



Field Guides Tour Report

Amazonian Ecuador: Sacha Lodge III 2016

Jul 1, 2016 to Jul 10, 2016

Mitch Lysinger

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



We connected with a group of Dusky-headed Parakeets clinging to a clay bank on our first visit to the Napo-edge salt licks. Photo by participant Lisa Spellman.

During our awesome week together at the wonderfully comfortable Sacha Lodge, we had the pleasure of birding one of the most diverse and beautiful biomes on Earth. I think all of you will agree when I say this: are we lucky, or what?! We all share a special love for our planet, and its natural wonders, and what better way to express this than getting out there, traveling, supporting, and appreciating it? This we did in flying colors, literally. Remember those clouds of parakeets? Well, they said it all!

Bird highlights were many, and how couldn't there be with such an array of possibilities? You certainly all have yours, but here are some that I thought really helped to set our trip apart, making it unique, and a more than memorable one! So let's go: how about Spix's Guans scoped from the towers; a Boat-billed Heron at close range; that Crested Eagle that swooped in; a Rufous-sided Crane standing in full view for most; those goofy Hoatzins; a responsive Black-bellied Cuckoo at almost eye level; Crested Owls and a Great Potoo on day roosts; Rufous-breasted Hermit at point-blank range on its evening roost; five species of trogons seen well; awesome puffbirds, including White-necked, Chestnut-capped, and Lanceolated Monklet; a belated, but well seen pair of White-chinned Jacamars; almost all of the possible toucan species for excellent studies; some spectacular woodpeckers, including the rare Ringed -- and how about those Cream-colored on a roost; a pair of raucous Red-throated Caracaras; Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlets feeding on figs for awesome scope studies; that cooperative male Dugand's Antwren at the wooden tower; Short-billed Leaf-tosser on its night roost; a nice haul of woodcreepers, though that Long-billed really stole the show; that Chestnut-winged Hookbill that came down from the canopy for a look; a whole slough of interesting and confusing flycatchers, but I think that last Cinnamon Attila took it for color and flash; those electric male Spangled and Plum-throated Cotingas; Amazonian Umbrellabird; a scoped and singing Screaming Piha; that male Orange-crowned Manakin showing off its flaming crown; five White-browed Purpletufts in awesome afternoon light; stunning Black-capped Donacobius along the edges of Pilchecochoa; loads of gorgeous tanager species -- like Paradise and Opal-rumped, and Black-faced and Yellow-bellied Dacnis -- from the canopy towers; and that rare and local Bicolored Conebill that gave us repeated studies out on the river island.

Oscar and Wilson, our very skilled local guides, were top-notch, and really helped make finding many of the birds a lot easier; who wouldn't pay big bucks to have their eyes, eh? But the biggest applause has to go out to you guys, the participants, for being such a fun and eager crowd to be around. So read on, and I hope to see all of you out there in the field sometime soon!

-- Mitch

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)

GREAT TINAMOU (*Tinamus major*) – Well, tinamous are generally a tough bunch to connect with visually, as we all know, but we certainly heard a bunch, and some even saw one. We heard this large species a couple of times at Sacha, once at close range. [*]

CINEREOUS TINAMOU (*Crypturellus cinereus*) [*]

LITTLE TINAMOU (*Crypturellus soui*) – Heard very close to the trail near the Napo River. [*]

UNDULATED TINAMOU (*Crypturellus undulatus*) – A few folks were quick enough to get quick looks at this one as it flushed along the Napo River; it was just a little too jumpy to stay around for longer views.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

SPECKLED CHACHALACA (*Ortalis guttata*) – Most common out along the Napo River where we had them for many fine studies.

SPIX'S GUAN (*Penelope jacquacu*) – A hulking guan species that we had particularly well from the canopy walkway, and then again out along the Napo River, both for fine scope studies.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

ZIGZAG HERON (*Zebrilus undulatus*) – Heard a couple of times, but we just couldn't coax them in for a look. [*]

RUFESCENT TIGER-HERON (*Tigrisoma lineatum*) – We had immature birds a couple of times around the lodge along the Pilchecocho lake edge, and along the Orquidea stream. We also heard them calling from the swamps a couple of times during our pre-dawn breakfasts; this vocalization sounds as if they are in agonizing pain!

COCOI HERON (*Ardea cocoi*) – This large, and striking, heron was seen a couple of times out along the edges of the Napo River.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Seen a couple of times along the Napo, but we actually had our first one at the San Jose Garden Hotel on our first morning during some birding before our flight to Coca.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – The most common heron species of the sand banks along the Napo.

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*) – A common sight during our canoe rides across Pilchecocho; we must have seen the same individual numerous times!

CAPPED HERON (*Pilherodius pileatus*) – One glimpsed as it flew off up a side arm of the Napo in the Anangu area.

BOAT-BILLED HERON (*Cochlearius cochlearius*) – Oscar spotted a quietly perched bird just as we entered the Anaconda stream for quick, but nice views.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GREEN IBIS (*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*) [*]

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*) – We had one adult bird during our canoe ride along the Napo into Sacha on our first day as it fed alongside a Snowy Egret.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Every day of the trip!

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Claudius spotted our only one of the trip as it perched on some dead trunks on a river island; this was on the final day of our trip.

GREATER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE (*Cathartes melambrotus*) – Seen in flight on all days, but we enjoyed some splendid scope studies from the canopy walkway.

KING VULTURE (*Sarcoramphus papa*) – A large vulture that sort of reminds me of a compact condor in shape. The white plumage of this species really makes it stand out, even from a distance. We saw this magnificent species a few times, but certainly best from the lodge one afternoon when a couple of birds started to soar after a short rain at fairly close range.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – A single bird came flying by as we birded the river islands on our last full day.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

PEARL KITE (*Gampsonyx swainsonii*) – One distant bird perched on a power pole as we scanned from the waiting lounge at the Coca airport was a nice, final pick-up!

HOOK-BILLED KITE (*Chondrohierax uncinatus*) – Fine scope studies of a female at Anangu, on the south side of the Napo from Sacha, was a nice find; we later had one soaring from the wooden tower.

GRAY-HEADED KITE (*Leptodon cayanensis*) – A very handsome, and cleanly plumaged kite species. We ran into one at the dock at Anangu, and Oscar said that it was interested in the foraging chickens there, which made complete sense as it seemed to be waiting patiently for us to go about our business so that it could come in for another raid!

SWALLOW-TAILED KITE (*Elanoides forficatus*) – A beauty of a kite, and we had them a number of times as they drifted about.

CRESTED EAGLE (*Morphnus guianensis*) – Wow! It was fairly quick, but we had one fly by at fairly close range as it crossed Pilchecocho, with a full crop... Rodolfo's photos proved this, in addition to its thick bill, heavy set build, and barred wings and tail! I was hoping for it to land in more visible spot, but it picked a more concealed place that we had trouble locating. Marla did actually find it just before it launched away for good... nice going! I do have to say that this one turned up on what looked to be a dismal, and rainy afternoon, but we certainly made the best of it! Just goes to show that you never know what will show up, in any kind of weather!

HARPY EAGLE (*Harpia harpyja*) – The jury will always be out on this particular sighting, but I include it here as there is genuine possibility that the large eagle that we saw at a distance from the canopy walkway could have been this powerful eagle species. Oscar first spotted the bird at a great distance as it perched high, atop a large Kapok tree east of us, so there was a definite light disadvantage in the morning, and the resolution through the scope was pretty muddy. This meant that we had to largely try and rely on any clues other than clean plumage characteristics. To me, the bird

always looked more slender than I would have wanted for a Harpy, including the bill shape, but distance can really play games; even a Harpy can look on the skinnier side if perched up vertically, and not fluffed out. We could never see the legs well enough to see if there was feathering, so this field mark was out, but many of us did agree that there did seem to be a hint of a clean black chest band. Again, light can play tricks, turning gray into something darker looking. The bird did fly closer on a couple of occasions before vanishing into the forest, but never really gave us the meat to drive the id home. For a bird of this magnitude and rarity, we really needed a closer look to claim victory, so we have to leave it as a mystery. I do have two final comments: first that we have a grand time watching it and trying to piece the puzzle together, and also that all of you now totally deserve to see one in the near birding future!

