



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Colombia: Santa Marta Escape 2020**

Feb 22, 2020 to Mar 1, 2020

Cory Gregory & Roger Rodriguez Ardila

*For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).*



*Voted as one of the highlights of the Santa Marta Escape tour, this attractive Golden-winged Sparrow was one of 315+ species we tallied on this short, one-week tour to northern Colombia. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.*

In looking back on this trip, it's sometimes hard to believe that all the biodiversity, fantastic scenery, and fun birding that we had on the Santa Marta Escape tour can be found just a couple of hours away from the US! A quick flight from Miami and we were immediately surrounded by the hustle and bustle of Brown-throated Parakeets, Red-crowned Woodpeckers, and Cattle Tyrants right at our downtown hotel! It's true though, and this quick "escape" tour was packed with specialties and endemics found nowhere else on the planet. In a quick week of birding, we tallied 315+ species, which is just incredible! Fresh in our memories are sunrises at the San Lorenzo Ridge, watching quetzals attending a nest, having lunch on the beach with some parrotlets, hearing the mysterious squeal of Stygian Owl from the inky darkness, gasping at a Golden-green Woodpecker that swooped in, having dozens of hummingbirds at arm's reach, flocks of Military Macaws lifting off, the predawn wailing of guans, and the list just goes on.

The adventure for some of us started with a pre-tour outing to the nearby Palermo area. Right off the bat we were awarded with specialties like Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird (!), Northern Screamer, Russet-throated Puffbird, Blue-winged Parrotlet, and Spot-breasted Woodpecker. When the tour started in earnest the next morning, we were lucky to track down the Colombian endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca at the university and Pied Puffbird, Yellow-chinned Spinetail, Golden-green Woodpecker, Panama Flycatcher, and Bicolored Conebills at Isla Salamanca. The Las Gaviotas area also produced some great birding and we added White-necked Puffbird, Ruby-topaz Hummingbird, Lance-tailed Manakin, and Golden-fronted Greenlet.

The dry country around Camarones is a unique part of South America and the birding there can be very rewarding. Because Venezuela is less visited these days, the Guajira Peninsula holds the key to a number of fascinating and range-restricted species. Our time there was spent studying specialties like Tocuyo Sparrow, Vermilion Cardinal, Orinoco Saltator, White-whiskered Spinetail, Buffy Hummingbird, Chestnut Piculet, White-fringed Antwren, Glaucous Tanager, Green-rumped Parrotlet, Double-striped Thick-knee, and even an awesome Crane Hawk!

Minca, a bustling little town sitting at about 2100' in elevation, put us in a great altitudinal range for new hummingbirds and a wealth of new specialties. Our lodge balcony was swarming with hummingbirds, and before long we all were familiar with the fieldmarks of Steely-vented Hummingbird, White-vented Plumeleteer, Black-throated Mango, White-necked Jacobin, Pale-bellied Hermit, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird. It was also near Minca that we enjoyed a huge flock of Military Macaws, Whooping Motmots sitting quietly, Long-billed Gnatwren, Pale-breasted Thrush, and a variety of flycatchers, honeycreepers, and tanagers. Just uphill from Minca, the shrubby bamboo revealed a drop-dead gorgeous species and one of our favorites, the Golden-winged Sparrow. Wow! Some new endemics showed themselves as well, like the Santa Marta Antbird.

The main star of the show, in terms of lodging, was our fantastic home for 4 nights, the El Dorado Lodge nestled high in the remote mountains of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. At a comfortable 6200' in elevation, the weather was comfortable, the dawns crisp, and the hummingbird feeders were

alive with a wealth of new species. Among the throngs of Crowned Woodnymphs and Lesser Violetears were Brown Violetears, Sparkling Violetears, White-tailed Starfrontlet, and even a Lazuline Sabrewing. In addition to the hummingbirds, the lodge was alive with Band-tailed Guans, Gray-breasted Wood-Wrens, Crested Oropendolas, White-sided Flowerpiercers, Black-chested Jays, and even a nesting pair of White-tipped Quetzals. We didn't have to venture far to track down some rare and endemic hummingbirds like the Santa Marta Woodstar and Santa Marta Blossomcrown; both gave us great shows! Meanwhile, Plumbeous Kites zoomed overhead, a pair of Masked Trogons sat quietly, and a Strong-billed Woodcreeper called to us at dusk every evening.

One of our favorite spots of the trip awaited us at about 8000' feet. The slow predawn climb via 4x4 took us to a hard-to-reach but magical ridge where most of what we saw were regional specialties! The sun crested over the distant 19,000' peaks, the tallest in Colombia, as we started adding endemics fast and furiously. Santa Marta Parakeets wheeled in, Santa Marta Warblers popped up briefly, Black-cheeked Mountain-Tanagers chased each other, and even a Brown-rumped Tapaculo showed itself. Our exploration of the San Lorenzo Ridge netted us more prizes like Hermit Wood-Wren, Paramo Seed-eater, Yellow-crowned Redstart, Tyrian Metaltail, Scarlet-fronted Parakeet, and even the rare Plushcap. If you had a chance to look up from the birding, you were no doubt struck by the beautiful vista, one of my all-time favorites.

I want to personally thank you for joining our trip to northern Colombia. A fun group of well-prepped birders made this trip a breeze, and having Roger along as our local expert was a blast. Many thanks to Roger, an outstanding and fun companion!! A huge thanks goes to Tina in Austin, who made all the arrangements and had everything nicely under control. Again, many thanks to you all and I hope to get to bird with you again someday soon.

Cheers!

-- 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)

**LITTLE TINAMOU** (*Crypturellus soui*) – One of these secretive guys was heard on our first day. However, it remained out of sight. [\*]

#### Anhimidae (Screamers)

**NORTHERN SCREAMER** (*Chauna chavaria*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Our half-day trip to the Palermo KM 4 area netted us this awesome, near-endemic. A big thanks to the local resident who came and got us for this highlight.

#### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna autumnalis*) – A couple groups of these big, odd ducks were seen at the waterholes near Camarones on our 2nd day.

**FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Right about the time we were leaving the Palermo area, huge flocks of these were seen flying over. Granted, it was hard to see much detail on them at that distance.

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Spatula discors*) – Some of these wintering dabblers were seen in the waterholes near Camarones. [b]

#### Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

**CHESTNUT-WINGED CHACHALACA** (*Ortalis garrula*) – Our predawn trip to the Universidad del Norte paid off when we encountered this endemic chachalaca. The songs of this species are unusually melodic! [E]

**RUFOUS-VENTED CHACHALACA (RUFOUS-VENTED)** (*Ortalis ruficauda ruficrissa*) – Although not endemic, this is a local chachalaca that can be very hard to find in the dry country of northern Colombia. We encountered one at the "magic" toll booth! Turns out, that would be our only sighting of this range-restricted species.

**BAND-TAILED GUAN** (*Penelope argyrotis*) – For being rather range-restricted (they're found only in Colombia and Venezuela), these were fairly common around the El Dorado Lodge.

**SICKLE-WINGED GUAN** (*Chamaepetes goudotii sanctaemarthae*) – These were seen around the El Dorado Lodge and often farther uphill. This species is found from Peru north into Colombia. However, the subspecies in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is separated geographically.

#### Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

**CRESTED BOBWHITE** (*Colinus cristatus*) – Thanks to John for spotting these! These sneaky guys were seen scurrying through the dry scrub near Camarones.

**BLACK-FRONTED WOOD-QUAIL** (*Odontophorus atrifrons*) – This sneaky species remained quite sneaky! We heard them singing once but off in the distance. [\*]

#### Phoenicopteridae (Flamingos)

**AMERICAN FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopeterus ruber*) – It was WAY out in the lagoon at Camarones but we could tell it was in fact a flamingo... barely.

#### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Seen in urban areas. [I]

**PALE-VENTED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – This is a lowland species that we spied on our second day.

**SCALED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas speciosa*) – For being "just a pigeon", this species is actually quite a stunner! We had scope views of these perched up in a tree downhill from the El Dorado Lodge.

