomachrus fulgidus*) – Any day with quetzal sightings is a good day! Thankfully, we had many encounters with this specialty throughout our time up in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. We were lucky enough to even encounter a family including a chick that was still downy! Within Colombia, this species is only found in the Santa Martas; otherwise it's found in just a couple of small pockets in northern Venezuela.

MASKED TROGON (*Trogon personatus sanctaemartae*) – We ended up having outstanding views of this attractive trogon several times around the El Dorado Lodge. Note the subspecies which is endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

Momotidae (Motmots)

WHOOPIING MOTMOT (*Momotus subrufescens*) – A couple of these were seen nicely on our first morning at the Universidad de Norte. Up until a couple of years ago, these were considered part of the Blue-crowned Motmot complex. As a separate species now, they are found from Venezuela south into Ecuador and barely into northern Peru.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*) – Isla Salamanca transformed on our last day into a kingfisher paradise and we saw a whole slew of these big guys perched and flying around.

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – A medium-sized green kingfisher, these lack white spots on the wings and back that Green Kingfishers have. We saw this pre-tour and then again at Las Acacias during lunch.

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – Nice views were had on our final day at the Isla Salamanca wooded ponds.

Bucconidae (Puffbirds)

PIED PUFFBIRD (*Notharchus tectus*) – Our final birding stop of the trip yielded this black-and-white puffbird. Despite the wind, this little guy held on tight up in the canopy! This population is probably the northernmost in the world for this species.

RUSSET-THROATED PUFFBIRD (*Hypnelus ruficollis*) – These attractive sit-and-wait predators were quite common on our pre-tour outing to Isla Salamanca (12+ individuals). We saw them again on our way back through Isla Salamanca as well. What striking birds!

Galbulidae (Jacamars)

RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR (*Galbula ruficauda*) – The one bird we saw in the dry scrub near Camarones was rather shy and difficult to get a bead on!

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

SOUTHERN EMERALD-TOUCANET (SANTA MARTA) (*Aulacorhynchus albivitta lautus*) – Seen overhead on the El Dorado Lodge trail to the Kogi Huts one afternoon. A couple of years ago, Emerald Toucanet was split into two species: Northern Emerald-Toucanet and Southern Emerald-Toucanet. The latter is the only one found in South America. This endemic subspecies that is only found in the Santa Martas remains a subspecies, for now.

GROOVE-BILLED TOUCANET (YELLOW-BILLED) (*Aulacorhynchus sulcatus calorhynchus*) – Since fewer birders are visiting Venezuela in recent years, the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta remains the best spot to hope for this specialty. On our tour, this small toucan is generally found at elevations lower than the previous species.

COLLARED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – Our only encounter with this colorful toucan was in the town of Minca on our morning walk there.

KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – This colorful toucan was heard more than seen, as is typical. We had some quick glimpses near the tienda downhill from El Dorado Lodge.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

SCALED PICULET (*Picumnus squamulatus*) – This little woodpecker was attending a nest! Finding this species can be tricky but thanks to the local knowledge from our drivers, we ended up seeing it very well indeed.

CHESTNUT PICULET (*Picumnus cinnamomeus*) – Among the piculets, this guy has to be one of the more distinctive and attractive ones! Found in the dry scrub around Camarones, this is always one of the fun targets we look for there.

RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) – Common in the lowlands around Barranquilla and up to Minca. This might have reminded you of Red-bellied Woodpeckers from farther north.

SMOKY-BROWN WOODPECKER (*Dryobates fumigatus*) – Our first trip up to the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo provided a great encounter with this species. You never quite know when one of these will pop into view!

GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER (GOLDEN-OLIVE) (*Colaptes rubiginosus alleni*) – Fond of medium elevations, the only location we encountered these were up in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. They were spotted around the El Dorado Lodge and farther downhill near the eco-tienda.

SPOT-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Colaptes punctigula*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Our walk on Isla Salamanca netted us this very attractive woodpecker before the tour officially began. Although they're fairly widespread in South America, they are rarely common.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

BARRED FOREST-FALCON (*Micrastur ruficollis*) – This hard-to-see raptor was heard one evening near the El Dorado Lodge. [*]

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Fairly common in the dry lowlands. At times, we saw these foraging on roadkilled scraps.

YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*) – We managed brief looks here and there of this distinctive raptor, mostly on Isla Salamanca pre-tour and on our first day.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – This small falcon was seen distantly from the same spot that the thick-knees were at near Camarones.