SLENDER-BILLED KITE (*Helicolestes hamatus*) – Seen well a couple of times through the scope at Sacha, as well as in flight. This was the all gray, short-tailed kite with the red soft part colors.

DOUBLE-TOOTHED KITE (*Harpagus bidentatus*) – A common raptor, especially from the canopy walkway where they perch about for easy scope views.

PLUMBEOUS KITE (*Ictinia plumbea*) – A relative of the Mississippi Kite, but this a resident bird that sports obvious rufous in the wing, as well as clean tail bars; we saw them a few times drifting about and perched at the canopy walkway.

CRANE HAWK (*Geranospiza caerulescens*) – A lighter gray hawk with a long, barred tail, as well as paler red soft part colors. Our best looks were of a perched bird from the wooden - soon to be - metal tower.

SLATE-COLORED HAWK (*Buteogallus schistaceus*) – Another gray hawk with red soft part colors. This one is darker and chunkier than the previous species, and we enjoyed nice scope views a couple of times.

ROADSIDE HAWK (*Rupornis magnirostris*) – Al and I had one briefly on our second day, but we all caught up with them later on in the trip. When in flight this one is best identified by those large rufous wing panels.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

RUFUS-SIDED CRAKE (*Laterallus melanophaius*) – Crakes are almost always a challenge to get a look at, as we experienced, but every now and then one behaves just the right way and offers up a fantastic view. I couldn't believe our luck when we got one to pop up for a few seconds along the Pilchecocho lake edge. The only down side was that we were in a canoe, so were at the mercy of the speed at which we could maneuver, meaning that a couple of folks had vegetation in the way... darn!

GRAY-BREASTED CRAKE (*Laterallus exilis*) – Uncooperative out on the river islands. [*]

UNIFORM CRAKE (*Amaurolimnas concolor*) – I had never even heard this species at Sacha, but we found a territory where we got them to vocalize a couple of times. Not surprisingly, it didn't come in... I've still never managed to catch a glimpse of this furtive species. [*]

Heliornithidae (Finfoots)

SUNGREBE (*Heliornis fulica*) – Seen by most up a side channel of the Orquidea stream as it swam away as fast as it could, and Rodolfo even got a pic! We actually unintentionally flushed what was probably the same bird off of its roost a little later, but it was too quick to outsmart, and once again, canoe birding has its limitations with respect to dexterity, but it is the only way to get into some of these species' habitats.

Aramidae (Limpkin)

LIMPKIN (*Aramus guarauna*) – Seen well around the edges of Pilchecocho.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SOUTHERN LAPWING (*Vanellus chilensis*) – A couple of times out on the sand banks of the Napo River, both standing and in flight. That large black chest was quite evident.

COLLARED PLOVER (*Charadrius collaris*) – A couple of them seen from the motorized canoe along the Napo as they fed about on some sand banks.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – A single bird along the Napo. [b]

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

YELLOW-BILLED TERN (*Sternula superciliaris*) – Nice views at a couple of birds in flight as we motored our way down to the parrot salt licks.

LARGE-BILLED TERN (*Phaetusa simplex*) – A large and striking tern species that can be found in small numbers along the upper Napo River. We lucked out and had some fabulous studies at a pair as they flew about close by, this as they sat about and called from a nearby sand bank.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) [I]

PALE-VENTED PIGEON (*Patagioenas cayennensis*) – Most common out along the Napo River where we saw them numerous times.

PLUMBEOUS PIGEON (*Patagioenas plumbea*) – Never did manage to spot one! [*]

RUDDY PIGEON (*Patagioenas subvinacea*) – Excellent studies a couple of times from the canopy towers.

SAPPHIRE QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon saphirina*) – One called below us from the dark understory as we birded from the canopy walkways. [*]

GRAY-FRONTED DOVE (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) [*]

EARED DOVE (*Zenaida auriculata*) – Common in the central valley.

Opisthocomidae (Hoatzin)

HOATZIN (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) – Seen everyday of the trip since they are such a common fixture around Pilchecocho. These guys are a showy and entertaining bird to watch, not to mention photogenic! Aside from looking like they are made from spare parts, they also have the goof factor, as they flop about and really create quite a scene.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SQUIRREL CUCKOO (*Piaya cayana*) – Especially common from the canopy towers, where we had them a few times.

BLACK-BELLIED CUCKOO (*Piaya melanogaster*) – Knock-out studies of a vocalizing bird from the wooden tower when it came in right below us. This one is beautifully colored, and really strutted its stuff for us.

GREATER ANI (*Crotophaga major*) – The largest ani, and a very intensely colored bird as well, with those metallic blue and purple tones. We had them for many fine studies along the edges of Pilchecocho and out along the Napo.

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Most common around the edges of Pilchecocho. It was a charge to see them all lined up and hunkered down during a rainy period, something they frequently do since they are so gregarious.

Strigidae (Owls)

TAWNY-BELLIED SCREECH-OWL (*Megascops watsonii*) – Vocal, but not at all responsive. [*]

CRESTED OWL (*Lophotrix cristata*) – Our sharp-eyed native guide, Wilson, went off the beaten track at Anangu - near the inner parrot salt lick - to find them for us on a day roost... wow! The looks could not have been better.

FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL (*Glauclidium brasilianum*) [*]

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

COMMON PAURAQUE (*Nyctidromus albicollis*) [*]

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

GREAT POTOO (*Nyctibius grandis*) – Oscar had one staked out in a tall *Ficus* tree along the Napo near the outer parrot salt lick for nice studies. These guys don't tend to perch atop a dead snag like other potoo species, but rather along a long, diagonal branch similar in color to its plumage.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne zonaris*) – Seen a few times zooming about in large groups over the canopy.

SHORT-TAILED SWIFT (*Chaetura brachyura*) – The stubby-tailed, thick-winged *Chaetura* swift of the lowlands.

GRAY-RUMPED SWIFT (*Chaetura cinereiventris*) – More like a Chimney Swift in shape; we had them a couple of times with the previous species.

FORK-TAILED PALM-SWIFT (*Tachornis squamata*) – The most commonly seen swift seen zipping about over lakes, and forest alike.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

RUFOUS-BREASTED HERMIT (*Glaucois hirsutus*) – Point blank studies of a bird already on its roost along the Anaconda stream one late afternoon!

WHITE-BEARDED HERMIT (*Phaethornis hispidus*) – One cooperative individual out near the Napo as it fed about in some trailside flowers was a hit! We even saw it well enough to discern the white throat stripe.

STRAIGHT-BILLED HERMIT (*Phaethornis bourcieri*) – Although the bill is not completely straight, it is straighter than other hermits, hence the name. We had them perched nicely a couple of times for scope studies.

GREAT-BILLED HERMIT (*Phaethornis malaris*) – We hit a small lek along the Providencia trail for nice scope views of this chunky hermit.

SPARKLING VIOLETEAR (*Colibri coruscans*) – Common in the gardens at the San Jose Hotel in the central valley.

BLACK-THROATED MANGO (*Anthracothorax nigricollis*) – One male under relatively backlit conditions from the wooden tower as it fed about overhead in the Kapok tree flowers.

BLACK-TAILED TRAINBEARER (*Lesbia victoriae victoriae*) – A few around the San Jose Garden Hotel.

WESTERN EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus melanorhynchus*) – One quick male at the San Jose during our couple of hours there before the flight.

BLUE-TAILED EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon mellisugus*) – Sometimes lumped with the previous species, but their habitats and ranges are so different, the split seems valid. This one prefers swampy forest edges, and we had quick looks a couple of times along the channels around Pilchecocho.

GRAY-BREASTED SABREWING (*Campylopterus largipennis*) – Excellent scope studies of this robust hummer across the Napo River from Sacha at Anangu.

