

Participants : Neil Osborne, Tony Armstrong, Doug Smith, Fred Wake, Paul Passant, John Rayner, Mike Passant, Jim Pattinson, Neil Marshall & Andy McLevy.

Itinerary (plus a few notable birds)

Friday 4 September - arrived late pm/early am. Night at Fuente de Piedra, Quito.

Saturday 5 September - A free day-tour officially starts on Sunday. We birded Quito National Park and the Botanical gardens seeing Black tailed Trainbearer, Black Flowerpiercer, Tyrian Metaltail, Band tailed Seed-eater and Cinereous Conebill. Night at Hotel Sebastian, Quito.

Sunday 6 September - Yanacocha & the old Nono-Mindo road. Birds included Scarlet bellied Mountain Tanager, Barred Fruit-eater, Sword billed Hummingbird, White rumped Hawk, Sickle winged Guan, Plate billed Mountain Toucan, Beautiful Jay and Crimson rumped Toucanet. A good variety of hummingbirds and Common Potoo were seen at Bella Vista. Night at Bella Vista.

Monday 7 September - Tandayapa valley - birding both the road and various trails. Notable birds – Tanager Finch, Toucan Barbet, Green and Black Fruit-eater, Ornate Flycatcher, Squirrel Cuckoo, Masked Trogon, Purple bibbed White-tip, Golden headed Quetzal and Swallow tailed Nightjar. Night at Bella Vista.

Tuesday 8 September - Tandayapa valley - again birding various trails and the road. Birds included Turquoise Jay, White throated Quail-Dove, Rufous headed Pygmy Tyrant, Occelated Tapaculo, Red crested Cotinga, Moustached Antpitta, Orange bellied Euphonia, Uniform Antshrike and Lyre tailed Nightjar. A minimum of 13 species of hummingbird were seen at Tandayapa lodge. Night at Tandayapa lodge.

Wednesday 9 September - Paz de Las Aves and Old Nono-Mindo road, Bella Vista-trails and road. Birds seen included Orange breasted Fruit-eater, Olivaceous Phia, Andean Cock of the Rock, Black chinned Mountain Tanager, Giant Antpitta, Yellow breasted Antpitta and Occelated Tapaculo. Night at Tandayapa lodge.

Thursday 10 September - Milpi/Mindo area - cloud forest birds included Club winged Manakin, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Choco Toucan, Rufous throated Tanager, Scaly throated Foliage Gleaner, Choco Warbler and White whiskered Hermit. Rain forest birds included Spotted Woodcreeper, Tawny breasted Flycatcher and Esmeraldes Antbird. Milpi road birds included Pacific Hornero, Swallow Tanager, Masked Water Tyrant, Snowy throated Kingbird and Olive crowned Yellowthroat. Night at Hosteria Ayelir.

Friday 11 September - Rio Silanche Sanctuary (PVM). Birding highlights were Pacific Ant Wren, Yellow tailed Oriole, Black cheeked Woodpecker, Swallow tailed Kite, Black striped Woodcreeper, Tawny crested Tanager, Rufous Motmot, Checker throated Ant Wren, Scarlet browed Tanager and Western Slaty Antshrike.
Night at Hosteria Ayelir.

Saturday 12 September - Wildcard day - Rio Silanche Sanctuary (PVM) and Calacali area. Birding highlights were Western striped Wood Haunter, Choco Trogon, Dusky faced Tanager, Spot crowned Ant Vireo, Orange fronted Barbet and Scaly throated Leaf-tosser. At Calacali we saw White tailed Hillstar, White tailed Shrike Tyrant, Ash breasted Sierra Finch, Burrowing Owl and Golden rumped Euphonia.
Night at Hotel Sabastian, Quito.

Sunday 13 September - Papallacta pass-Las Atenas-clear & cold with spectacular views of Antisana. Notable birds were Tawny Antpitta, Stout billed Cinclodes, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Rufous bellied Seedsnipe, White chinned Thistletail and Silvery Grebe.
Afternoon in Thermos valley - birds seen included Shining Sunbeam, Pale napped Brushfinch, Black chested Buzzard Eagle and a distant Andean Condor.
Later at Guango we noted up to 12 species of hummingbird including Tourmaline Sun Angel, White bellied Woodstar and Glowing Puffleg.
Night at Guango lodge.

Monday 14 September - am in Thermos valley. Highlights included Agile Tit Tyrant, Black capped Hemispingus, Paramo Seedeater, Rainbow bearded Thornbill, Black backed Bush Tanager, Masked Mountain Tanager and a very close Andean Condor.
Lunch at Guango lodge. Notable birds - a high soaring Solitary Eagle, Inca Jay, Rufous breasted Chat Tyrant, White capped Dipper and Torrent Duck.
San Isidro area - birds included Sulphur bellied and Ashy headed Tyrannulet, Sub tropical Cacique, Chestnut crowned Antpitta and San Isidro Owl.
Night at Cabanas San Isidro.

Tuesday 15 September - San Isidro area - birds included Black billed Pepper Shrike, Golden crowned Flycatcher and White bellied Antpitta.
Guacamayos ridge - quiet but noted Lacrimose Mountain Tanager, Beryl spangled Tanager, Slate crowned Antpitta and Black and White Hawk Eagle.
San Isidro - nearby roads - highlights were Rufous breasted Flycatcher, Tyrannine Woodcreeper, Crested Quetzal - heard only - and Rufous banded Owl.
Night at Cabanas San Isidro.