BAT FALCON (*Falco rufigularis*) – We really enjoyed watching this smartly-plumaged falcon as it perched atop a tower at the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. At one point, we watched it fly way out over the valley, nab a dragonfly, and fly all the way back; quite a journey for one bug!

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – This small and compact parakeet was spotted a few times including at the Las Acacias lunch stop, the toll booth area, and in Minca. The orange chin isn't a great fieldmark; it's often difficult to see!

RED-BILLED PARROT (*Pionus sordidus saturatus*) – Of the two *Pionus* parrot species we saw on the trip, this one prefers the higher elevations around El Dorado Lodge and the cuchilla. We ended up getting great views of a couple near the lodge as we returned for lunch one day.

BLUE-HEADED PARROT (*Pionus menstruus*) – This small species of parrot was spotted on our first day, in the lowlands where they're typically the only *Pionus* parrots present.

SCALY-NAPED PARROT (*Amazona mercenarius*) – This big Amazona was seen mostly in flight at spots like the El Dorado Lodge and the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo.

GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET (*Forpus passerinus*) – A small and fast-flying Psittacid, these were spotted at the toll booth area on both our first and second days of tour. They really blended in with the green leaves at the tops of trees!

SANTA MARTA PARAKEET (*Pyrrhura viridicata*) – This rare and endangered endemic is often tricky to find at the upper reaches of the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. We had a couple of very brief looks at the ridge before we descended to the San Lorenzo Station. However, we were shocked to find a tame flock there on the grounds! Turns out, our timing coinciding with the parakeets is pretty remarkable; the parakeets are seen there maybe twice a year! [E]

BROWN-THROATED PARAKEET (*Eupsittula pertinax*) – This was the common lowland parakeet around Barranquilla and Isla Salamanca. At times, flocks would even fly by our hotel in Barranquilla.

MILITARY MACAW (*Ara militaris*) – A very brief encounter indeed. Just a few folks had this rare species calling and flying by as we were driving downhill towards the tienda.

SCARLET-FRONTED PARAKEET (*Psittacara wagleri wagleri*) – A species we only found once we rose into the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, these were seen all the way up to the ridge where we got to watch one at a nest hole!

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

BLACK-CRESTED ANTSHRIKE (STREAK-FRONTED) (*Sakesphorus canadensis pulchellus*) – An attractive antshrike with a crazy, spiky crest! We encountered these a few times in the dry scrub near Camarones on our second birding day.

BARRED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus doliatus*) – A black-and-white antshrike, these were seen once as we birded uphill from Minca late one morning (the same spot as the Lesser Elaenia).

BLACK-BACKED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus melanonotus*) – We were wrapping up our birding near Camarones for the morning when we stumbled into a couple of species of antshrikes. This species, which is found only in northern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela, came in nicely and both a male and female were present.

WHITE-FRINGED ANTWREN (NORTHERN) (*Formicivora grisea intermedia*) – An attractive little antwren with a black belly and white sides. These were seen a few times in the dry, scrubby habitat in Camarones.

SANTA MARTA ANTIBIRD (*Drymophila hellmayri*) – Several years ago Long-tailed Antbird was split into 4 distinct species. One of the resulting species was the Santa Marta Antbird, an endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Usually tricky to see, it took us a few tries before we saw

these well on the slopes between Minca and the El Dorado Lodge. But eventually, a few came out into the open and even perched atop bushes! [E]

Grallariidae (Antpittas).

SANTA MARTA ANTPITTA (*Grallaria bangsi*) – This vulnerable and hard-to-see endemic was the star of the show at the San Lorenzo Station! We were lucky to witness the feeding of Catalina, an antpitta that has learned to come in for fresh worms. [E]

RUFOUS ANTPITTA (SIERRA NEVADA) (*Grallaria rufula spatiator*) – This secretive species was heard at close range up along the cuchilla but it never came into view for us. Note the subspecies, a very different-sounding endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Of all the potential splits looming in the future, this one seems primed and ready! [*]

RUSTY-BREASTED ANTPITTA (RUSTY-BREASTED) (*Grallaricula ferrugineipectus ferrugineipectus*) – This tiny and secretive antpitta took quite a bit of effort to see! At one point, one came in and even perched on a barbed-wire fence along the roadside!

Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)

SANTA MARTA TAPACULO (*Scytalopus sanctaemartae*) – Tapaculos are notoriously difficult to spot! However, our persistence paid off and one particular ravine uphill from Minca yielded great looks at this dark, secretive species. It's not every day we get to enjoy tapaculos scurrying at our feet and then posing atop a stump! [E]

BROWN-RUMPED TAPACULO (*Scytalopus latebricola*) – This tapaculo is also endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Typically found at higher elevations than the previous species, these were heard well along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. [E*]

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers).

PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) – This was a bonus! Not seen on every trip, this is a pretty uncommon woodcreeper that we encountered near the tienda downhill from El Dorado Lodge. It perched motionless but out in the open for all of us to enjoy.

STRONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER (ANDEAN/NORTHERN) (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus sanctaemartae*) – Although the calling bird was part of our evening checklist routine at the El Dorado Lodge, it remained out of sight for our tour. [*]

STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER (*Dendroplex picus picirostris*) – With a pale, dagger-like bill, this species was fairly easy to recognize. We saw them mostly in the lowlands at spots like Isla Salamanca.

MONTANE WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger sanctaemartae*) – An attractive woodcreeper with a slender, curved bill, these were seen just a couple of times at higher elevations like the San Lorenzo Station and around El Dorado Lodge. Note the subspecies, an endemic.

STREAKED XENOPS (*Xenops rutilans*) – Tom found one of these just uphill from the eco-tienda and we ended up getting great looks at this tiny Furnariid.

PALE-LEGGED HORNERO (CARIBBEAN) (*Furnarius leucopus longirostris*) – We had glimpses here and there of these walking on the ground in the scrubby habitat around Camarones. This species has many isolated populations within South America and some sources split this out as the Caribbean Hornero.

MONTANE FOLIAGE-GLEANER (*Anabacerthia striaticollis anxia*) – After an initial dearth of sightings, these finally came out of the woodwork during our walk towards the Kogi Huts near the El Dorado Lodge. Typically, these don't overlap much with the following species (which is usually found at lower elevations).

SANTA MARTA FOLIAGE-GLEANER (*Clibanornis rufipectus*) – As the name suggests, this Furnariid is endemic to the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Long considered a subspecies of Ruddy Foliage-gleaner, it wasn't until somewhat recently that it was given full species rank. Tom worked his magic with one below the eco-tienda and we ended up getting pretty decent views for such a secretive species. [E]

FLAMMULATED TREEHUNTER (*Thripadectes flammulatus*) – One of the highlights of our first venture up to the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo was this big, beautiful, and bold treehunter that came out into the open near where we were eating breakfast! This population is quite isolated from the others which are found mostly in Ecuador and elsewhere in Colombia.

STREAK-CAPPED SPINETAIL (*Cranioleuca hellmayri*) – Very nearly endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, there are just a few records from over the border in Venezuela. This *Cranioleuca* spinetail doesn't mind foraging at middle heights which made it somewhat easier to see. We had sightings near the station and the tienda.

YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) – This marsh-loving spinetail was seen very well pre-tour at Isla Salamanca. We heard them the following day elsewhere on Isla Salamanca as well.

PALE-BREASTED SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis albescens*) – This *Synallaxis* spinetail ranges from Costa Rica south well into Argentina. For us, we encountered them in the scrubby habitat on the slopes above Minca one morning, alongside the Lesser Elaenia and Barred Antshrikes.

WHITE-WHISKERED SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis candei*) – A stunning spinetail, this specialty is only found in the lowland scrub of northern Colombia and northwestern Venezuela. We encountered them a few times near Camarones where we caught glimpses of these bright rufous birds, sometimes foraging on the ground.

RUSTY-HEADED SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis fuscorufa*) – Although it doesn't have "Santa Marta" in the name, this secretive spinetail is endemic to the undergrowth there between 2000 and 3000 meters. We got nice looks on our second trip to the ridge when a few of them were seen out in the open. [E]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers).

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – This small flycatcher with a small, bushy crest was seen near the Scaled Piculet nest area above Minca.

WHITE-THROATED TYRANULET (*Mecocerculus leucophrys*) – These active flycatchers were quite common up around the cuchilla where we had point-blank looks at their puffy throats.

YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – A common and noisy species in the lowlands around Isla Salamanca, Minca, and even our hotel in Barranquilla. Their big, two-parted crest is always cool to see flared up.

LESSER ELAENIA (*Elaenia chiriquensis*) – Not a species we often get to enjoy on this tour, this subtly-marked flycatcher was found on the scrubby slopes above Minca, near the Barred Antshrikes.

MOUNTAIN ELAENIA (*Elaenia frantzii*) – On each of our visits to the San Lorenzo Ridge, these round-headed elaenias were fairly common.

OLIVE-STRIPED FLYCATCHER (OLIVE-STRIPED) (*Mionectes olivaceus galbinus*) – Despite seeing a couple of these around the El Dorado Lodge, they never seemed to stick for very long!

OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – Similar to the previous species, the looks at this buffy-bellied species were rather brief.

- GOLDEN-FACED TYRANNULET (COOPMANS'S)** (*Zimmerius chrysops minimus*) – Our final day netted us this little flycatcher as we worked down the mountain. The *Zimmerius* genus is a complicated one and has gone through recent changes. However, this subspecies is still considered part of the Golden-faced complex.
- NORTHERN SCRUB-FLYCATCHER** (*Sublegatus arenarum*) – Patterned like a miniature *Myiarchus*, this species was seen in the scrubby habitat near Camarones on our 2nd day.
- SLENDER-BILLED TYRANNULET** (*Inezia tenuirostris*) – With a restricted distribution of the Guajira Peninsula and neighboring Venezuela, this little flycatcher is a regional specialty. We encountered several of these nondescript tyrannulets in the dry scrub of Camarones.
- PALE-TIPPED TYRANNULET** (*Inezia caudata*) – Only a very brief view of one of these was managed during our morning of birding the scrub around Camarones.
- PALE-EYED PYGMY-TYRANT** (*Atalotriccus pilaris*) – This truly tiny flycatcher was first spotted on our morning walk into Minca.
- PEARLY-VENTED TODY-TYRANT** (*Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer*) – This small, drab flycatcher was seen several times in the scrub around Camarones. It may have been overshadowed by the more colorful Vermilion Cardinals and Oronocan Saltators though!
- BLACK-THROATED TODY-TYRANT** (*Hemitriccus granadensis lehmanni*) – It took a little bit of work but we eventually came across a couple of these along a trail near the El Dorado Lodge. This subspecies, *H. g. lehmanni*, is only found in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.
- OLIVACEOUS FLATBILL** (*Rhynchocyclus olivaceus*) – This was a surprise during our morning walk into the town of Minca! It wasn't very wary! It was perched right next to us for a moment or two.
- YELLOW-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (OCHRE-LORED)** (*Tolmomyias flaviventris aurulentus*) – Seen very nicely during our morning birding the scrub around Camarones. If this species is ever split, this will be part of the northern species, perhaps named Ochre-ored Flatbill. Time will tell.
- CINNAMON FLYCATCHER (SANTA MARTA)** (*Pyrrhomyias cinnamomeus assimilis*) – We encountered one of these just down the road a little from the El Dorado Lodge. This subspecies is endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – This stunning little flycatcher was seen both at the toll booth area and in Camarones on our first two days.
- SANTA MARTA BUSH-TYRANT** (*Myiotheretes pernix*) – This endemic flycatcher played hard to find on this trip but we did manage to hear it a couple of times along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. [E*]
- PIED WATER-TYRANT** (*Fluvicola pica*) – This small but sharply-dressed flycatcher was fairly common around water on Isla Salamanca pre-tour and on our return visit late in the tour.
- WHITE-HEADED MARSH TYRANT** (*Arundinicola leucocephala*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. At times, this attractive little flycatcher was in the same field of view as the previous species! These are found through much of South America and almost always around stagnant water.
- YELLOW-BELLIED CHAT-TYRANT** (*Ochthoeca diadema jesupi*) – A handsome little flycatcher, these were encountered only along the cuchilla on our two visits there, although never common.
- CATTLE TYRANT** (*Machetornis rixosa*) – Common in lowland habitats, these were usually seen foraging on the ground.
- BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA** (*Attila spadiceus*) – Despite being heard many times, this big flycatcher remained hidden for us during our time at the El Dorado Lodge. [*]
- DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – This *Myiarchus* flycatcher preferred the mid-elevation forests in the Santa Martas where we encountered them a couple of times.
- VENEZUELAN FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus venezuelensis*) – The silent flycatcher we found up the road in Minca on our morning walk looked to be a good match for this.
- PANAMA FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus panamensis*) – Our very last birding stop of the tour netted us this big flycatcher from the mangroves at Isla Salamanca.
- GREAT CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus crinitus*) – We heard this familiar species calling from the Las Gaviotas road on our first day. [*]
- BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – This big *Myiarchus* flycatcher, the same species that reaches the southwestern US, was seen in the dry country around Camarones and the Las Gaviotas road.
- GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Common and widespread in the lowlands.
- BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – Our best views came from Minca where we scoped a few of these during our morning walk up to the mirador area.
- RUSTY-MARGINED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes cayanensis*) – Encountered a few times at Las Acacias and in Minca, these were often recognizable by their calls. Otherwise, they are quite similar in appearance to the following species.
- SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*) – Not as common as one might expect on this tour! We encountered them just a few times including at the Las Acacias lunch stop and Isla Salamanca.
- GOLDEN-CROWNED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*) – The evening air at El Dorado Lodge was often filled with the squeaky calls of this big, mountain-loving flycatcher. We eventually saw these very nicely farther downhill near the eco-tienda.
- STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) – Sharing the same genus with the previous species, this big and widespread flycatcher was seen at Las Gaviotas and in Minca.
- TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Abundant at lower elevations on this tour.
- GRAY KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – It was awesome seeing 60+ of these wintering kingbirds at the toll booth stop! We suspect they may have had a communal roost nearby.
- FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*) – One or two of these graceful insect-eaters were mixed in with the kingbirds at the toll booth area during our first visit there.