FORK-TAILED WOODNYMPH (*Thalurania furcata*) – A few of us had scope views of a female at Providencia, right near our lunch spot.

OLIVE-SPOTTED HUMMINGBIRD (*Leucippus chlorocercus*) – Restricted to the early growth, river island habitats of larger rivers. We had plenty of fine views of this dull species on the first river island that we visited, as they fed about on bright, yellow squash-like flowers, and even through the scope.

GLITTERING-THROATED EMERALD (*Amazilia fimbriata*) – The common emerald of the lowlands in edge habitats. This was the one with the white stripe down the belly that many also saw right around the cabins as they fed about on large, pink flowers.

GOLDEN-TAILED SAPPHIRE (*Chrysuronia oenone*) – We had good looks at a female from the canopy walkways.

Trogonidae (Trogons)

BLACK-TAILED TROGON (*Trogon melanurus*) – Fine studies of a red-bellied male right overhead along the main boardwalk at Sacha.

GREEN-BACKED TROGON (*Trogon viridis*) – The most commonly encountered trogon around Sacha, and we enjoyed many fine studies of both males and females.

AMAZONIAN TROGON (*Trogon ramonianus*) – Heard a couple of times, but Oscar spotted a perched female for us from the wooden tower for clean looks one morning.

BLACK-THROATED TROGON (*Trogon rufus*) – Killer scope views at a pair along the terra firme forest trail at Providencia.

COLLARED TROGON (*Trogon collaris*) – Our final new trogon of the trip when we ran into a pair along the main boardwalk at Sacha on our last bit of birding before heading to the motorized canoe to Coca. Things really exploded at this moment, and we celebrated some of the best activity of the trip!

Momotidae (Motmots)

AMAZONIAN MOTMOT (*Momotus momota*) – We were really close, but this one really gave us the runaround! [*]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle torquata*) – This large kingfisher was common along the edges of Pilchecocho.

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*) – Surprisingly scarce this trip, but Claudius pulled one out of the hat with a fine spot as we made our way up to Coca on our final day of the trip.

GREEN-AND-RUFOUS KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle inda*) – A bird of blackwater streams. We did manage to find one perched along the Orquidea stream, but it didn't stay for everybody to get a look at. Apart from this, the best we could do were birds blasting by at light speed!

AMERICAN PYGMY KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle aenea*) – We had brushes with them a few times, and even saw them in flight quite well, but never got one stationary.

Bucconidae (Puffbirds)

WHITE-NECKED PUFFBIRD (*Notharchus hyperrhynchus*) – Fabulous scope studies of a pair from the canopy walkway of this handsome, and large, canopy puffbird species.

PIED PUFFBIRD (*Notharchus tectus*) – A smaller version of the previous species, but with a spotted crown, and a few other plumage alterations. We had no trouble finding this boldly patterned puffbird from the canopy walkway, even having it for a bout perched on the suspension cables.

CHESTNUT-CAPPED PUFFBIRD (*Bucco macrodactylus*) – Quality scope studies were had by all across the river at Anangu as one called and fed about in a tall vine tangle. This one gave us a run for our money, but I believe it was Marla who tracked it down among the myriad of vines!

LANCEOLATED MONKLET (*Micromonacha lanceolata*) – This one has a large range, but is often a very hard bird to actually come across as it spends much of its time - as most puffbirds do - sitting quietly, often in the canopy. Luckily, we heard one calling from the canopy walkway, and managed to cajole it in for crippling studies as it perched in the canopy right below us!

BROWN NUNLET (*Nonnula brunnea*) – Another tricky puffbird species to track down and spot, but we heard one calling at Anangu, and pulled it in for "high-five" scope studies.

BLACK-FRONTED NUNBIRD (*Monasa nigrifrons*) – The common nunbird in the riparian forests out along the Napo.

WHITE-FRONTED NUNBIRD (*Monasa morphoeus*) – This one replaces the previous species in taller, more mature forest, such as around the canopy towers.

YELLOW-BILLED NUNBIRD (*Monasa flavirostris*) – The least common of the nunbirds at Sacha. After having heard one vocalizing for a healthy chunk of the morning during our second visit to the canopy walkway, Oscar finally spotted it perched at a distance, and promptly threw it into the scope for pretty good views.

SWALLOW-WINGED PUFFBIRD (*Chelidoptera tenebrosa*) – Commonly seen perched in tall trees from the canopy towers, and out along the Napo.

Galbulidae (Jacamars)

WHITE-CHINNED JACAMAR (*Galbula tombacea*) – While we had resounding success with the puffbird family this trip, the closely related jacamars, on the other hand, really made things hard. I don't know what they were up to, but at least we tagged in with terrific studies at a couple of key species, salvaging the family count to some extent. This species was on almost complete hiatus up until the final day, when they must have decided that the conditions were right. I don't know how many times we tried to find this one up and down the entrance channel to the lake, but the last time was the charm when an active and responsive pair came to life, offering up awesome scope views! Just goes to show that the rainforest can be a mysterious place, that takes time and patience to bird.

PURPLISH JACAMAR (*Galbula chalcothorax*) – This one, on the other hand, was pretty easy during our first visit to the canopy walkway, perching right on the main suspension cables for scope studies.

Capitonidae (New World Barbets)

SCARLET-CROWNED BARBET (*Capito aurovirens*) – Some fine scope studies of males out along the Napo River. When seen well, that red crown really stands out!

GILDED BARBET (*Capito auratus*) – A beautiful orange, yellow, and black barbet of the forest canopy, that one can find pretty easily after a bit of searching around Sacha.

Ramphastidae (Toucans)

LETTERED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus inscriptus*) – A small, all yellow-bellied aracari. We only ever stumbled upon them but once during some activity out along the Napo.

CHESTNUT-EARED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus castanotis*) – This one tends to be more a bird of large river edges and riparian forests, but one surprised us at the canopy walkway for excellent studies; the one with the red belly band.

MANY-BANDED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus pluricinctus*) – The most common aracari of the area, and the one with the two bold black bands on the belly.

IVORY-BILLED ARACARI (*Pteroglossus azara*) – The aracari with the all ivory bill, and one that we had many great studies of over the course of the week.

WHITE-THROATED TOUCAN (*Ramphastos tucanus cuvieri*) – The larger of the two *Ramphastos* toucan species here in the Ecuadorian Amazon. In many places in the neotropics there are two large *Ramphastos* toucans, the larger one gives the yelping calls, while the smaller croaks. We had some nice looks at this iconic species a few times, perched up for scope studies.

CHANNEL-BILLED TOUCAN (YELLOW-RIDGED) (*Ramphastos vitellinus culminatus*) – Very similar in plumage to the previous species, but if seen well, this one is smaller, and with a shorter bill. They can be hard to distinguish at times, but the vocalizations make it easy. We saw this one on two occasions at the canopy walkways, right on the same perch, and watching them give their distinctive calls.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

YELLOW-TUFTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes cruentatus*) – A flashy woodpecker species that we saw well a few times as they perched up in the open.

LITTLE WOODPECKER (*Veniliornis passerinus*) – Common out in the riparian forests of the Napo edge.

CRIMSON-MANTLED WOODPECKER (*Colaptes rivolii*) – A stunning woodpecker of the highlands that we saw around the San Jose Garden Hotel during our pre-flight birding.

SPOT-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Colaptes punctigula*) – Nice looks at this well-marked woodpecker species out along the Napo when we found one perched up on a snag next to what was probably its nest hole.

SCALE-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Ceolus grammicus*) – Superb views of this beauty from the canopy walkway during our first visit there.

CHESTNUT WOODPECKER (*Ceolus elegans*) – As we paddled along the first stretches of the Anaconda stream, one of this large species surprised us, and crossing right in front of us, landing on a trunk for sensational views.

CREAM-COLORED WOODPECKER (*Ceolus flavus*) – One of the most beautiful and unique woodpeckers of them all! We struggled a bit initially with quick flyovers, but scored big along the Anaconda stream when we ran face-first into a group of three that had put down to roost at almost eye level in a spiny palm tree of the genus *Desmuncus*; a palm tree that actually behaves more like a vine. Good choice too, because the protection value probably pays off. I doubt that there is much information regarding the roosting habits of this species, so our sighting might be very significant.