**BARE-EYED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas corensis*) – This distinctive pigeon is found only along the Caribbean coast of Venezuela and Colombia. We had good looks at the toll both en route to the dry country around Camarones.

**BAND-TAILED PIGEON (WHITE-NECKED)** (*Patagioenas fasciata albilinea*) – This montane species was seen nicely up along the San Lorenzo Ridge on each of our visits.

- COMMON GROUND DOVE** (*Columbina passerina*) – A common resident of lowland habitats that we encountered during our first couple of days.
- RUDDY GROUND DOVE** (*Columbina talpacoti*) – Like the previous species, these were common for us around Palermo, Isla Salamanca, and the dry country around Camarones.
- SCALED DOVE** (*Columbina squammata*) – Although not a ground dove by name, note the genus. This small and scaly-looking species might have reminded you of the Inca Doves from farther north.
- WHITE-TIPPED DOVE** (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – A common but somewhat sneaky resident throughout our trip. The low-pitched song, which sounds like someone blowing over the mouth of a bottle, was a common sound around El Dorado.
- LINED QUAIL-DOVE** (*Zenytgon linearis*) – Sneaky as always, this sought-after species was seen at the compost pile by a few folks and then up the road from the lodge.

*Cuculidae (Cuckoos)*

- SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) – This cuckoo, an all black denizen of grassy areas, was seen a couple of times, including at the Las Acacias Restaurant and a few other spots in the lowlands.
- GROOVE-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga sulcirostris*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. We had good looks at the bill of this similar species in the Palermo area.
- SQUIRREL CUCKOO** (*Piaya cayana*) – This big, ruddy-colored cuckoo was seen at Isla Salamanca on our first day where a duo was scampering through the trees.

*Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)*

- BAND-WINGED NIGHTJAR** (*Systellura longirostris*) – A few lucky folks in the first vehicle got glimpses of this species during our pre-dawn climb up to the San Lorenzo Ridge.

*Apodidae (Swifts)*

- WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT** (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – This big and common tropical swift was spied overhead from the San Lorenzo Station and again down below El Dorado Lodge.

*Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)*

- WHITE-NECKED JACOBIN** (*Florisuga mellivora*) – A common and flashy hummingbird we enjoyed at the Minca feeders.
- RUFOUS-BREASTED HERMIT** (*Glaucis hirsutus*) – Some folks had a glimpse of this hummingbird on our final day of the tour.
- LONG-BILLED HERMIT (CENTRAL AMERICAN)** (*Phaethornis longirostris susurrus*) – We had a big hermit on the slopes below El Dorado Lodge that looked to be this fairly common species. Later on, our pictures confirmed this.
- PALE-BELLIED HERMIT** (*Phaethornis anthophilus*) – A couple of these were visiting the feeders in Minca during our visits there.
- BROWN VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri delphinae*) – A common and yet underappreciated hummingbird at the feeders at El Dorado Lodge.
- LESSER VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri cyanotus*) – This mostly-green hummingbird was abundant at the feeders at the El Dorado Lodge. This was part of the former species known as Green Violetear.
- SPARKLING VIOLETEAR** (*Colibri coruscans*) – Although outnumbered by the previous two species, this violetear was also present at the El Dorado feeders.
- RUBY-TOPAZ HUMMINGBIRD** (*Chrysolampis mosquitus*) – This was a great surprise during our brief outing at Las Gaviotas on our first day. Although this female was perched atop a dead snag quite high up, I think everyone saw it decently well.
- BLACK-THROATED MANGO** (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) – This species, which is actually the most widespread mango, was spotted at the Minca feeders during our first visit there. However, it was greatly outnumbered by the other half dozen hummingbird species.
- TYRIAN METALTAIL (SANTA MARTA)** (*Metallura tyrianthina districta*) – This little hummingbird, found mostly along the slopes of the Andes, varies quite a bit geographically. For example, the subspecies we saw is endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and has a cobalt-blue tail instead of the widespread subspecies that has a coppery color.
- WHITE-TAILED STARFRONTLET** (*Coeligena phalerata*) – This flashy endemic was seen nicely at the feeders at the El Dorado Lodge a few times. This can be a tricky endemic to find sometimes and so we were lucky to have one appear there. [E]
- MOUNTAIN VELVETBREAST** (*Lafresnaya lafresnayi*) – This mostly-Andean hummingbird ranges south through Peru. For us, our only encounter was at the San Lorenzo Station toward the end of the tour.
- LONG-BILLED STARTHROAT** (*Heliomaster longirostris*) – This is an uncommon hummer for this tour and so it was a treat to see the one perched high above us at Las Gaviotas on our first day.
- SANTA MARTA WOODSTAR** (*Chaetocercus astreans*) – This tiny, bee-like hummingbird is found only in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. For us, we had great, extended looks at some at flowering bushes downhill from the El Dorado Lodge. [E]
- COPPERY EMERALD** (*Chlorostilbon russatus*) – Although not technically endemic to Colombia, this tiny hummer is extremely range-restricted and it's always a specialty we seek. We had good luck at the flowering bushes downhill from the El Dorado Lodge.
- SANTA MARTA BLOSSOMCROWN** (*Anthocephala floriceps*) – This endemic is another major specialty we look for on this tour. We waited for a little bit before one of these came in but then it just got ridiculous when a male came and foraged around us, sometimes at arm's reach. Fantastic! [E]
- LAZULINE SABREWING** (*Campylopterus falcatus*) – This is a tough species to find in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and getting to see the male at the El Dorado feeders a couple of times was a major highlight for some.
- WHITE-VENTED PLUMELETEER** (*Chalybura buffonii*) – This stocky hummingbird was common at the Minca feeders.
- CROWNED WOODNYMPH (COLOMBIAN VIOLET-CROWNED)** (*Thalurania colombica colombica*) – A drop-dead gorgeous hummingbird that we were lucky to have be abundant at the El Dorado Lodge. It was invigorating to have swarms of these feeding around us on a daily basis.
- BUFFY HUMMINGBIRD** (*Leucippus fallax*) – A dry-country specialist found only in a tiny area of Colombia and Venezuela. We had no trouble finding these thanks to a wonderful feeder setup near Camarones.
- STEELY-VENTED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia saucerottei*) – These tiny powerhouses were abundant at the Minca feeders where they were the smallest species present.
- RUFOUS-TAILED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Amazilia tzacatl*) – Abundant and widespread in the lower-mid elevations. We had plenty of good looks in Minca.
- SAPPHIRE-BELLIED HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lepidopyga lilliae*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This hummingbird still seems shrouded in mystery. Extremely rare and local, it appears to be endemic to a small area of coastal Colombia. Although it's not very well known, we did encounter one near the start of our Palermo birding half-day. What will future research tell us about these? Are they a subspecies or morph of Sapphire-throated? Time will tell. [E]

**SHINING-GREEN HUMMINGBIRD** (*Lepidopyga goudoti*) – Found only in Colombia and a little bit of Venezuela, this hummingbird was another bonus from our Las Gaviotas stop.

*Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)*

**SORA** (*Porzana carolina*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. One of these rails called a few times from the cattail marshes of our KM 4 birding around Palermo. [\*]

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*) – This species, which is in the rail family, was spotted in the big waterhole birding spot near Camarones during our full morning there.

**PURPLE GALLINULE** (*Porphyrio martinica*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. These were fairly common in one of the marshes in Palermo during our pre-tour half day birding.

*Aramidae (Limpkin)*

**LIMPKIN** (*Aramus guarauna*) – A fairly common snail-eating specialist that we encountered in a couple of the wetlands around Camarones.

*Burhinidae (Thick-knees)*

**DOUBLE-STRIPED THICK-KNEE** (*Burhinus bistriatus*) – This big and odd shorebird was tallied a few times in the dry-country near Camarones.

*Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)*

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – This lanky, black-and-white shorebird was tallied several times around the lagoons and waterholes near Camarones.

*Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)*

**BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – We stopped briefly along the cienega and found these big plovers posing out on the mudflats. [b]

**SOUTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus chilensis*) – This attractive wader, which is related to the plovers, was spotted a few times at the lagoons around Camarones.

**WILSON'S PLOVER** (*Charadrius wilsonia*) – A few stops along the cienega and the big lagoon in Camarones provided scope views of this big-billed plover.

**SEMIPALMATED PLOVER** (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – This migrant species will continue migrating north where it will breed in the arctic. We saw them a few times along the cienega and in Camarones. [b]

*Jacanidae (Jacanas)*

**WATTLED JACANA** (*Jacana jacana*) – About a dozen of these long-toed marsh dwellers were seen in the big waterhole near Camarones.

*Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)*

**RUDDY TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) – Although they weren't in their finest plumages yet, this familiar shorebird was spotted a few times on tour, including one at the big lagoon in Camarones. [b]

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – This pale sandpiper was scoped from a stop along the cienega on our final day. [b]

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – Wherever there was shorebird habitat, this tiny peep was usually present. [b]

**SEMIPALMATED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris pusilla*) – This peep, with its black legs, was found and scoped along the cienega on our final tour day.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – A fairly common sandpiper with a distinctive habit of bobbing its back end. We saw them at Isla Salamanca and the big lagoon in Camarones. [b]

**SOLITARY SANDPIPER** (*Tringa solitaria*) – A few of this small *Tringa* were seen at wet habitats near the cienega and around Camarones. [b]

**GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) – At least a few of these sturdy *Tringas* were spotted near Camarones. [b]

**WILLET** (*Tringa semipalmata*) – This big *Tringa* was scoped nicely along the cienega where we also saw their distinctive wing patterning in flight.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – This slender shorebird was spotted along the cienega during our drive back to Barranquilla. [b]

*Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)*

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Fairly common but only along the oceanside shoreline.

**LARGE-BILLED TERN** (*Phaetusa simplex*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A couple of these big terns flew overhead during our pre-tour birding near Palermo.

**CASPIAN TERN** (*Hydroprogne caspia*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. The largest species of tern in the world, these big guys were seen pre-tour where their big orange bills made them obvious. [b]

**ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – These were seen the best on our final day when we scoped several large roosting flocks along the cienega. [b]

*Ciconiidae (Storks)*

**WOOD STORK** (*Mycteria americana*) – We spotted one of these flying overhead from the toll booth area, which seemed like an odd place to see this large wading bird.

*Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)*

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata magnificens*) – Fairly common along the oceanside shoreline at the start of our tour.

*Anhingidae (Anhingas)*

**ANHINGA** (*Anhinga anhinga*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. One of these was seen soaring way overhead while we were walking out along the levee on our pre-tour outing.

*Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)*

**NEOTROPIC CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*) – This species of cormorant, the only one we expect on this tour, was seen lining power lines and some bridges in the lowlands.

*Pelecanidae (Pelicans)*

**BROWN PELICAN** (*Pelecanus occidentalis*) – This huge saltwater species was often seen gliding over the water during our time along the oceanic shoreline.

*Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)*

**LEAST BITTERN** (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Although they may not be particularly uncommon, to actually find and SEE this tiny heron always seems like a miracle. We found two of these along the levee pre-tour.

**BARE-THROATED TIGER-HERON** (*Tigrisoma mexicanum*) – Our tour got off to a great start with a sighting of this sometimes-sneaky heron up in a tree at Isla Salamanca!

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) – This big and familiar heron is only a wintering species here. [b]

**COCOI HERON** (*Ardea cocoi*) – This big, pale heron was seen before the tour and then again near the thick-knee spot, although that bird was only in flight.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – This familiar egret was seen commonly in wet habitats.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – A smaller but familiar egret, these were also seen in the lagoons around Camarones.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – Although not abundant, this heron was seen nicely near Camarones. It was a young one and so was in its all-white plumage.

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – One of these slender herons was seen in the big lagoon near Camarones on our 2nd day.

**REDDISH EGRET** (*Egretta rufescens*) – This fairly uncommon heron is hard-to-find in Colombia. For us, we spotted one in Camarones.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – This familiar egret was common during the first two days in grassy habitats in the lowlands.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A couple folks had a look at this uncommon wintering heron. [b]

**STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striata*) – This is a close relative of the Green Heron that we're so familiar with. This small species showed up a couple of times early in the tour at spots like Palermo and Isla Salamanca.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – At least one of these was sitting quietly on the edge of the big waterhole in Camarones during our full morning there.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – Similar to the previous species, this night-heron was seen near the big waterhole in Camarones.

*Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)*

**WHITE IBIS** (*Eudocimus albus*) – Fairly common in the lagoon in Camarones.

**SCARLET IBIS** (*Eudocimus ruber*) – At least a couple of the red ibis we saw were probably pure Scarlet Ibis! We did, however, see a wide variety of shades of pink indicating rampant hybridization here between this and the previous species.

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A few of these were seen in the Palermo area before the tour officially began.

**BARE-FACED IBIS** (*Phimosus infuscatus*) – This odd ibis has much shorter legs than other ibis species, which gives it a very strange look in flight. We encountered these early in the tour at spots like Palermo, Isla Salamanca, and around Camarones.

**ROSEATE SPOONBILL** (*Platalea ajaja*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. A few of these gorgeous waders were seen in one of the wetlands we birded at pre-tour.

*Cathartidae (New World Vultures)*

**KING VULTURE** (*Sarcorampus papa*) – A couple of these big beauties were seen soaring through one of the gaps at the San Lorenzo Station.

**BLACK VULTURE** (*Coragyps atratus*) – Common and tallied most days.

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Abundant and tallied every day of tour.

**LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE** (*Cathartes burrovianus*) – This lowland, marsh specialty was spotted pre-tour and then again overhead at Isla Salamanca the following morning.

*Pandionidae (Osprey)*

**OSPREY** (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Only a couple of these fish-eating raptors were spotted on tour: near Camarones and another migrant overhead on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. [b]

*Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)*

**PEARL KITE** (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) – This attractive little raptor was perched atop a bush in the dry country near Camarones during our morning there.

**BLACK-AND-CHESTNUT EAGLE** (*Spizaetus isidori*) – Roger was always keen to find one of these! Eventually, our careful eyes paid off and we spied one of these huge raptors way up overhead of the El Dorado Lodge. This can be a tough bird to find in Colombia.

**BLACK-COLLARED HAWK** (*Busarellus nigricollis*) – A duo of these fish-eating hawks were perched on the other side of the big wetland in Camarones.

**SNAIL KITE** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. There must have been a lot snails in the Palermo area given the number of Snail Kites we saw foraging there!

**PLUMBEOUS KITE** (*Ictinia plumbea*) – It was a real treat to look up to see these graceful kites swirling overhead during our time in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. In fact, we encountered these more on this tour than any other recent tour there.

**SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (PLAIN-BREASTED)** (*Accipiter striatus ventralis*) – We were birding our way down on our final day when, at one of the stops, this distinctive raptor was seen in flight overhead. Some authorities split this subspecies out as a distinct species; others do not.

**CRANE HAWK** (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) – Surely one of the highlights of the trip was watching this red-eyed, long-legged raptor near one of the wetlands in Camarones. What an awesome species!

**SAVANNA HAWK** (*Buteogallus meridionalis*) – One of these open-country raptors was seen near Riohacha on our 2nd day. Turns out, that would be our only sighting of the trip.

**ROADSIDE HAWK** (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – It didn't take long to find this widespread tropical hawk; we encountered them at our first stop while we were looking for chachalacas in Barranquilla on our first morning.

**HARRIS'S HAWK** (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) – There were just one or two sightings of this distinctive raptor and both came on our first day as we headed out towards the open country around Riohacha.

**WHITE-RUMPED HAWK** (*Parabuteo leucorhous*) – This small raptor, which ranges south along the Andes, was spied overhead a couple of times including from the El Dorado Lodge. It's always a treat to get to see these guys.