Cotingidae (Cotingas)

GOLDEN-BREASTED FRUITEATER (*Pipreola aureopectus*) – This green-and-yellow species is endemic to Colombia and Venezuela where they inhabit montane forests. Lucky for us, we eventually caught sight of a couple on the Kogi Huts trail at the El Dorado Lodge. Their habit of sitting still for long periods of time made finding it a challenge though!

Pipridae (Manakins)

LANCE-TAILED MANAKIN (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) – This fascinating species was present along the Las Gaviotas trail during the detour on our first day and, although we all heard them well, only a few folks caught a glimpse here and there, back in the forest.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

MASKED TITYRA (*Tityra semifasciata*) – Only a couple of these were seen on tour including one at the Las Acacias lunch stop on our first day.

CINNAMON BECARD (*Pachyrhamphus cinnamomeus*) – This plainly-colored becard is found from Mexico south into Ecuador. For us, we had a few in Minca during our morning walk there.

WHITE-WINGED BECARD (*Pachyrhamphus polychopterus*) – This was a surprise! A male was found along the Las Gaviotas road during the detour on our first day.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BROWN-CAPPED VIREO (*Vireo leucophrys*) – With a plumage very similar to Warbling Vireo that folks are familiar with from farther north, this somewhat bland species was spotted a few times: first by the El Dorado Lodge and then again down near the eco-tienda.

RED-EYED VIREO (*Vireo olivaceus*) – We heard, and then distantly saw this bird up in the canopy on our third day. Now that Chivi Vireo has been split from Red-eyed, it's less clear what species this particular bird was.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

BLACK-CHESTED JAY (*Cyanocorax affinis*) – A colorful and common species right around the El Dorado Lodge.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – A few of these swallows were flying high over the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo during our visits there.

SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – A fairly plain swallow with a pale rump, these were spotted a couple of times near Minca.

GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*) – We weren't able to spend a lot of time around this species but we did cross paths with a few in Camarones near our lunch stop.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (SOUTHERN) (*Troglodytes aedon musculus*) – We found a number of these little wrens at various spots, most often in the lowlands of Isla Salamanca, Camarones, and up to Minca. Technically, this is still treated as the same species as the House Wrens we have up north.

STRIPE-BACKED WREN (*Campylorhynchus nuchalis*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This bold and streaked wren was common along our pre-tour walk on Isla Salamanca. This species is only found in northern Colombia and Venezuela.

BICOLORED WREN (*Campylorhynchus griseus*) – This big wren happens to be one of the largest wrens in the world. These ended up being fairly common in the low and mid-elevations on tour and their rich, bold song was commonplace.

RUFOUS-BREASTED WREN (*Pheugopedius rutilus*) – A vine-loving wren, we had several looks as a couple of these were seen scrambling up the shady recesses of roadside tangles.

RUFOUS-AND-WHITE WREN (*Thryophilus rufalbus*) – Although sometimes easy to hear, this attractive wren can be difficult to see. In the end, we did manage a brief look at one high in a tangle but some flyover King Vultures distracted us at that point!

BUFF-BREASTED WREN (*Cantorchilus leucotis*) – Because we don't spend much time in the lowland forests on this itinerary, this species is often missed. However, the detour on the first day sent us exploring the Las Gaviotas road where a couple of these secretive wrens were calling.

GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (BANGSI) (*Henicorhina leucophrys bangsi*) – Up until recently, there were two subspecies of this wide-ranging wren present in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. However, a recent change has split one of them into its own species (see the following species). The other, this "Bang's" Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, which is also endemic, remains part of Gray-breasted for now. These were present right around the El Dorado Lodge and we saw them repeatedly at the compost pile and along the road.