RINGED WOODPECKER (*Ceolus torquatus*) – Yet another fabulously beautiful and rare woodpecker species that we connected with at the canopy walkways. We heard it calling from the canopy as we made our way through the understory to the towers, and managed to call it along with us, in hopes of having it waiting for us up high. And what do you know? It came with us and performed wonderfully when it hit a large dead tree for scope studies.

LINEATED WOODPECKER (*Dryocopus lineatus*) – Claudius spotted one for us out along the Napo River one afternoon before it got away.
CRIMSON-CRESTED WOODPECKER (*Campephilus melanoleucos*) – First seen from the canopy walkways, but they got away too quickly. We made up for it, however, finding them along the Shipati stream that leads up into the Providencia trail and had nice views when we hit a pair as they foraged in some high trees.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

BLACK CARACARA (*Daptrius ater*) – A handsome caracara, with its stark black plumage, white rump, and reddish-orange facial skin. We had them on a few days out along the Napo, and up at the canopy towers.
RED-THROATED CARACARA (*Ibycter americanus*) – The arresting vocalizations of this large, forest based caracara sound like a riot in progress! Soon into our hike along the Providencia trail, we hit a loud pair as they called from the canopy, and nabbed some pretty nice scope studies.
YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*) – Common out along the Napo River.
LAUGHING FALCON (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*) – The Lone Ranger of the falcon family, with that bold black mask. We called one into the canopy walkway towers for killer scope studies, and also enjoyed their memorable chorusing a few times over the course of the week.
AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – Common in the central valley highlands.
BAT FALCON (*Falco ruficularis*) – We had a pair flying about over Pilchecochoa one beautiful afternoon.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

SCARLET-SHOULDERED PARROTLET (*Touit huetii*) – We had high hopes of finding this rare and colorful parrotlet species at the inforest parrot salt lick at Anangu, but they just didn't materialize among the hundreds of screeching Cobalt-winged Parakeets, that in the end put on one of the greatest shows on earth! But as I said a few times, there is always pay back, and we got it. During our full morning stint at the wooden tower, we suddenly heard a loud group of them right around us, and quickly spotted them as they fed at close range in a fruiting Ficus tree at eye level for views, that we will never forget; a rare event, indeed. As impressive as the views of them perched through the scope, was when they loudly took flight, and did a few parade laps in flight around us. This is what birding is all about!
COBALT-WINGED PARAKEET (*Brotogeris cyanopectera*) – Without doubt, one of the best experiences of the trip. How can you beat hundreds of screaming parakeets visiting a hallowed salt lick site, in a setting lush with emerald-green vegetation, only meters away? I've seen this more times than I can remember, but I am always blown away! The finale is something to behold, when they take flight, like little fighter planes, and dash through the shelter right by ones head... amazing. It takes some waiting to get them to come down to the lick, as they trickle down, one-by-one, watching carefully for any predator, but it is always worth it!
BLUE-HEADED PARROT (*Pionus menstruus*) – We had our best views of this distinctive species out at the outer parrot salt lick at Anangu as they perched about with the Mealy.
YELLOW-CROWNED PARROT (*Amazona ochrocephala*) – We bombed with this one on our first run past the Napo edge parrot salt lick, but our second pass was the silver bullet, when we landed at least 20 of them feeding right on the clay!
MEALY PARROT (*Amazona farinosa*) – The large Amazon parrot with the whiter cast to its plumage; so well named! While we did see them in the trees during our first visit for nice views, we hit it just right during our second visit, finding them gobbling down the clay for magnificent views.
ORANGE-WINGED PARROT (*Amazona amazonica*) – Seen only as flyovers, but we did manage to discern the yellow cheeks.
BLUE-WINGED PARROTLET (*Forpus xanthopterygius*) – Seen flying over as little rockets on the river islands.
BLACK-HEADED PARROT (*Pionites melanocephalus*) – Many fine studies of this canopy, forest based parrot.
MAROON-TAILED PARAKEET (*Pyrrhura melanura*) – Mainly heard, but we did catch them in flight from the canopy walkway, catching hints of the red in the wings.
DUSKY-HEADED PARAKEET (*Aratinga weddellii*) – This was the highlight during our first visit to the Napo-edge salt licks, when we connected with a group of about 20 birds, clinging to the clay bank as they put on a nice performance. We also saw them during our birding from the towers.
RED-BELLIED MACAW (*Orthopsittaca manilatus*) – Seen best as flybys out along the Napo River in nice light where we could see the yellowish facial skin, and red belly.
SCARLET MACAW (*Ara macao*) – Some scanning with the scope from the canopy walkway produced a few of this colorful species at a distance, as they foraged in a canopy tree.
CHESTNUT-FRONTED MACAW (*Ara severus*) – A few flew by as we birded the canopy walkway, but we did eventually find some perched out along the Napo River.
WHITE-EYED PARAKEET (*Psittacara leucophthalmus*) – We had our best experience with this loud and large parakeet during our second visit to the Napo-edge lick when a large group was caught in the act, perched and feeding on the clay bank for exceptional views. As we watched them, we could see the red and yellow in the shoulders cleanly.

Thamnophilidae (Typical Antbirds)

FASCIATED ANTSHRIKE (*Cymbilaimus lineatus*) – This one had teased us a bit vocally, but we finally clinched excellent views of a male when it came in with a small flock in the canopy near the boat house at the end of the Pilchecochoa canal.
UNDULATED ANTSHRIKE (*Frederickena unduliger*) [*]
PLAIN-WINGED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus schistaceus*) – Quick views of a male near the Wire-tailed Manakin lek behind the lodge one afternoon.
MOUSE-COLORED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus murinus*) [*]
CASTELNAU'S ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnophilus cryptoleucus*) – A river island specialty that can be a real devil to see, as it has a talent for keeping to the deepest thickets. We persevered, and landed some quality views of a male as it called and perched in a few holes a few times.
DUSKY-THROATED ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnomanes ardesiacus*) – We had one active male as it foraged in the understory along the main boardwalk at Sacha.
CINEREOUS ANTSHRIKE (*Thamnomanes caesius*) [*]
PLAIN-THROATED ANTWREN (*Isleria hauxwelli*) – Great looks at this understory antwren during our first afternoon at Sacha.
SPOT-WINGED ANTSHRIKE (*Pygiptila stellaris*) [*]
PYGMY ANTWREN (*Myrmotherula brachyura*) – We called one in from the canopy walkway for spot on views. Nice to finally look down at this one!
MOUSTACHED ANTWREN (SHORT-BILLED) (*Myrmotherula ignota obscura*) [*]
WHITE-FLANKED ANTWREN (*Myrmotherula axillaris*) – We had a pair in the understory below the wooden tower for quick, but nice views.