**BROAD-WINGED HAWK** (*Buteo platypterus*) – This migrant woodland species was the most familiar Buteo on this tour. Most of our luck came from the slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. [b]

**SHORT-TAILED HAWK** (*Buteo brachyurus*) – One of these, a dark one at that, was seen soaring overhead from the San Lorenzo Station. However, that remained our only sighting of this tropical raptor.

*Strigidae (Owls)*

**SANTA MARTA SCREECH-OWL** (*Megascops gilesi*) – This little owl is surely one of the main targets on this tour. After all, it's only found in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta! Formally described to science only in the last 5 years, it's still a thrill to hear and sometimes see this range-restricted species. It took a couple of attempts but most people eventually caught a glimpse of one predawn as we drew close to the San Lorenzo Ridge. [E]

**FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL** (*Glaucidium brasilianum*) – Tallied near Minca and again in the dry country around Camarones where we were able to put a scope on it.

**MOTTLED OWL** (*Ciccaba virgata*) – Although it wasn't the owl we were specifically looking for, we were surprised when one of these flew in and landed nearly overhead predawn en route to the ridge.

**STYGIAN OWL** (*Asio stygius*) – Both mornings that we looked for the screech-owl, one of these was whistling upslope from us. A few folks got a brief glimpse of one in flight but very briefly (and distantly).

*Trogonidae (Trogons)*

**WHITE-TIPPED QUETZAL** (*Pharomachrus fulgidus*) – To get to see this range-restricted quetzal at all is normally a treat and a success. However, things were even crazier this year due to a nest of these gorgeous birds point-blank next to the road. We had repeated looks at both birds and sometimes even swooping down to the hole (where it sounded like they had chicks). This species is only found in Colombia and Venezuela. In fact, it has the smallest distribution of any quetzal in the world. [N]

**MASKED TROGON** (*Trogon personatus sanctaemartae*) – This subspecies, which is a Santa Marta endemic, was seen nicely a couple of times including some right from the road by the El Dorado Lodge. Through the scope, it was hard to imagine getting better views.

*Momotidae (Motmots)*

**WHOOPIING MOTMOT** (*Momotus subrufescens*) – Seen a couple of times in the Minca area. This was part of the Blue-crowned Motmot complex before it was split out several ways many years ago now.

*Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)*

**RINGED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle torquata*) – This huge kingfisher showed nicely at Isla Salamanca during our first day of tour. That would turn out to be the only sighting of the trip.

**AMAZON KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. We encountered several of these big-billed kingfishers on our pre-tour trip to the Palermo area.

**AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – This tiny guy was flighty but I think everyone managed a look at it! Roger knew right where to look at Isla Salamanca on Day 1 to find this lovely kingfisher.

**GREEN KINGFISHER** (*Chloroceryle americana*) – Our only sighting of this small kingfisher species was from the big waterhole near Camarones. We eventually got the scope on it as it sat motionless in bare branches of a downed tree.

*Bucconidae (Puffbirds)*

**WHITE-NECKED PUFFBIRD** (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) – This was a special treat at Las Gaviotas. This big black-and-white puffbird isn't a species we typically see on this tour. With some patience, we eventually spotted it perched atop a distant tree.

**PIED PUFFBIRD** (*Notharchus tectus*) – One of our first stops at Isla Salamanca yielded a couple of these sitting high in some bare branches.

**RUSSET-THROATED PUFFBIRD** (*Hypnelus ruficollis*) – This attractive puffbird was surely one of our favorites from the tour. They were fairly common in the lowlands at spots like Isla Salamanca and Camarones. This species is limited to northern Colombia and Venezuela.

*Galbulidae (Jacamars)*

**RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR** (*Galbula ruficauda*) – We had some luck with this long-billed species in the dry scrub near Camarones during our morning there. This family of birds specializes in eating large insects like cicadas and butterflies.

*Ramphastidae (Toucans)*

**SOUTHERN EMERALD-TOUCANET (SANTA MARTA)** (*Aulacorhynchus albivitta lautus*) – Up until a couple of years ago, there was a species called Emerald Toucanet. Then that was split into the Northern Emerald-Toucanet and Southern Emerald-Toucanet. The latter, which is found in South America, consists of several interesting subspecies. One such subspecies, *A. a. lautus*, which is endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, could someday be split further. Time will tell. This species was distinctive for, among other things, the bright chestnut undertail coverts.

**GROOVE-BILLED TOUCANET (YELLOW-BILLED)** (*Aulacorhynchus sulcatus calorhynchus*) – This small, mostly-green toucanet, was noted for having green undertail coverts. We encountered these slightly lower in elevation compared to the previous species.

**COLLARED ARACARI** (*Pteroglossus torquatus*) – A duo of these was spotted on the slopes of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta well below the El Dorado Lodge as we birded our way back down to the lowlands.

**KEEL-BILLED TOUCAN** (*Ramphastos sulfuratus*) – This gaudy toucan was spotted just a few times, including a pair near the intersection to El Cedral well below the El Dorado Lodge.

*Picidae (Woodpeckers)*

**SCALED PICULET** (*Picumnus squamulatus*) – Our work paid off when we finally found one of these near one of the roadside gardens below El Dorado. Thankfully, it froze on the branch and we all manage to spot it well above the road.

**CHESTNUT PICULET** (*Picumnus cinnamomeus*) – We eventually connected with this regional specialty in the dry scrub near Camarones. This species is only found in a sliver of Colombia and some in neighboring Venezuela.

**RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes rubricapillus*) – This was the common woodpecker in the lowlands.

**CRIMSON-CRESTED WOODPECKER** (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) – One of these big guys was seen near the El Dorado Lodge one afternoon.

**LINEATED WOODPECKER** (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – This is another big, spiffy woodpecker that we tracked down near Minca one morning.

**GOLDEN-GREEN WOODPECKER (GOLD-THROATED)** (*Piculus chrysochloros xanthochlorus*) – Spotting this awesome guy at Isla Salamanca on our first day easily ranked as one of the highlights from the trip! This is a hard-to-find woodpecker and this isolated subspecies is quite removed from the rest of their range.

**GOLDEN-OLIVE WOODPECKER (GOLDEN-OLIVE)** (*Colaptes rubiginosus alleni*) – A woodpecker that prefers mid-upper elevations in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta; one of these was seen near the El Dorado Lodge a couple of times including from the deck.

**SPOT-BREASTED WOODPECKER** (*Colaptes punctigula*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This beautiful woodpecker was one of the highlights from our pre-tour trip to the Palermo area. Gorgeous!

*Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)*

**CRESTED CARACARA** (*Caracara cheriway*) – This interesting raptor, which is more closely related to falcons than to the other hawks, was quite common in the dry lowlands at spots like Camarones.

**YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA** (*Milvago chimachima*) – Outnumbered by the previous species, a few of these were spotted in the lowlands.

**LAUGHING FALCON** (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – We had a decent look at one of these snake-eating raptors that flew by us at Camarones.

**AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) – Not very abundant on this tour, only a couple were seen in the lowlands.

**MERLIN (TAIGA)** (*Falco columbarius columbarius*) – One of these swift falcons was spotted at the big waterhole near Camarones. Turns out, that would be our only sighting of the trip. [b]

**APLOMADO FALCON** (*Falco femoralis*) – They may have been literally miles away... but the specks we saw through the scope near Riohacha were indeed this attractive falcon species.

**PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) – This hefty and familiar falcon was spotted a couple of times in the lowlands such as at the stables on our first day. [b]

*Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)*

**ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET** (*Brotogeris jugularis*) – This short-tailed species was seen near the magic toll booth en route to the Riohacha area. The orange chin is actually a rather poor fieldmark as it's hard to see in the field.

**RED-BILLED PARROT** (*Pionus sordidus saturatus*) – This was the Pionus parrot that we encountered around the elevation of the El Dorado Lodge. The following species tends to be found lower.