Wednesday 16 September - San Isidro - nearby roads - many Tanager species, Highland Motmot, Golden collared Honeycreeper, Rufous crowned Tody Flycatcher, Wilsons Phalarope, Yellow vented Woodpecker and Barred Becard. 6 species of hummingbird were seen at San Isidro.
Journey to Gareno lodge - birds included Black Caracara, White eared Jacamar, Orange backed Troupial, Scarlet crowned Barbet, Lettered Aracari and Cream coloured Woodpecker.
Night at Gareno lodge.

Thursday 17 September - Birding trails and road adjacent to lodge – highlights were Scaly breasted Woodpecker, Undulated Antshrike, Yellow browed Antbird, White fronted Nunbird, Striped Manakin, Guilded Barbet, Yellow billed Jacamar, Pavonine Quetzal, Red stained Woodpecker, Purplish Jacamar, Brown Nunlet and Tawny bellied Screech Owl. What a day!

Night at Gareno lodge.

Friday 18 September - Early morning at Gareno lodge - birds were Spangled Cotinga, Black faced Antbird, Casqued Oropendola, Lemon throated Barbet, Chestnut winged Hookbill and Rufous Potoo.

Journey to Quito - birded Boraha road seeing Orange eared Tanager, Blue necked Tanager, Cerulean Warbler and Barred Becard.

Night at Hotel San Sebastian, Quito.

Saturday 19 September - Flew to Coca then journeyed to Sacha lodge - 80 kms downstream via the River Napo. Birds seen - White banded Swallow, Yellow billed Tern, Tropical Screech Owl, Black fronted Nunbird, King Vulture, Hoatzin, Black capped Donacobius and Yellow bellied Dacnis.

Walked trail seeing Striated Antthrush, Great Tinamou, Crested Owl and Grey winged Trumpeter.

Night at Sacha lodge.

Sunday 20 September - Climbed canopy tower and walkway - 40 metres high with fantastic views over the forest. Highlights included Slate coloured Hawk, Bare necked Fruitcrow, Violaceous Jay, White browed Purpletuft, Many banded Aracari, Spix's Guan, Ivory billed Aracari, White Hawk, Double toothed Kite, Plum throated Cotinga, Dugand's Antwren and Golden collared Aracari. Rain stops play!

Canoe trail - seeing Boat billed Heron, White chinned Jacamar, Striped Woodcreeper, Silvered Antbird and Dot backed Antbird.

Walked another trail seeing Variegated Tinamou, Reddish winged Bare-eye, Sooty Antbird and Straight billed Hermit.

Night at Sacha lodge.

Monday 21 September - Birded different aged islands in River Napo. Birds noted included White bellied Spinetail, Mottled backed Elania, Lesser Hornero, Ladder tailed Nightjar, Grey breasted Crake, Red bellied Macaw, Rufous headed Woodpecker, Castelnau's Antshrike and Dark breasted Spinetail.

Went into a side creek then walked a trail seeing Ocellated Poorwill, Red throated Caracara, Black throated Hermit, Plain throated Antwren, Hairy crested Antbird, Undulated Antbird, Masked Crimson Tanager and poor flight views only of Chestnut crowned Foliage Gleaner.

Grey fronted Dove was seen on return to lodge on boardwalk.

Short billed Leafhopper seen at night time roost - a short walk into forest.

Night at Sacha lodge.

Tuesday 22 September - Heavy rain stopped play early am. Later, as we made our way to the canopy walkway a cracking Collared Puffbird was noted.

Canopy Tower - birds included Ornate Hawk Eagle, a distant Great Potoo, Guilded Barbet, Crimson crested Woodpecker, King Vulture, Swallow tailed Kite, White necked Puffbird and Plum throated and Spangled Cotinga. A little more quiet than our first visit but still top rate.

Trail birds included Cinereous Mourner, Wire tailed Manakin, Black faced Antthrush, White chested Puffbird, White necked Thrush and Chestnut belted Gnateater
Night at Sacha lodge.

Wednesday 23 September - Sacha lodge to Coca - birds seen included Chestnut Woodpecker, Eastern White winged Becard, Orange fronted Plushcrown, Swallow winged Puffbird, Short crested Flycatcher and Yellow headed Caracara.

Night at Fuente de Piedra, Quito.

Thursday 24 September - Miami stopover- Having a few hours to kill, most of the group took taxis to the area adjacent to Miami Springs golf course. In a long avenue of trees and on the golf course we noted about 20 species including Red bellied Woodpecker, Loggerhead Shrike, Chimney Swift, American Redstart, Black & White, Prairie and Yellow throated Warbler, Common Yellowthroat, Blue Jay, Northern Mockingbird and Blue Grey Gnatcatcher.

We were made very welcome in the club house and were allowed to bird watch on the course!

The trip was organized through Tropical Birding and was a great success. All arrangements were trouble free, the transport and drivers first class and always on time. The accommodation ranged from basic but clean to first rate and the food good throughout.

Our guide Sam Woods - an English lad - was excellent and his knowledge of bird calls and song enabled us to see many difficult species.

His replacement for the last few days - Olger Licuy- a local guy, was an absolute revelation, his birding skills were second to none and it was a privilege to be in his company.

The local guides at all the lodges were also first rate.

Our 4 nights extension to Sacha Lodge is an absolute not-to-be-missed experience - a very slick operation throughout with top class accommodation and unbelievable food.

At more than 40 metres high, the canopy walkway gave us fantastic views of many species in the tree tops looking down on the birds and was an unforgettable experience.

Our bird guides Oscar, and Columbia were also first rate and went to great lengths to make sure we saw all the birds.

Finally, the birds were absolutely fantastic and as a group we racked up around 600 species seen with another 50 or so heard.

South America is a must for the travelling birder and Ecuador is a good choice for a first visit.

Andy McLevy March 2010

for any information on the above trip do not hesitate to get in touch.