- GRAY ANTWREN** (*Myrmotherula menetriesii*) – Scope views of a singing male dazzled us upon arrival to Sacha.
- DUGAND'S ANTWREN** (*Herpsilochmus dugandi*) – A strict canopy species that one can pretty much write off seeing without a canopy tower! We were treated to eye level scope studies of a handsome, singing male as it foraged about in a tree right next to the wooden tower.
- PERUVIAN WARBLING-ANTBIRD** (*Hypocnemis peruviana*) – The warbling antbird complex was recently split six ways, this being the one that is found throughout much of western Amazonia. This species prefers viney tangles from where they deliver their loud scratchy calls. A pair of them appeared for us one morning along Sacha's main boardwalk for good views.
- BLACKISH ANTBIRD** (*Cercomacroides nigrescens*) [*]
- GRAY ANTBIRD** (*Cercomacra cinerascens*) [*]
- BLACK-FACED ANTBIRD** (*Myrmoborus myotherinus*) – Cracking views at a pair out near the Napo at Sacha as they hopped about in the understory.
- BLACK-AND-WHITE ANTBIRD** (*Myrmochanes hemileucus*) [*]
- SILVERED ANTBIRD** (*Sclateria naevia*) – One of the more commonly seen species of antbird on this trip, often popping out of its swampy forest haunts as we paddled about in the "dugout" canoes!
- SPOT-WINGED ANTBIRD** (*Schistocichla leucostigma*) [*]
- WHITE-SHOULDERED ANTBIRD** (*Myrmeciza melanoceps*) – Seen best along the Anaconda stream when we got a male to emerge from the swamp; at one point when it flew across the stream, that white shoulder was evident.
- PLUMBEOUS ANTBIRD** (*Myrmeciza hyperythra*) – Another swamp forest based antbird that we saw along the main boardwalk during one of our hikes out to the Napo; we also heard their loud songs ringing throughout the forests on repeated occasions.
- WHITE-CHEEKED ANTBIRD** (*Gymnopithys leucaspis*) [*]
- [SPOT-BACKED] ANTBIRD (NEW SPECIES)** (*Hylophylax [naevius] sp. nov.?*) – Yes, you guessed it, this is yet another antbird that thrives in the swampy forests around Sacha. This small, and well marked species, frequently sings and calls along the Orquidea stream and main boardwalk, where we saw a male at close range.
- DOT-BACKED ANTBIRD** (*Hylophylax punctulatus*) – Very similar to the previous species in plumage. This species can only be found in swampy forests with extensive, standing blackwater, such as along the Orquidea stream. Paul spotted this one for us during our first round along Orquidea as it fed about quietly right alongside the stream.
- COMMON SCALE-BACKED ANTBIRD** (*Willisornis poecilinotus*) – Tremendous scope views of a male behind the lodge at Sacha one early morning really kicked things off!
- Grallariidae (Antpittas)*
- WHITE-LORED ANTPITTA** (*Hylopezus fulviventris*) [*]
- Rhinocryptidae (Tapaculos)*
- RUSTY-BELTED TAPACULO** (*Liosceles thoracicus*) – We gave it a good try several times, but never could convince one to come in for a peek. [*]
- Formicariidae (Antthrushes)*
- RUFOUS-CAPPED ANTTHRUSH** (*Formicarius colma*) [*]
- STRIATED ANTTHRUSH** (*Chamaeza nobilis*) – It started to move towards us, but then seemed to lose interest. [*]
- Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)*
- SHORT-BILLED LEAFTOSSER** (*Sclerurus ruficularis*) – Although heard and glimpsed along the main boardwalk, we really drove this one home with smashing views of an individual on its night roost a short walk from the lodge after dinner. This thanks to an extra effort from Wilson who went out and confirmed its presence for us.
- PLAIN-BROWN WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*) – Seen best on our last morning during our final trip down the Orquidea. This one is essentially unstreaked, but does show a grayer face patch.
- WEDGE-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*) – We were about to get this one, but a burst of rain shut things down! [*]
- CINNAMON-THROATED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrexetastes rufigula*) – A richly colored, mostly unmarked woodcreeper of the forest canopy. This was one of the first birds on the scene up at the canopy walkway during our first visit, and we tagged in with some top-notch views.
- LONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Nasica longirostris*) – Although we had a close encounter with one flying right over us out on Pilchecochoa, Linde really came through by spotting another one for us at close foraging as it probed the leaf bases of a palm tree along Orquidea... nothing less than stunning!
- BLACK-BANDED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendrocolaptes picumnus*) – Nice views at a pair of this large woodcreeper in some Cecropia tree/river edge habitat across the Napo from Sacha.
- STRIPED WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*) – Mainly a bird of swamps. We had them a few times as they foraged about, such as along Orquidea.
- ELEGANT WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus elegans*) – A stealthy woodcreeper who's song is often heard echoing through the forest, but a bird that can be a toughie to lay eyes on; for some reason they seem more skittish than most other woodcreepers, barely staying in sight for more than a few seconds, before dashing to the next tree. We did luck out with a responsive bird one early morning on our way to the canopy walkway before it finally decided that it had been had!
- BUFF-THROATED WOODCREEPER** (*Xiphorhynchus guttatus*) – A hefty woodcreeper that tends to be one of the most commonly seen around Sacha. Well, we heard them numerous times, but it took us right up until the last day to get everybody on one that for clean views, this right along the main boardwalk during that last blast of head-spinning activity!
- STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Dendroplex picus*) – A fairly common woodcreeper of swampy lake edges around Sacha. During that rainy spell on our second afternoon, we certainly made the best of it, raking in some of the more common, but still interesting birds one can expect around the "Balsa". This one played hide-and-seek a bit, but finally gave us the views we had been working for!
- DUIDA WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes duidae*) – A member of the Lineated Woodcreeper complex, and now officially split from it; this one occurs in the canopy, often with flocks, in NW Amazonia. This is another fine example of how the canopy towers really make life much, much easier when trying to spot these high strata species! We had nice views of one from the canopy walkway on our second visit.
- CINNAMON-RUMPED FOLIAGE-GLEANER** (*Philydor pyrrhodes*) – This one can be very hard to see well, even when responsive, blasting by in rocket form!

CHESTNUT-WINGED HOOKBILL (*Ancistrops strigilatus*) – This proved to be a tougher trip than normal for furnariids, but we still got a few good ones, such as this handsome canopy species as it moved with a small canopy flock along the Providencia trail.

ORANGE-FRONTED PLUSHCROWN (*Metopothrix aurantiaca*) [*]

PARKER'S SPINETAIL (*Cranioleuca vulpecula*) – Pretty good looks at this river island specialty after some convincing!

AZARA'S SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis azarae*) – Nice looks at a pair in a scrubby hedge at the San Jose Garden Hotel on our first day.

DARK-BREASTED SPINETAIL (*Synallaxis albigularis*) – Briefly for some out on a river island, but it was sneaky!

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

WHITE-LORED TYRANNULET (*Ornithion inermis*) – Perched up and singing for fabulous scope studies from the canopy walkway.

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*) [*]

YELLOW-CROWNED TYRANNULET (*Tyrannulus elatus*) – A rather unobtrusive canopy bird that we saw well first from the canopy walkway.

FOREST ELAENIA (*Myiopagis gaimardii*) – Good looks at an active pair at Providencia in the garden edges around our lunch spot.

GRAY ELAENIA (*Myiopagis caniceps*) – These canopy elaenias are tough to get a good look at if not birding from a tower, but we did manage a few peeks out along the Napo, where we found a vocal pair.

LARGE ELAENIA (*Elaenia spectabilis*) – Well, most of us never even saw the bird, but a couple of folks snapped some clearly identifiable pics out on the river island, where this species spends its austral winter. [a]

MOTTLE-BACKED ELAENIA (*Elaenia gigas*) – Nice scope views for all of this distinctive elaenia out along the Napo River one morning. For a bird with such a distinctive horned crest, and white patch in the crown, its name seems to fall short!

OCHRE-BELLIED FLYCATCHER (*Mionectes oleagineus*) – This orange toned species was seen well a couple of times, but it was less common than usual.

SLENDER-FOOTED TYRANNULET (*Zimmerius gracilipes*) – I guess they just ran out of names to slap onto these dull tyrannulets, but taking measurements into account, I'm sure that the slender feet make much more sense when examined as a specimen! We had this small canopy tyrannid a few times from the canopy towers.

GOLDEN-FACED TYRANNULET (*Zimmerius chrysops*) – At its extreme lower elevational limit here in the east; we had a quick pair at Providencia for scope studies, and agreed that the term "Golden" doesn't quite cut it... "yellowish" would be more accurate.

DOUBLE-BANDED PYGMY-TYRANT (*Lophotriccus vitiosus*) [*]

SPOTTED TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum maculatum*) – Scoped out on the river islands, where this species finds its stronghold.

YELLOW-BROWED TODY-FLYCATCHER (*Todirostrum chrysocrotaphum*) – A spectacularly plumaged little canopy tyrant that we had fine studies at from the wooden tower, where it can often be found.