**BLUE-HEADED PARROT** (*Pionus menstruus*) – Although I don't think we actually saw these guys, we at least heard them near Minca. [\*]

**SCALY-NAPED PARROT** (*Amazona mercenarius*) – This Amazon, which is much bigger than the previous two species, was seen up along the San Lorenzo Ridge on one of our visits there.

**BLUE-WINGED PARROTLET (TURQUOISE-WINGED)** (*Forpus xanthopterygius spengeli*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This was a special sighting for us of a species we rarely see on this tour. Near Palermo, we spotted a couple of these tiny guys and even managed some photos. This northern subspecies is quite removed from the others and some sources treat this as a separate species.

**GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET** (*Forpus passerinus*) – Found in northern South America, this species is somewhat local in Colombia. Favoring dry scrubby habitat, this tiny parrotlet was seen near the toll booth and again near our lunch spot in Camarones.

**SANTA MARTA PARAKEET** (*Pyrrhura viridicata*) – This endangered and endemic parakeet is often one of the tougher endemics to see although we had great luck on this tour. We ended up with several chances to study these in the trees up on top of the ridge at 8400' feet. It's thought that the population of this species might only be a few thousand. [E]

**BROWN-THROATED PARAKEET** (*Eupsittula pertinax*) – This was the common parakeet in the lowlands around Barranquilla.

**MILITARY MACAW** (*Ara militaris*) – More than 50 of these beauties were seen during the morning birding session near Minca. Major thanks to Roger for sharing the experience!

**SCARLET-FRONTED PARAKEET (SCARLET-FRONTED)** (*Psittacara wagleri wagleri*) – These were fairly common up around the San Lorenzo Ridge for us and we even saw some allopreening pairs.

*Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)*

**BLACK-CRESTED ANTSHRIKE (STREAK-FRONTED)** (*Sakesphorus canadensis pulchellus*) – These have quite the pronounced, spiky crests! We encountered this species, which is restricted to northern South America, near the toll booths and again near the Camarones waterhole.

**BLACK-BACKED ANTSHRIKE** (*Thamnophilus melanonotus*) – Getting views of this bird turned out to be a real challenge (as it often is with this species), but one was indeed seen as we birded the dry scrubland east of Camarones.

**WHITE-FRINGED ANTWREN (NORTHERN)** (*Formicivora grisea intermedia*) – Although some sources split the Southern White-fringed Antwrens from the Northern White-fringed Antwrens, current belief is that they're just one species. Either way, we encountered a number of these in the dry habitats near Camarones on our second day of birding.

**SANTA MARTA ANTIBIRD** (*Drymophila hellmayri*) – There was a species a while back known as Long-tailed Antbird. That was eventually split into four different species and this endemic was one of the results. We managed a few quick looks as these hung back in the tangles above Minca. [E]

*Grallariidae (Antpittas)*

**SANTA MARTA ANTPITTA** (*Grallaria bangsi*) – Oh Maria! Major thanks to Kelly and her hard work at the San Lorenzo Station, we got to enjoy this skulky antpitta as it came in to feed. This endemic is certainly not a very widespread species; it's considered "Vulnerable" and the population is thought to be fewer than 10,000 individuals. [E]

**RUFIOUS ANTPITTA (SIERRA NEVADA)** (*Grallaria rufula spatiator*) – This sneaky dude stayed out of view, despite calling a few times. [\*]

**RUSTY-BREASTED ANTPITTA (RUSTY-BREASTED)** (*Grallaricula ferrugineipectus ferrugineipectus*) – We sure gave this skulky species a lot of time but in the end, it outlasted us and remained out of sight. I'm sure it tallied us for ITS life list though! [\*]

*Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)*

**SANTA MARTA TAPACULO** (*Scytalopus sanctaemartae*) – Seeing this endemic tapaculo, as is the case with all of them, is always a real challenge! Thankfully, we were in the right place at the right time and we all got a look as it crawled down some roots below El Dorado Lodge! Of the two endemic tapaculos in these mountains, this species prefers the lower elevations. [E]

**BROWN-RUMPED TAPACULO** (*Scytalopus latebricola*) – The other tapaculo in these mountains, and one that prefers the upper elevations such as near the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo, was seen around the ridge a couple of times (including one time completely out in the open on a branch!). As expected, however, it was heard more than it was seen. [E]

*Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)*

**PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) – This species of woodcreeper was seen on the morning outing near Minca on our third day.

**STRONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER (ANDEAN/NORTHERN)** (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus sanctaemartae*) – This is a large woodcreeper that we encountered near the El Dorado Lodge grounds. Often, we would hear it calling right at dusk from the lodge.

**COCOA WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus susurrans*) – It wasn't until we were birding the slopes below El Dorado that these uncommon woodcreepers showed up once or twice.

**STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendroplex picus picirostris*) – This common woodcreeper was spotted in the lowlands, mostly around Barranquilla, Isla Salamanca, and near Camarones. The pale, dagger-shaped bill was an easy fieldmark to see.

**RED-BILLED SCYTHEBILL** (*Campylorhamphus trochilrostris*) – This fancy woodcreeper, although vocal, only did a brief flyby as we were birding in the dry scrub near Camarones. Although it came in and zipped right by us, it didn't land within sight.

**STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*) – We spotted one of these near the intersection to El Cedral on our final day. This medium-sized woodcreeper has a rather slender and curved bill.

**MONTANE WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger sanctaemartae*) – A couple of sightings were tallied from the El Dorado Lodge area. Oftentimes, these prefer higher elevations than the previous species.

**PLAIN XENOPS** (*Xenops minutus*) – We tallied a duo of these on our final day as we birded downhill from the El Dorado Lodge. These are tiny members of the Furnariid family.

**PALE-LEGGED HORNERO (CARIBBEAN)** (*Furnarius leucopus longirostris*) – Our main encounter with this sometimes-wary ovenbird was in the dry forest near Camarones. Although sometimes easy to hear, they stroll around on the ground and never seem to cooperate fully. We had another look pre-tour as well near Palermo.

**MONTANE FOLIAGE-GLEANER** (*Anabacerthia striaticollis anxia*) – This foliage-gleaner is at home right around the El Dorado Lodge grounds and the forests slightly downhill. This species has pale "spectacles" giving it a distinctive look. Compared to the following species, these tend to be found at higher elevations although there is certainly some overlap.

**SANTA MARTA FOLIAGE-GLEANER** (*Chibanornis rufipectus*) – This species was originally included in the Ruddy Foliage-Gleaner complex but was later split out as an endemic taxa. This foliage-gleaner is often found at lower elevations than the previous species. We encountered it just once on our final day. Whew! [E]

**STREAK-CAPPED SPINETAIL** (*Cranioleuca hellmayri*) – Although not technically endemic to the Santa Martas, they essentially are since there's only one or two records from neighboring Venezuela. This spintail tends to be more arboreal than others in the family and we managed glimpses at several locations such as Cuchilla de San Lorenzo and down along the road below El Dorado.

**YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL** (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) – We had beautiful looks at this marsh-loving spintail at the Isla Salamanca headquarters. The bird, interestingly, was banded.

**WHITE-WHISKERED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis candei*) – This has to be one of the most attractive of the spintails! This specialty was found in the dry-country near Camarones where they tended to stay low or on the ground. This species is only found in a sliver of Colombia and neighboring Venezuela.

**RUSTY-HEADED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis fuscorufa*) – We settled for glimpses here and there as we birded the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. This endemic spintail is usually found at relatively high elevations and is very fond of the native bamboo there. [E]

#### Pipridae (Manakins)

**LANCE-TAILED MANAKIN** (*Chiroxiphia lanceolata*) – Although this attractive species hasn't been seen on many of our recent tours, we were able to visit some spots this year where we encountered it. First was in the Las Gaviotas area and then again near Minca.

**WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN** (*Manacus manacus*) – This species was tallied on the morning outing near Minca.

#### Cotingidae (Cotingas)

**GOLDEN-BREASTED FRUITEATER** (*Pipreola aureopectus*) – We finally connected with this specialty near the El Dorado Lodge. What a looker! The high-pitched song was one of the most distinctive ones around. Their habit of staying quite still makes them hard to spot! This fruiteater is quite range restricted; it's only found in northern Colombia and Venezuela.

#### Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

**MASKED TITYRA** (*Tityra semifasciata*) – Up to five of these were seen in one tree near one of the flowering roadside stops below El Dorado Lodge on one of our visits.

**CINNAMON BECARD** (*Pachyrhamphus cinnamomeus*) – This uniformly-colored becard was seen near Minca during our morning birding there.

#### Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**OLIVE-STRIPED FLYCATCHER (OLIVE-STRIPED)** (*Mionectes olivaceus galbinus*) – Just a couple were seen during our time in the mountains. This was formerly called "Olive-striped Fruit-Tyrant" for its proclivity of feeding on fruit.

**OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER** (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – This is another flycatcher that was tallied on the morning outing near Minca.

**SEPIA-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Leptopogon amaurocephalus*) – There was a little confusion about this sighting but in the end it was decided the mystery bird was in fact a Sepia-capped.

**PALE-EYED PYGMY-TYRANT** (*Atalotriccus pilaris*) – This tiny little flycatcher, hardly bigger than a leaf, was spotted near Minca.

**PEARLY-VENTED TODY-TYRANT** (*Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer*) – The arid region around Camarones yielded several of these small flycatchers. However, once we left that habitat, we left this species as well.

**BLACK-THROATED TODY-TYRANT** (*Hemitriccus granadensis lehmanni*) – It took a little work but we were eventually rewarded with this little (but distinctive) tody-tyrant just uphill from the El Dorado Lodge.

**COMMON TODY-FLYCATCHER** (*Todirostrum cinereum*) – Despite the name, this familiar tody-flycatcher wasn't too common for us. We tallied it just once near Camarones on our 2nd day.

**YELLOW-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (OCHRE-LORED)** (*Tolmomyias flaviventris aurulentus*) – This rather uniformly colored flycatcher was spotted near one of the waterholes in Camarones. Some sources split this subspecies out into a species called Ochre-lored Flatbill. Time will tell whether or not it's worthy to be split.

**CINNAMON FLYCATCHER (SANTA MARTA)** (*Pyrrhomyias cinnamomeus assimilis*) – Note the subspecies, an endemic to the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. We couldn't have gotten any better views of these cute and distinctive flycatchers; a pair was foraging in a clearing, always coming back to the same vine.



**SOUTHERN BEARDESS-TYRANNULET** (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) – This is a rather plain little flycatcher that we encountered at the HQ of Isla Salamanca.

**WHITE-THROATED TYRANNULET** (*Mecocerculus leucophrys*) – We encountered a number of these on the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo during both of our visits. Their bright white throats really do stand out!

**YELLOW-CROWNED TYRANNULET** (*Tyrannulus elatus*) – We tallied a couple of these along the road at Las Gaviotas where they were being quite vocal.

**FOREST ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis gaimardii*) – This species was tallied near Minca during our morning there.

**YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia flavogaster*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This widespread species was somehow just tallied on our pre-tour outing. This is a common and distinctive elaenia with a big bushy crest.

**MOUNTAIN ELAENIA** (*Elaenia frantzii*) – This round-headed elaenia was fairly common up along the ridge and down to the station on both of our visits.

**BLACK-CAPPED TYRANNULET** (*Phyllomyias nigrocapillus flavimentum*) – This was a great, uncommon sighting for us. We encountered this tiny, canopy-loving flycatcher on an afternoon walk from the El Dorado Lodge. This species, which can be hard to find in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, isn't one we expect to see most tours.

**SLENDER-BILLED TYRANNULET** (*Inezia tenuirostris*) – A couple of encounters in the dry forests near Camarones were our only ones. This species, formerly known as "Slender-billed Inezia", is found only in a small region of northern Colombia and neighboring Venezuela.

**OLIVE-SIDED FLYCATCHER** (*Contopus cooperi*) – This wintering flycatcher, which we tallied a couple of times downhill from El Dorado, usually likes to perch on the tip-top of trees and barren snags.

**NORTHERN SCRUB-FLYCATCHER** (*Sublegatus arenarum*) – Colored like a miniature Myiarchus, this flycatcher was seen well as we birded the dry scrub near Camarones.

**VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – This vibrant flycatcher was spotted first at the magic toll booths. We saw a few others but only in the open, dry country in the lowlands.

**PIED WATER-TYRANT** (*Fluvicola pica*) – This attractive, water-loving flycatcher was seen nicely at Isla Salamanca including at a nest it was building. [N]

**YELLOW-BELLIED CHAT-TYRANT** (*Ochthoeca diadema jesupi*) – Although we heard these more than we saw them, we had a couple of stunner looks at the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. Note the endemic subspecies.

**BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLA** (*Attila spadiceus*) – Heard-only at Las Gaviotas. [\*]

**DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – This montane Myiarchus was heard quite a bit but also seen at spots around the El Dorado Lodge.

**PANAMA FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus panamensis*) – We found this big, mangrove-loving flycatcher at Isla Salamanca on our first day.

**BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus tyrannulus*) – We found this dry-country Myiarchus near Camarones where we had good scope views. This species ranges from Utah in the US south to Argentina!

**CATTLE TYRANT** (*Machetornis rixosa*) – Even our hotel dining area in Barranquilla hosted this widespread, ground-loving species.

**LESSER KISKADEE** (*Pitangus lictor*) – This slim-billed kiskadee was spotted on a fence near a waterhole in Camarones. A good sighting; it's not a species we typically see on this tour.

**GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Common and widespread in the lowlands.

**BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER** (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – Our first detection of this big-billed species was at Las Gaviotas where they were being quite vocal. After that, we encountered them on the slopes between Minca and El Dorado Lodge. Remember, these have much less rufous in the wings than the previous species.

**SOCIAL FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes similis*) – A small, widespread, and vocal species; these were tallied on our first two days in the lowlands.

**GOLDEN-CROWNED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*) – A common sound around the El Dorado Lodge where their squeaky, rubber-ducky calls were heard.

**STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) – This sturdy and, yes, streaked flycatcher was tallied near Minca.

**TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Abundant in the lowlands.

**GRAY KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus dominicensis*) – This kingbird is actually a winter-only species around Barranquilla and northern Colombia. We spotted quite a few early on in the tour at spots like the stable spot. [b]

**FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*) – This wonderful and distinct flycatcher was seen pre-tour and again near the toll booths.

#### Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

**SCRUB GREENLET** (*Hylophilus flavipes*) – This species, which is related to the vireos, was seen on a morning outing in Minca.

**GOLDEN-FRONTED GREENLET** (*Pachysylvia aurantiifrons*) – This greenlet is actually fairly range-restricted, found only in southernmost Central America and then across a bit of northern South America. We had a close encounter on our first day along the Las Gaviotas road.

**BROWN-CAPPED VIREO** (*Vireo leucophrys*) – This mountain-loving vireo, which is found from Mexico south into South America, was spotted around the El Dorado Lodge a couple of times.

#### Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**BLACK-CHESTED JAY** (*Cyanocorax affinis*) – A fairly widespread and attractive species, especially from Minca upwards. A few of these were attending the cracked corn feeders at the El Dorado Lodge as well.

#### Hirundinidae (Swallows)

**BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW** (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – This common species is found from Central America south through South America. For us, we encountered them along the ridge a couple of times where they were sometimes landing on the tower.

**SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW** (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – This pale-rumped swallow was tallied near Minca.

**GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN** (*Progne chalybea*) – Perhaps our best looks of this hefty swallow came from our lunch restaurant on our first day.

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This familiar wintering swallow was seen flying around the marshes near Palermo before the tour. [b]

#### Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)

**LONG-BILLED GNATWREN** (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) – This distinctive, vine-loving species was found near Minca on our morning outing.  
**TROPICAL GNATCATCHER (PLUMBICEPS/ANTEOCULARIS)** (*Polioptila plumbea plumbeiceps*) – This tiny, tail-wagging insect-eater was one of the most common species in the dry forests near Camarones.