HERMIT WOOD-WREN (*Henicorhina anachoreta*) – Now elevated to a full species status, these are endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Found at elevations typically higher than the previous species, they were encountered a few times along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. [E]

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)

TROPICAL GNATCATCHER (PLUMBICEPS/ANTEOCULARIS) (*Poliptila plumbea plumbiceps*) – This wide-ranging insect-eater was spied a few times at spots like Camarones and the toll booth area.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – A gifted songster... and a gifted escape artist! These can be difficult to see but a few in our group got lucky and had a glimpse of one near the eco-tienda that Angel's family owned.

SLATY-BACKED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus fuscater*) – This attractive thrush attended the compost pile at El Dorado Lodge once or twice but was never common.

PALE-BREASTED THRUSH (*Turdus leucomelas*) – Fairly common in the mid-elevation forests around Minca. Similar to Clay-colored Thrush, note that these have a darker bill.

YELLOW-LEGGED THRUSH (*Turdus flavipes*) – Found in the forests above Minca, this is a rather attractive species that is the same size and shape of the robins we know from back home. The yellow legs, eyering, and bill really stood out!

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Our only sighting of this species was near the hotel before the tour began.

BLACK-HOODED THRUSH (*Turdus olivater*) – Perhaps the most common of the thrushes right around the El Dorado Lodge, these were seen various times, often high up but right from the road. The majority of the distribution of this attractive thrush is in Venezuela.

GREAT THRUSH (*Turdus fuscater cacozelus*) – We encountered this lovely, huge thrush during our time up along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. In fact, this is the largest *Turdus* thrush species in the world.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus gilvus*) – The only spot we encountered these long-tailed mimics was near the town of Camarones on the Guajira Peninsula.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

BLUE-NAPED CHLOROPHONIA (*Chlorophonia cyanea*) – A gorgeous species that was, thankfully, rather common right around the El Dorado Lodge! At times, several of these would gather at the fruit feeder to feed on the bananas.

- TRINIDAD EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia trinitatis*) – We encountered these a few times early on in the tour including at spots like the Universidad del Norte, the Las Gaviotas road, and the toll booth area.
- THICK-BILLED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia laniirostris*) – A fruiting tree in Minca attracted a whole swarm of these euphonias! Unlike the previous species, the yellow on the breast of this one extends all the way up the throat and reaches the bill.
- LESSER GOLDFINCH** (*Spinus psaltria*) – Rather scarce on this trip, only one of these was spotted along a roadside as we birded our way up the road towards the El Dorado Lodge.

Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)

- BLACK-STRIPED SPARROW** (*Arremonops conirostris*) – We were able to lure one of these out of a grassy area in Minca during our morning walk. Note that this shares the genus with the following specialty as well.
- TOCUYO SPARROW** (*Arremonops tocuensis*) – With a very restricted distribution of the Guajira Peninsula and a little bit of neighboring Venezuela, this sparrow is often one of the most sought-after specialties of the region. Although they can be devilishly tricky to see, we had great luck with one in the dry scrub near Camarones.
- SIERRA NEVADA BRUSHFINCH** (*Arremon basilicus*) – Formerly part of the Stripe-headed Brushfinch complex, this now-endemic was eventually seen by everyone at the cracked corn feeder at the El Dorado Lodge. [E]
- GOLDEN-WINGED SPARROW** (*Arremon schlegeli*) – This beautiful species was seen uphill from Minca on our final day. These are very restricted in distribution; they're found only in northern Colombia and Venezuela.
- RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – Not abundant on this tour, only a few were seen including some at the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo.
- SANTA MARTA BRUSHFINCH** (*Atlapetes melanocephalus*) – Seeing endemics is always fun... and then there are the endemics that are downright common! This species of brushfinch was seen daily during our time at the El Dorado Lodge. The ones up along the cuchilla were quite tame as well; methinks they've been fed! [E]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