YELLOW-MARGINED FLYCATCHER (*Tolmomyias assimilis*) [*]

GRAY-CROWNED FLYCATCHER (*Tolmomyias poliocephalus*) – It is always a thrill to look down on some of these hard to identify, canopy tyrannids, isn't it? The canopy towers really afford this unusual opportunity, and we took full advantage! We had this active species right around us at the canopy walkway for scope views a couple of times.

YELLOW-BREASTED FLYCATCHER (*Tolmomyias flaviventris*) [*]

ROYAL FLYCATCHER (AMAZONIAN) (*Onychorhynchus coronatus castelnaui*) – I sure wish this rare flycatcher had been a little more cooperative, but it was just too jumpy, and stayed well behind a thick wall of vines to be able to do much with it. In all of my years birding the right habitats in Ecuador's Amazon, I had never once even heard this subspecies here. [*]

EULER'S FLYCATCHER (*Lathrotriccus eulerei*) [*]

FUSCOUS FLYCATCHER (FUSCOUS) (*Cnemotriccus fuscatus fuscator*) – Great looks at this river island, understory species; it gave us a run for our money, but we persevered, and ended up with nice views.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Known to many! We found this one in the gardens around the San Jose.

DRAB WATER TYRANT (*Ochthornis littoralis*) – As I said, this one is spectacular in its drabness! We had plenty of fine views of them as they fed about on the Napo edge sandbars.

STREAK-THROATED BUSH-TYRANT (*Myiotheretes striaticollis*) – Heard at the San Jose in the central valley, but it was distant. [*]

RUFOUS-TAILED FLATBILL (*Ramphotrigon ruficauda*) – We had to bend over backwards since we were in the canoe along the Orquidea stream, but hey, that's canoe birding! We still triumphed, with fine studies at a pair as they fed about and vocalized right overhead.

CINNAMON ATTLILA (*Attila cinnamomeus*) – This richly colored, varzea attila species, was first seen pretty well along the Orquidea stream, but we topped our views on our last day along the main boardwalk when one popped in for scope studies.

CITRON-BELLIED ATTLILA (*Attila citriniventris*) [*]

BRIGHT-RUMPED ATTLILA (*Attila spadiceus*) – A wide ranging neotropical species that is often heard, but the bird itself to see can be a very different can of worms as it frequently stays high in the canopy. We had some fine luck finding one at Providencia when we called one down for almost full frame scope studies.

GRAYISH MOURNER (*Rhytipterna simplex*) – Very Myiarchus like in shape and appearance, but mainly gray in coloration. We had good looks at this canopy species from the towers a couple of times.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – One from the canopy walkway.

SWAINSON'S FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus swainsoni*) – An easily overlooked Myiarchus species that tends to prefer river and lake edges. Although traditionally considered to be an austral migrant, there is evidence that suggests that there is a resident breeding population here in Ecuador, such as the birds around Pilchecocha. This still remains to be seen though. We caught one along the channel while birding from the canoe for nice looks.

SHORT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus ferox*) – Close views, in nice afternoon light at a pair along the edges of Pilchecocha.

LESSER KISKADEE (*Pitangus lictor*) – A swamp edge species that often stays close to the water, hawking insects over the grasses, with its long, skinny bill.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – An iconic species that can be found throughout the neotropics in a variety of habitats; its call is probably even more recognizable than the bird in the flesh!

BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER (*Megarynchus pitangua*) – A larger version of the previous species that we saw almost daily around Sacha, such as around the "balsa".

SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (*Myiozetetes similis*) – A common flycatcher along the edges of Pilchecocha.

- GRAY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes granadensis*) – Seen best along the edges of Pilchecocho. Remember that we noted the bifurcated crest, which is so distinctive for this noisy species.
- DUSKY-CHESTED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiozetetes luteiventris*) – Scope views at Providencia, at their boardwalk camp.
- STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) – Brief views a couple of times.
- PIRATIC FLYCATCHER** (*Legatus leucophaeus*) – They were quiet this trip, but we did find one as it foraged at a fruiting tree along the Napo edge.
- VARIEGATED FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonomus varius*) – Very common this time of the year, especially out along the Napo, where we had them in almost every tree! [a]
- CROWNED SLATY FLYCATCHER** (*Empidonomus aurantioatrocristatus*) – Another austral migrant that crowds into this part of the world during the southern winter. [a]
- TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Another daily sight!

Cotingidae (Cotingas)

- PURPLE-THROATED FRUITCROW** (*Querula purpurata*) – Not as common and vocal as they can be, but we did eventually spot a male from the canopy walkway for scope views.
- AMAZONIAN UMBRELLABIRD** (*Cephalopterus ornatus*) – Cotingas are one the strangest groups of all neotropical birds... sort of like the western hemisphere's version answer to the birds of paradise, because they seem to be able to do everything; some have crazy shapes, while others are outrageously colored. This one happens to be one of those hulking, shy species that looks as if it has been crossed with a woodpecker and a crow. No fancy colors, just an odd bird that charms with its all black plumage, and sneaks into sight just when the observer least expects it! We had excellent views of this one out on the river islands at Anangu when a female graced our presence as we birded from the motorized canoe.
- PLUM-THROATED COTINGA** (*Cotinga maynana*) – The flashy side of cotingas, no doubt! This one saved the afternoon out along the Napo River one afternoon when Claudius spotted a male in full splendor!
- SPANGLED COTINGA** (*Cotinga cayana*) – Many fine views from the towers of this sizzling cotinga species. It is interesting to note that the more intense the plumage, the less vocal cotingas seem to be... this being a classic example. Has anybody ever heard one?
- SCREAMING PIHA** (*Lipaugus vociferans*) – Now here is the other extreme! Although seriously short on color, this cotinga species more than makes up for it, with its explosive song. Used in many Hollywood soundtracks, this unforgettable sound shows up in movies not even supposed to be made in the neotropics! We had some picture perfect studies through the scope of this one as it belted out its almost defining song at Sacha.
- BARE-NECKED FRUITCROW** (*Gymnoderus foetidus*) – We had our best views of this gangly looking cotinga when a few perched up at the canopy walkway.

Pipridae (Manakins)

- DWARF TYRANT-MANAKIN** (*Tyrannetes stolzmanni*) – Not a real attention grabber, but we did track one down in the canopy at the wooden tower as it fed on ficus fruits.
- BLUE-CROWNED MANAKIN** (*Lepidothrix coronata*) – Linde and I had quick looks at a male before it scooted away along the Providencia trail.
- ORANGE-CROWNED MANAKIN** (*Heterocercus aurantiivertex*) – Fabulous studies at a male along the Orquidea as it flashed that flaming orange crest!
- WHITE-BEARDED MANAKIN** (*Manacus manacus*) – Nice looks at a male along the Anaconda stream.
- WIRE-TAILED MANAKIN** (*Pipra filicauda*) – Wow... what a manakin! Our late in the day stake-out behind the lodge really paid off when we scored killer scope views at two males at an active little lek, as they danced about right over the trail; through the scope we could even discern those fine little wires at the end of the tail. Since they were so close to the lodge, a few folks opted for some encore performances for some nice pic opportunities!
- WING-BARRED PIPRITES** (*Piprites chloris*) – At close range, right below us, through the scope from the canopy walkway!