*Troglodytidae (Wrens)*

**HOUSE WREN (SOUTHERN)** (*Troglodytes aedon musculus*) – Seen (and heard) at Isla Salamanca on our first day. Although considered the same species as the House Wrens we have in the Eastern US, the subspecies here sound a bit different (and may yet be split out someday).  
**STRIPE-BACKED WREN** (*Campylorhynchus nuchalis*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. This big and flashy *Campylorhynchus* wren was fairly common around Palermo pre-tour. This species is found only in northern Colombia and Venezuela.  
**BICOLORED WREN** (*Campylorhynchus griseus*) – This is a big and distinctive wren that we commonly encountered (and heard) in the lowlands and up through Minca. This species, which is related to the Cactus Wren from farther north, is only found in northern South America.  
**RUFOUS-BREASTED WREN** (*Pheugopedius rutilus*) – Heard-only around Minca. [\*]  
**RUFOUS-AND-WHITE WREN** (*Thryophilus rufalbus*) – Heard-only around Minca. [\*]  
**BUFF-BREASTED WREN** (*Cantorchilus leucotis*) – This species was heard chattering along the Las Gaviotas Road but it stayed out of view. [\*]  
**GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (BANGSI)** (*Henicorhina leucophrys bangsi*) – This sneaky wren is a wide-ranging tropical taxon with a variety of interesting subspecies. This endemic subspecies is only found on the low slopes of the Santa Martas and we heard and saw a few on the El Dorado Lodge grounds.  
**HERMIT WOOD-WREN** (*Henicorhina anachoreta*) – We had amazing looks at these deep in the bamboo along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. One particular bird was even gathering nesting material. Recently elevated to full species status (and previously called "Santa Marta Wood-Wren"), this endemic of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta is found at higher elevations than the previous species. [E]

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus gilvus*) – Only a couple were seen in the dry areas near Camarones.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH** (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – A hard-to-see songster, these were tallied a couple of days on the lower slopes above Minca. [\*]  
**SLATY-BACKED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH** (*Catharus fuscater*) – This thrush was only heard singing a few times from the El Dorado Lodge. We kept a watch out along the trails and at the compost, but no luck in actually seeing them [\*]  
**PALE-BREASTED THRUSH** (*Turdus leucomelas*) – A common thrush at the lower elevations such as around Minca. Similar to Clay-colored Thrush but with a darker bill.  
**YELLOW-LEGGED THRUSH** (*Turdus flavipes*) – This attractive thrush, which is related to our American Robin, was fairly common on the low-mid elevation portions of the mountain. Cory certainly chose this as one of his favorites.  
**CLAY-COLORED THRUSH** (*Turdus grayi*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. Oddly, the only sighting of this usually-common thrush came from our time before the tour began.  
**BLACK-HOODED THRUSH** (*Turdus olivater*) – Although widespread around the El Dorado Lodge, they were rather shy and retiring. Still, we all managed a glimpse of one or two while birding the roadsides nearby. This montane species is found only in northern South America.  
**GREAT THRUSH** (*Turdus fuscater cacozelus*) – Our only encounters with this big thrush came from our time high up along the ridgetop.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**BLUE-NAPED CHLOROPHONIA** (*Chlorophonia cyanea*) – This gorgeous species was a pleasure to see at the feeders at the El Dorado Lodge so frequently!  
**TRINIDAD EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia trinitatis*) – We encountered this colorful species at the "chachalaca university" and again along the Las Gaviotas Road.  
**THICK-BILLED EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia laniirostris*) – At least one of these widespread euphonias was tallied from Las Gaviotas.

*Passerellidae (New World Sparrows)*

**TOCUYO SPARROW** (*Arremonops tocuensis*) – Not only did we manage to find this secretive species near Camarones, most of us actually got to SEE it which is usually quite tough to do. This is a very range-restricted species found only in a sliver of Colombia and extreme northwest Venezuela.  
**SIERRA NEVADA BRUSHFINCH** (*Arremon basilicus*) – The species, formerly known as Stripe-headed Brushfinch, was split into several species including this Santa Marta endemic. Only a few were seen near the cracked corn feeders at the lodge and once or twice along the road downhill. [E]  
**GOLDEN-WINGED SPARROW** (*Arremon schlegeli*) – A beautiful bird, and one of the highlights of the tour, this was seen in the bamboo forests uphill from Minca. This species, which is in the same genus as the previous brushfinch, is found only in a few spots in northern Colombia and Venezuela.  
**RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – Common and seen daily during our time at the higher elevations.  
**SANTA MARTA BRUSHFINCH** (*Atlapetes melanocephalus*) – Although an endemic found only in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta, these were fairly common and tallied each day that we were at higher elevations. [E]

*Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)*

**YELLOW-BILLED CACIQUE** (*Amblycercus holosericeus*) – This was a quick but interesting sighting while we were in the bamboo up along the ridgetop. The population in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta seem to be bamboo specialists, as they are in some parts of their range, while other populations have nothing to do with bamboo.  
**CRESTED OROPENDOLA** (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – Common and seen attending their pendulous nests around the El Dorado Lodge. [N]  
**YELLOW-BACKED ORIOLE** (*Icterus chrysater*) – Gary spotted one of these for us near one of the little ecotiendas down the road from the El Dorado Lodge.  
**ORANGE-CROWNED ORIOLE** (*Icterus auricapillus*) – Our only sighting of this oriole was near Minca.  
**YELLOW ORIOLE** (*Icterus nigrogularis*) – This was the common oriole we encountered in the lowlands at spots like Barranquilla, Isla Salamanca, and Camarones. We had really good looks at the feeders in Camarones when they came in to feed point-blank.