- CRESTED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – Fairly common during our time in Minca and the El Dorado Lodge. On our drive up the mountain, we paused to check out their long, pendulous nests.
- YELLOW-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus chrysater*) – We found a couple of these attractive orioles on our final day of birding as we worked our way down the mountain.
- YELLOW ORIOLE** (*Icterus nigrogularis*) – Common resident in the lowlands around Barranquilla, Isla Salamanca, and Camarones.
- BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – This is a wintering species in Colombia and we had fairly good luck finding several of these during the first half of our trip.
- SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – We ended up with decent numbers of these at Las Acacias during our lunch stop, and then again in Camarones.
- GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Common in the lowlands around Barranquilla, Isla Salamanca, and Camarones.
- CARIB GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus lugubris*) – With a much shorter tail than the previous species, it wasn't too difficult telling these apart. These were common in the lowland areas.
- YELLOW-HOODED BLACKBIRD** (*Chrysomus icterocephalus*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Our walk on Isla Salamanca before the tour netted this nicely-marked blackbird. Not to be confused with the Yellow-headed Blackbird from farther north, there is no range overlap.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – This wintering warbler was seen at the Las Acacias lunch stop on our first day.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – We saw this familiar warbler every day that we were up around the El Dorado Lodge.
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** (*Protonotaria citrea*) – A beautiful favorite of many birders, this bright warbler was fairly common in the lowland mangrove areas on Isla Salamanca.
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Oreothlypis peregrina*) – This subtly-marked warbler was seen several times, sometimes at fruit feeders like at Angel's family's eco-tienda.
- AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – We bumped into these at various spots in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, mostly between Minca and the El Dorado Lodge.
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) – Our most common warbler during our time at elevation, these were seen every day around El Dorado Lodge, the road system near there, and the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. We even got to watch one glean insects from the lodge windows one morning!
- YELLOW WARBLER (NORTHERN)** (*Setophaga petechia aestiva*) – This familiar warbler was seen several times but always down in the lower elevations at spots like Isla Salamanca, Las Gaviotas, and Minca.
- RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus rufifrons*) – A bright and handsome little tropical warbler, these were seen a couple of times on the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta at spots like Minca.
- SANTA MARTA WARBLER** (*Myiothlypis basilica*) – Sometimes a tricky endemic to find, we had great luck right off the bat on our first visit to the cuchilla. We had to be quick though, it didn't stay in view for very long! [E]
- WHITE-LORED WARBLER** (*Myiothlypis conspicillata*) – This warbler, also an endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, was seen very well right around our lodge, sometimes flitting across the paths to our rooms! They were especially fond of gleaning insects from near the compost pile. [E]
- SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus*) – Fairly common in the forests around the El Dorado Lodge and elsewhere at elevation.
- YELLOW-CROWNED REDSTART** (*Myioborus flavivertex*) – Only found between 2000 and 3000 meters in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, this attractive endemic was seen nicely during our visits to the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. [E]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

- SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – A couple of these red, wintering birds were found on our final day as we birded our way down the mountain.
- VERMILION CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis phoeniceus*) – This vivid specialty is only found in the Guajira Peninsula and a few other pockets in northern Venezuela. We found both males and females on our morning walk through the dry scrub around Camarones. The numbers of this brilliant red species have been in decline, often due to the illegal pet trade.

- GOLDEN GROSBEEK** (*Pheucticus chrysogaster*) – Singing high above us near the San Lorenzo Station, the call notes of this attractive grosbeak really reminded us of the following species! The Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is the farthest north that this species reaches.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEEK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – A wintering species in Colombia, a few of these were spotted on our tour down below the eco-tienda on our final day.
- BLUE-BLACK GROSBEEK** (*Cyanoloxia cyanoides*) – The Las Gaviotas road in the lowlands yielded a single female on our first day.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

- GRAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Eucometis penicillata*) – One of these popped up into view as we birded downhill towards Minca on our last day. It was quick though and not everyone had a chance to get on it.
- WHITE-LINED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – The males and females are very different looking! The males are a deep, dark, glossy black but the females are a rufous brown. We encountered a couple of pairs of these downhill from El Dorado Lodge on our final day.
- CRIMSON-BACKED TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*) – A lovely species that was common for us at lower elevations.
- BLACK-CHEEKED MOUNTAIN-TANAGER** (*Anisognathus melanogenys*) – Sometimes known as the "Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager", this beautiful bird is found no where else on the planet. Lucky for us, we encountered them several times up along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo on each of our visits there. [E]
- BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – Fairly common in the lowlands and up to around Minca where they were sometimes seen eating fruit.
- GLAUCOUS TANAGER** (*Thraupis glaucocolpa*) – This tanager, being rather similar to the previous species, might get overlooked to some degree along our route. Favoring the dry scrubby habitat around Camarones and the Guajira Peninsula, our only encounter was from the toll booth area on our return. This species is endemic to the arid Caribbean Coast of Colombia and Venezuela and is thus a bit of a specialty.
- PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Seen on our first day and then again around Minca where they were feeding among the euphonias and other tanagers.
- BLACK-HEADED TANAGER** (*Tangara cyanoptera*) – We eventually caught up to a female and then a male on our final day. They were skittish though and didn't perch out for long.
- BLACK-CAPPED TANAGER** (*Tangara heinei*) – A beautiful tanager of the forests around the El Dorado Lodge. Showing up at the feeders there from time to time, they were fairly common although sometimes hard to see.
- BAY-HEADED TANAGER** (*Tangara gyrola*) – We all had great views of this attractive tanager during our time in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. On our final day, a couple of these popped out along the road at eye level!
- SWALLOW TANAGER** (*Tersina viridis*) – Fairly common in the mountains but usually along the lower elevations around Minca.
- BICOLORED CONEBILL** (*Conirostrum bicolor*) – Our final stop of the trip netted this local mangrove specialist! After being thwarted on our first day, it was well worth stopping in there again on our final day to catch up with this target.
- BLACK FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa humeralis nocticolor*) – The only spots we encountered this flowerpiercer, one that prefers higher elevations, was at the San Lorenzo Ridge and the San Lorenzo Station.
- WHITE-SIDED FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa albilatera*) – A bit more of a generalist compared to the previous species, these were encountered at a wide range of elevations in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. From the downhill tienda, to the lodge grounds at El Dorado, to the San Lorenzo Ridge, these were the most common of the flowerpiercers.
- RUSTY FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa sittoides*) – The flowers by Angel's family's eco-tienda were quite reliable for this species.
- PLUSHCAP** (*Catamblyrhynchus diadema*) – Hiding in the bamboo up along the cuchilla, one of these called a few times while we were working on Rufous Antpitta and Hermit Wood-Wren. [*]
- SAFFRON FINCH** (*Sicalis flaveola*) – A friendly duo of these attractive tanagers (yes, they're technically tanagers) met us out front of our Barranquilla hotel one morning!
- BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT** (*Volatinia jacarina*) – Our only encounter with this species was a female on our morning walk through Minca.
- GRAY SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila intermedia*) – Perched higher than any seedeater I've ever seen, one of these posed nicely along the Las Gaviotas Road on our first day in the lowlands.
- PARAMO SEEDEATER** (*Catamenia homochroa oreophila*) – This mostly-gray seedeater was seen very nicely in the morning light up along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. This subspecies, which is endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, may warrant full species status. Stay tuned.
- PILEATED FINCH** (*Coryphospingus pileatus*) – Although mostly a dull grayish color, these interesting tanagers have a bright red crest that is usually concealed. We encountered these in the dry country around Camarones a few times.
- BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – This widespread species was seen among flowers, usually in the lowlands and up to Minca.
- DULL-COLORED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris obscurus*) – A very dull-colored bird indeed! Only a few folks had a quick glimpse of this species on the lower slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta on our final day.
- BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris bicolor*) – A couple of these were spotted near one of the waterholes we visited near Camarones. Turns out, that was the only spot we encountered these little tanagers.
- BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR** (*Saltator maximus*) – The only spot we saw these was in Minca during our morning walk.
- ORINOCAN SALTATOR** (*Saltator orinocensis*) – This was outstanding. This beautiful saltator is a specialty on this itinerary; they're found in just a sliver of Colombia and in neighboring Venezuela. The ones we encountered in Camarones put on a great show.
- GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – Fairly common in the lowlands of Barranquilla, Isla Salamanca, and up to Minca.
- STREAKED SALTATOR** (*Saltator striatipectus*) – We encountered this species just once, near the Scaled Piculet nest uphill from Minca. Saltators were long thought to be close relatives of cardinals. However, it turns out that they are large-billed tanagers instead.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

- HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) – This was a bit of an odd bird to get excited about! We saw a couple at our lunch spot in Camarones. Turns out, that little town has been hosting these for a little while now and it's the only spot on our tour where we've ever seen them.

MAMMALS

- GRAY-HANDED NIGHT MONKEY** (*Aotus griseimembra*) – These nocturnal monkeys are reliable at the El Dorado Lodge on a nightly basis.

RED HOWLER MONKEY (*Alouatta seniculus*) – Although they're usually heard-only, we were lucky to actually see these! It was said that the local weather had pushed them higher up than normal.

RED-TAILED SQUIRREL (*Sciurus granatensis*) – Seen daily during our time in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. Additionally, we saw one near the hotel in Barranquilla that looked exceptionally bright!

CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – One or two of these made a couple of passes through the El Dorado Lodge grounds, sometimes visiting the compost pile, sometimes walking right past us on the benches.

Herps

GREEN IGUANA (*Iguana iguana*) – A few of these were spotted pre-tour and on our final day on Isla Salamanca.

RAINBOW WHIPTAIL (*Cnemidophorus lemniscatus*) – This colorful lizard was seen near Minca on our third day.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 283 bird taxa and 4 mammal taxa