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

- BLACK-TAILED TITYRA** (*Tityra cayana*) – Seen a couple of times from the towers through the scope!
- BLACK-CROWNED TITYRA** (*Tityra inquisitor*) – One female bird out along the Napo River perched up for us during some birding from the motorized canoe.
- WHITE-BROWED PURPLETUFT** (*Iodopleura isabellae*) – This little cutie was recently reclassified from the cotingas, into this newly erected family, the Tityras. We had our best looks at this canopy species when we had no less than five birds perched up together in nice afternoon light, on our last visit to the wooden tower... awesome! It was nice to see all of the marks, including the purple on the sides.
- WHITE-WINGED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus polychopterus*) – Glimpsed out along the Napo River.
- BLACK-CAPPED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus marginatus*) – Excellent studies at this forest species from both towers.
- PINK-THROATED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus minor*) – A large canopy becard, that often runs with flocks. We had our first views of this one at the canopy walkway as a female plumaged bird flitted about at close range right at eye level, but then later caught up with males - pink throats flashing - for memorable views.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

- RED-EYED VIREO** (*Vireo olivaceus*) – A few from the canopy walkway.
- DUSKY-CAPPED GREENLET** (*Pachysylvia hypoxantha*) – A canopy flock bird that be a tricky one to see from the forest floor, but we pulled it off along the Providencia trail when we called in a responsive bird with a small flock that was breezing through overhead.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

- VIOLACEOUS JAY** (*Cyanocorax violaceus*) – A large, noisy, and very conspicuous jay of the eastern lowlands. We had plenty of fine views of them as they screamed over our heads.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

- BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW** (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*) – We had the nominate, resident breeding form - common in the highlands - on our first day around the San Jose, but did see a group of the austral migrant form (patagonica) as they swept over Pilchecocho a time or two.
- WHITE-BANDED SWALLOW** (*Atticora fasciata*) – An elegant swallow that occurs mainly out along the Napo River, where we had plenty of fine looks.

SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*) – In small numbers along the edges of Pilchecocha, and out along the Napo; the mostly brown swallow with the paler rump.

GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*) – Most commonly seen perched right up on top of the balsa at Sacha.

BROWN-CHESTED MARTIN (*Progne tapera*) – The all brown-backed martin, with the thin brown band across the chest; we had them a number of times for good looks along the Napo.

WHITE-WINGED SWALLOW (*Tachycineta albiventer*) – A beautiful swallow that graces any place there is water.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

SCALY-BREASTED WREN (*Microcerculus marginatus*) – We had them close, but never managed to get one into view. [*]

HOUSE WREN (*Troglodytes aedon*) – Right around the balsa at Sacha.

THRUSH-LIKE WREN (*Campylorhynchus turdinus*) – A large canopy wren with an explosive, dueted song that can be heard from quite a distance. We had fabulous studies from the canopy walkway through the scope a couple of times.

CORAYA WREN (*Pheugopedius coraya*) – An understory wren that inhabits vine tangles, so it can be a real devil to see, but a few of us did manage to see at least one of a pair as they sneaked around us along the main boardwalk at Sacha.

WHITE-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (*Henicorhina leucosticta*) – Seen along the Providencia trail as it slinked about through the understory.

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

LONG-BILLED GNATWREN (*Ramphocaenus melanurus*) [*]

Donacobiidae (Donacobius)

BLACK-CAPPED DONACOBIOUS (*Donacobius atricapilla*) – This one has for years been jostled about between various families due to uncertainty regarding its taxonomic affiliation. Alas, the right decision was eventually made to create a monotypic family for it... Donacobiidae! This one ended up being one of the trip favorites, and for good reason, as it is a real looker, and full of energy!

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

HAUXWELL'S THRUSH (*Turdus hauxwelli*) – We had one zip by, but really can only claim it as a heard. This one was strangely silent throughout the trip, but came to life on our last morning. [*]

BLACK-BILLED THRUSH (*Turdus ignobilis*) – The common thrush of secondary habitats.

GREAT THRUSH (*Turdus fuscater*) – The largest member of the genus, and a common bird in the central highlands.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

MAGPIE TANAGER (*Cissopis leverianus*) – We had a pair fly by out along the Napo, but never managed to connect with them again.

ORANGE-HEADED TANAGER (*Thlypopsis sordida*) – They flitted by us a few times out on the river islands.

SILVER-BEAKED TANAGER (*Ramphocelus carbo*) – A common bird of edges and secondary habitats. The male is quite a beautiful bird, with its velvety plumage and, chalky-white bill.

MASKED CRIMSON TANAGER (*Ramphocelus nigrogularis*) – Frequently seen cohorting with the previous species, and certainly outshines it, with that brilliant red and black plumage! We had plenty of fine views at a few groups of them around Pilchecocha.

BLUE-AND-YELLOW TANAGER (*Pipraeidea bonariensis*) – A stunning central valley tanager species that we saw during our early morning birding around the San Jose.

BLUE-GRAY TANAGER (*Thraupis episcopus*) – We saw two subspecies of this ubiquitous tanager species. First, we saw the more drab form of the west slope (*quaesita*) in the central valley around the San Jose. For the rest of the trip we saw the brighter form (*coelestis*), that sports the white shoulder patch, and inhabits the east slope.

PALM TANAGER (*Thraupis palmarum*) – Seen daily at Sacha where they frequented the lake edges and towers.

SCRUB TANAGER (*Tangara vitriolina*) – A few of this central valley species on the grounds of the San Jose as they fed about in the trees around the parking lot.

MASKED TANAGER (*Tangara nigrocincta*) – Seen briefly from the canopy walkway, but we caught up with this one later on for good looks a couple of times as they fed through the canopy.

TURQUOISE TANAGER (*Tangara mexicana*) – I still have a hard time finding anything particularly "turquoise" about this bird... maybe "purple-and-yellow" would have been a better choice. We had scope views of this one from the canopy walkway when they came up and perched for us during a glorious morning.

PARADISE TANAGER (*Tangara chilensis*) – We had crippling studies of this well named tanager as they danced overhead from the wooden tower.

OPAL-RUMPED TANAGER (*Tangara velia*) – A stunningly beautiful, cobalt colored species that we had wonderful views of a couple of times from the canopy towers.

OPAL-CROWNED TANAGER (*Tangara callophrys*) – Similar in plumage to the previous species, but with a large, opal diadem, and one that we had splendid views of from the canopy towers.

GREEN-AND-GOLD TANAGER (*Tangara schrankii*) – Al spotted our first group of this gorgeous tanager from the canopy walkway when they came in to feed right below us for nice looks, but we had a number of other encounters over the course of the week.

BLACK-FACED DACNIS (*Dacnis lineata*) – A striking turquoise and black tanager species that we enjoyed killer scope studies of from the canopy towers.

YELLOW-BELLIED DACNIS (*Dacnis flaviventer*) – A brilliantly colored, yellow and black dacnis species, with the reddish eye that we saw well a few times from the canopy towers.

BLUE DACNIS (*Dacnis cayana*) – A mostly blue species of dacnis (male) with pinkish legs. While most other female dacnis species are rather dull, this one does actually sport some color. We had fine studies at eye level a couple of times from the metal canopy walkway.

PURPLE HONEYCREEPER (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*) – Males and females from the canopy towers was a nice treat!

GREEN HONEYCREEPER (*Chlorophanes spiza*) – A wide ranging species throughout Central and South America that we saw well from the canopy towers at close range... that male is a real stunner!

BICOLORED CONEBILL (*Conirostrum bicolor*) – Well, it isn't often that the leader gets a full-blown lifer on this trip, but it happened in the form of this little river island specialty! This one had only been known from one or two old sightings along nearby islands along the Napo in Ecuador, but

fairly recently popped back onto the radar on one particular island where it has also been reported breeding. I was certainly hoping to run across this one, but didn't expect it to be so easy, being the first island bird we encountered after stepping out of the canoe... nice!

CINEREOUS CONEBILL (*Conirostrum cinereum fraseri*) – A common highland conebill that we saw well in the parking lot at the San Jose; the one with the whitish brow and wing spot.

RUSTY FLOWERPIERCER (*Diglossa sittoides decorata*) – One quick female in the gardens around the San Jose when one popped in for a quick visit.

CHESTNUT-BELLIED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila castaneiventris*) – Quick looks at a female on the river islands.

BUFF-THROATED SALTATOR (*Saltator maximus*) – A common saltator in many parts of the neotropics; we had them a few times as they fed about in nearby trees.

GRAYISH SALTATOR (*Saltator coerulescens*) – Most common in riparian forests, such as out along the Napo River. We encountered one for nice views through the scope as the sun really started to bake us out on a river island.

Emberizidae (Buntings and New World Sparrows)

YELLOW-BROWED SPARROW (*Ammodramus aurifrons*) – A few of this open country were seen as they scampered about along the sand out on the river islands.

RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – One of the most common species in the central valley, such as around gardens; we had plenty of them around the San Jose.

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

BLUE-BLACK GROSBEAK (*Cyanocompsa cyanoides*) [*]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

RED-BREASTED MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella militaris*) – Distant, but still pretty good views at a male across the runway at the Coca airport on our last day just before the flight... nice spotting, Claudius!

ORIOLE BLACKBIRD (*Gymnomystax mexicanus*) – Smashing views of this large and colorful blackbird out on the river islands was a real hit!

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*) – We had one female perched up one morning out along the Napo River.

GIANT COWBIRD (*Molothrus oryzivorus*) – The largest cowbird. We had them a few times flying by, but did catch a female perched on one occasion.

EPAULET ORIOLE (MORICHE) (*Icterus cayanensis chrysocephalus*) – A lovely black canopy oriole with bright yellow highlights on the crown and wings. We spotted this one a few times from the canopy towers for clean scope studies.

SOLITARY BLACK CACIQUE (*Cacicus solitarius*) – We had brushes with a sneaky pair when they crept up into some trees along the Napo, doing their best to stay out of sight.

YELLOW-RUMPED CACIQUE (*Cacicus cela*) – The common cacique of the Amazonian lowlands, and seen everyday of the trip.

RUSSET-BACKED OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius angustifrons*) – Seen daily, and a very common oropendola in the east.

CRESTED OROPENDOLA (*Psarocolius decumanus*) – The oropendola with the all dark plumage and ivory bill; we had good looks at them on most days around Sacha.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

THICK-BILLED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia laniirostris*) – The euphonia species with the black mask and yellow all the way up through the throat that we saw along the Providencia trail.

GOLDEN-RUMPED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia cyanocephala*) – A stunning euphonia species that we had as an added bonus to the trip during our morning birding of birding at the San Jose.

GOLDEN-BELLIED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia chrysopasta*) – Also known as the White-lored Euphonia, this is a fairly common bird of the canopy, and we had nice views at a pair from the canopy walkway as they foraged right below us.

WHITE-VENTED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia minuta*) – Oscar spotted, and scoped a singing male from the canopy walkway for excellent studies. This one differs from other similar euphonia species in that it has a more reduced yellow frontal patch, among other minor differences.

ORANGE-BELLIED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia xanthogaster*) – The most commonly encountered euphonia in much of Ecuador, especially in humid areas.

RUFOUS-BELLIED EUPHONIA (*Euphonia rufiventris*) – A chunky euphonia species of the Amazonian lowlands, males bearing an all black hood. We had our first good looks at this one from the canopy walkway, but even topped these looks when we found them feeding about right overhead in the fruiting ficus at the wooden tower.

HOODED SISKIN (*Spinus magellanicus*) – Flyovers in the central valley at the San Jose.

MAMMALS

LONG-NOSED BAT (*Rhynchonycteris naso*) – A small bat that can often be found on day roosts right around the lake edge at Pilchecochoa, often on emergent trunks and sticks. Oscar had a family group staked-out for us out at the balsa where they could be found daily, hanging upside-down on one of the main supports.

PYGMY MARMOSET (*Cebuella pygmaea*) – The smallest monkey in the world, the body not much larger than a clinched fist. Oscar, Wilson, and I had our eyes and ears out for them, but only finally managed to locate one from the wooden tower as it fed about quietly about halfway up on a neighboring tree. Unfortunately, about half of the group had already gotten to the top, and on our way back down, it had vanished.

BLACK-MANTLE TAMARIN (*Saguinus nigricollis*) – One of the most commonly seen monkey species around Sacha, and seen almost daily right around the cabins. This is the one that is sometimes called in the Spanish, "bebe leche" (milk drinker) due to its white muzzle.

COMMON SQUIRREL MONKEY (*Saimiri sciureus*) – Common in large, entertaining groups around Sacha as they search the branches for insects and fruits... sort of like an active, acrobatic, GI- Joe doll!

SPIX'S NIGHT MONKEY (*Aotus vociferans*) – We had some excellent scope views at a group at a day roost near the lodge as they lounged about; cute little faces just barely able to open their eyes during daylight hours.

DUSKY TITI MONKEY (*Callicebus moloch*) – A very noisy monkey that can be a tough one to see as they have the ability to stay hidden in dense vine tangles, but we did outsmart them for killer scope views a couple of times as they sat their with their long, non-prehensile tails hanging down.

- RED HOWLER MONKEY** (*Alouatta seniculus*) – Common around Sacha where small groups feed and sit about in the canopy.
- WHITE-FRONTED CAPUCHIN** (*Cebus albifrons*) – A hefty monkey species that we caught in the act, as they fed across the main boardwalk at Sacha.
- POEPPIG'S WOOLLY MONKEY** (*Lagothrix poeppigii*) – I have not seen woolly monkeys like this in a long time, so it was really refreshing to see them doing so well in the forests on the south side of the Napo around Anangu. This is a widely hunted species for food by local people, so it was a breath of fresh air to see that they have come back, and seem unafraid. Although we had listed this one as the "Common Woolly Monkey", the animals on the south side of the Napo are actually "Poeppig's". Woolly monkey taxonomy has undergone a few changes lately, so animals north of the Napo are now officially the Common Woolly Monkey. But the taxonomy still seems to be a bit in debate.
- BROWN-THROATED THREE-TOED SLOTH** (*Bradypus variegatus*) – We saw one distant, stolid individual slumped up in between a few branches in the canopy from the metal towers, but we could still see the three "toes"!
- CAPYBARA** (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*) – While we didn't see the animal, we did see plenty of tracks out on the river island. This has always puzzled me; why is it that this species seems so rare in Ecuador even though the tracks are commonly seen, while in other areas of South America they are so abundant?
- BLACK AGOUTI** (*Dasyprocta fuliginosa*) – Commonly seen sneaking about around camp at Sacha.
- KINKAJOU** (*Potos flavus*) – During an owling attempt one evening before dinner along the main boardwalk at Sacha, we ran into a couple of this monkey-like species overhead for remarkable spotlight views.
- GIANT OTTER** (*Pteronura brasiliensis*) – What an incredible welcome to Sacha (and the Amazonian lowlands) when we stumbled across this hulking otter species as it chomped on some unfortunate fish, as it bobbed about right in front of us as we paddled across Pilchecocha for the first time!
- Herps*
- TURNIP-TAILED GECKO** (*Thecadactylus rapicauda*) – The large gecko species that we saw around the cabins during evening hours. I'm not 100% positive on this id, but it was all I could find for the area.
- GOLDEN TEGU** (*Tupinambis teguixin*) – Seen scurrying about along the edges of Pilchecocha.
- GREEN ANACONDA** (*Eunectes murinus*) – Oscar spotted a small individual basking in the early morning sun as we made our way up the Shipati stream on our way up to the Providencia trail. Needless to say, we pulled over, and enjoyed nice views at close range.
- SPECTACLED CAIMAN** (*Caiman crocodilus*) – A medium-sized caiman that hangs back along lake edges and streams. We saw them as they floated about underneath the dining room areas as they laid in wait for scraps!
- BLACK CAIMAN** (*Melanosuchus niger*) – We had one fairly large individual as it made its way across Pilchecocha one afternoon.
- ECUADOR POISON DART FROG** (*Ameerega bilinguis*) – We found one of this colorful species on the forest floor as it did its best to run for cover.
- YELLOW-SPOTTED RIVER TURTLE** (*Podocnemis unifilis*) – A daily sight near the balsa where they would line up along emergent logs on Pilchecocha.
- CANE TOAD** (*Rhinella marina*) – The large and wide ranging toad found throughout South America; we had one floating in a swamp along the main boardwalk one evening at Sacha.
- SOUTH AMERICAN COMMON TOAD** (*Rhinella margaritifera*) – The common forest toad that we saw a couple of times. This one passes itself off as a dead, crumpled-up leaf until it decides to hop!

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 307 bird taxa and 14 mammal taxa