- BALTIMORE ORIOLE** (*Icterus galbula*) – This migrant species was looking pretty sharp; it was just a matter of time before they were to start migrating north. [b]
- SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – This brood parasite was seen a few times early on at spots like the stables and our lunch restaurant on our first day.
- BRONZED COWBIRD (BRONZE-BROWN)** (*Molothrus aeneus armenti*) – This range-restricted subspecies, the only one in South America, is quite limited and is endemic to Colombia. We saw these at the stables on our first day.
- GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Seen commonly in the lowlands.
- CARIB GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus lugubris*) – This short-tailed grackle was widespread in the lowlands. These were especially obvious along the coast including around Barranquilla and Camarones.
- YELLOW-HOODED BLACKBIRD** (*Chrysomus icterocephalus*) – PRE-TOUR ONLY. We encountered a few of these in the marsh near Palermo.
- Parulidae (New World Warblers).*
- NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – Heard chipping a few times near Camarones and someone may have gotten a quick view of this ground-loving warbler. [b]
- BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – This limb-creeping warbler was fairly common in the mountains and we tallied them daily there. [b]
- PROTHONOTARY WARBLER** (*Protonotaria citrea*) – Just like on the breeding grounds, this wintering warbler preferred the slow-water areas around Isla Salamanca. However, that was our only day with sightings of this vibrant warbler. [b]
- TENNESSEE WARBLER** (*Leiothlypis peregrina*) – A common migrant at mid-elevations in the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta. [b]
- AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – This migrant warbler was also tallied a couple of times including on our way up and our way down the slopes near Minca. [b]
- TROPICAL PARULA** (*Setophaga pitiayumi*) – A singing bird was spotted in a tree as we birded our way uphill towards El Dorado Lodge on our 4th day. Turns out, that would be our only sighting of this bright-breasted warbler.
- BLACKBURNIAN WARBLER** (*Setophaga fusca*) – Seen daily at mid-elevations around the El Dorado Lodge and along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. [b]
- YELLOW WARBLER (NORTHERN)** (*Setophaga petechia aestiva*) – A few of these migrants were seen in the lowlands at spots like Isla Salamanca and Camarones. [b]
- RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (CHESTNUT-CAPPED)** (*Basileuterus rufifrons mesochrysus*) – We spotted a few of these at a couple different locations as we ascended (and then descended) the Sierra Nevada.
- SANTA MARTA WARBLER** (*Myiothlypis basilica*) – This endemic can be tough to find but we were lucky to find some promptly after arriving at the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo on our first visit. A rare bird, estimates of the total population suggest there might be fewer than 2,000 of these left. [E]
- WHITE-LORED WARBLER** (*Myiothlypis conspicillata*) – This warbler is another endemic of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta and they were fairly common right around the El Dorado Lodge. Once or twice, we even saw them from the breakfast table! [E]
- SLATE-THROATED REDSTART** (*Myioborus miniatus*) – A fairly common warbler at mid-elevations.
- YELLOW-CROWNED REDSTART** (*Myioborus flavivertex*) – This is another of the endemic warblers and these are usually found at the higher elevations we visit. We had great looks on our visits to the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. [E]
- Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies).*
- SUMMER TANAGER** (*Piranga rubra*) – We enjoyed scattered sightings of this migrant including at the Universidad Del Norte and the hillsides above Minca. [b]
- VERMILION CARDINAL** (*Cardinalis phoeniceus*) – Holy smokes, it was great getting views of both the males and the females at the feeders in the dry scrub near Camarones. This is a very range-restricted species limited to the arid regions of northern Colombia and Venezuela. Sadly, they are sought after by bird trappers as well.
- GOLDEN GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus chrysogaster*) – This bright seed-eater was seen a few times including at the San Lorenzo Station and the El Dorado Lodge.
- ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK** (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – This migrant was spotted just once at one of the roadside stops downhill from the El Dorado Lodge. [b]
- Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies).*
- WHITE-SHOULDERED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus luctuosus*) – At least one of these was spotted on our final day as we birded downhill away from the El Dorado Lodge.
- WHITE-LINED TANAGER** (*Tachyphonus rufus*) – A male showed up at the flowering bushes at one of the ecotiendas downhill from the El Dorado Lodge. Superficially, and at a glance, we were reminded of White-sided Flowerpiercer!
- CRIMSON-BACKED TANAGER** (*Ramphocelus dimidiatus*) – A colorful addition to the avifauna at spots like Las Gaviotas, around Minca, and the roadsides we birded at between there and the El Dorado Lodge. This species is found only in Panama, Colombia, and Venezuela.
- BLACK-CHEEKED MOUNTAIN-TANAGER** (*Anisognathus melanogenys*) – This beautiful tanager, sometimes known as the "Santa Marta Mountain-Tanager", is an endemic that we encountered only near the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo. They weren't rare though and we ended up getting pretty good looks several times. [E]
- BLUE-GRAY TANAGER** (*Thraupis episcopus*) – We had a good showing of these in moist lowland areas.
- GLAUCOUS TANAGER** (*Thraupis glaucocolpa*) – This tanager, a regional specialty limited to Venezuela and a little tip of Colombia, was seen at the magic toll booth as we approached Camarones.
- PALM TANAGER** (*Thraupis palmarum*) – This widespread tanager wasn't abundant for us. We had a few around Minca and the slopes just uphill from there.
- BLUE-CAPPED TANAGER** (*Thraupis cyanocephala margaritae*) – In the same genus as the previous two species, this subtly-marked tanager was seen only briefly between the San Lorenzo Station and the El Dorado Lodge.
- BLACK-HEADED TANAGER** (*Stilpnia cyanoptera*) – Although most of these are found in Venezuela, it was a treat to find them in Colombia where they're a regional specialty of the Sierra Nevada de Santa Marta.

- BLACK-CAPPED TANAGER** (*Stilpnia heinei*) – What a gorgeous tanager! We were lucky to find these a few times below the El Dorado Lodge although they never were abundant.
- BAY-HEADED TANAGER (BAY-AND-GREEN)** (*Tangara gyrola toddi*) – Although this colorful tanager is a widespread species through much of the neotropics, the subspecies we got to enjoy on this tour is *T. g. toddi*, a regional specialty.
- SWALLOW TANAGER** (*Tersina viridis*) – It's hard to beat the shade of turquoise that this beautiful tanager has! These were fairly common around Minca and upslope from there.
- PURPLE HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*) – This species, which is actually a tanager, was spotted on the morning outing in Minca.
- RED-LEGGED HONEYCREEPER** (*Cyanerpes cyaneus*) – Like the previous species, this honeycreeper was also spotted near Minca.
- BICOLORED CONEBILL** (*Conirostrum bicolor*) – In the tanager family, these habitat-restricted birds were found exclusively in the mangrove forests of Isla Salamanca.
- BLACK FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa humeralis nocticolor*) – Typically found at higher elevations than the next species, these were seen at the San Lorenzo Station and up along the ridge.
- WHITE-SIDED FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa albilatera*) – An abundant species in the flowering bushes along the roadsides downhill from the El Dorado Lodge.
- RUSTY FLOWERPIERCER** (*Diglossa sittoides*) – A distinctive flowerpiercer, these were fairly common in the flowering bushes along the roadsides. This tanager is found in mountains from Venezuela south to Argentina.
- PLUSHCAP** (*Catamblyrhynchus diadema*) – This hard-to-find tanager is a bamboo specialist and we lucked into a pair in the Chusquea up along the ridgetop. This is certainly not a species we see often on this tour.
- YELLOW-BELLIED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila nigricollis*) – A few folks in the first vehicle saw this tiny species along a roadside on our final day.
- PARAMO SEEDEATER** (*Catamenia homochroa oreophila*) – Seedeaters are actually in the Thraupidae (tanager) family and we chanced into a couple of these along the Cuchilla de San Lorenzo on our first visit. Note that this is an endemic subspecies.
- PILEATED FINCH** (*Coryphospingus pileatus*) – This somewhat range-restricted species is a dry-country specialty that we encountered near Camarones. They have a bright red crest that's usually hidden.
- BANANAQUIT** (*Coereba flaveola*) – Common around flowers (and nectar feeders!) in the lower elevations.
- BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Melanospiza bicolor*) – A few of these were seen in the dry country around Camarones but that was the only day with sightings.
- BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR** (*Saltator maximus*) – We had scattered sightings of this thick-billed tanager ranging from Las Gaviotas to spots between Minca and El Dorado Lodge.
- ORINOCAN SALTATOR** (*Saltator orinocensis*) – An attractive dry-country specialist that's restricted to Venezuela and a small part of Colombia. We had nice looks at the feeders in Camarones which was a real treat.
- GRAYISH SALTATOR** (*Saltator coerulescens*) – Fairly common in lowland habitats from Barranquilla to Camarones. This species has a large range and can be found from Mexico south to Argentina.
- 

## MAMMALS

- RED HOWLER MONKEY** (*Alouatta seniculus*) – It was hard NOT to hear this species most of the mornings! [\*]
- RED-TAILED SQUIRREL** (*Sciurus granatensis*) – This was the common squirrel we saw on tour and we ended up tallying them most days.
- CENTRAL AMERICAN AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta punctata*) – Seen a few times around the El Dorado Lodge.
- CRAB-EATING FOX** (*Cerdocyon thous*) – Seen by some in the first vehicle and others on the trails around the lodge after dark.
- KINKAJOU** (*Potos flavus*) – At least one of these showed up after dark a couple of nights at El Dorado.

### Herps

- GREEN IGUANA** (*Iguana iguana*) – These big guys were seen in the lowlands on our first day.
- RAINBOW WHIPTAIL** (*Cnemidophorus lemniscatus*) – Fairly common, these colorful whiptails were seen both pre-tour and on our first day around Isla Salamanca.
- SPECTACLED CAIMAN** (*Caiman crocodilus*) – A couple little guys were seen in one of the canals at Isla Salamanca on our first day.
- SANTA MARTA POISON DART FROG** (*Colostethus ruthveni*) – This endangered and endemic frog was spotted by Roger in one of the nearby streams. Super cool!
- 

## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

---

**Totals for the tour: 315 bird taxa and 5 mammal taxa**