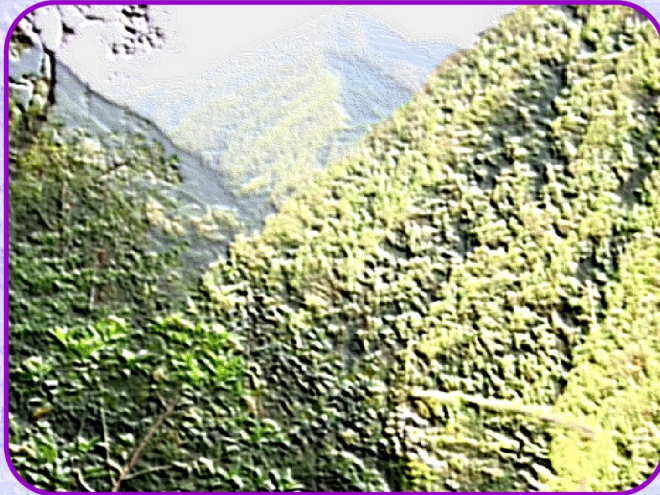
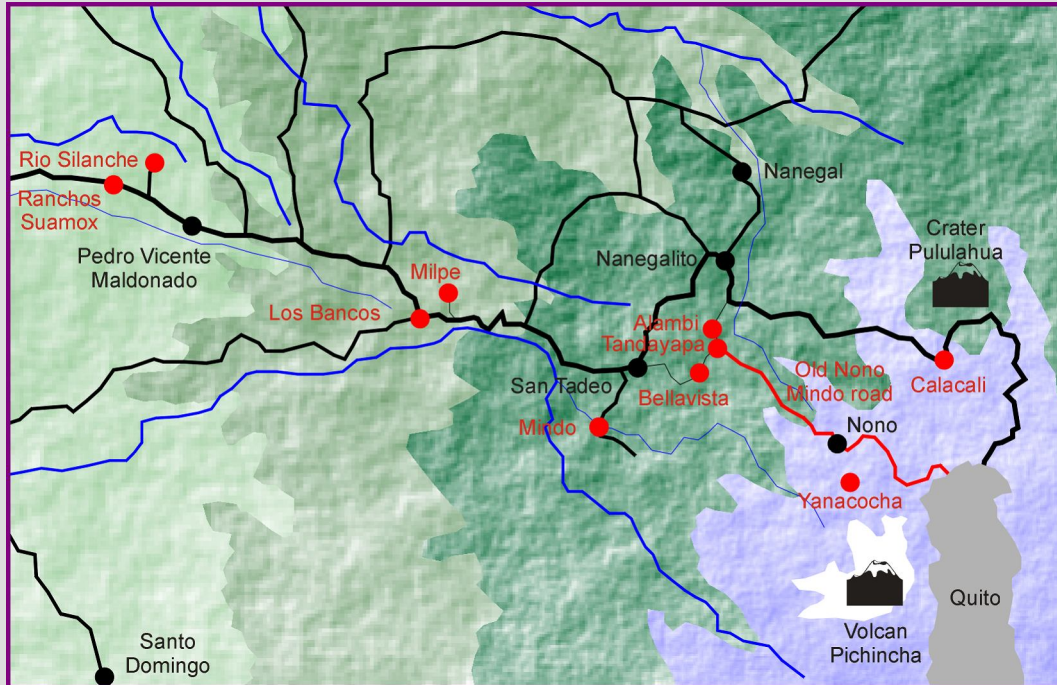


Ecuador



18th to 24th April, 2008



Friday, 18 th	Calacali Bellavista	9.00 - 11.00 13.45 - 17.30
Saturday, 19 th	Bellavista Lodge Bellavista forests Tony Nunnery's	6.00 - 8.30 10.00 - 13.30 14.30 - 17.30
Sunday, 20 th	Tandayapa Alambi Bellavista Lodge	6.00 - 12.30 13.00 - 15.15 16.15 - 18.00
Monday, 21 st	Paz Sachatamia Lodge Mindo	6.00 - 12.00 12.45 - 13.30 14.00 - 17.00
Tuesday, 22 nd	Paz Los Blancos Milpe	6.00 - 10.30 11.45 - 14.00 14.15 - 17.00
Wednesday, 23 rd	Rio Silanche Rancho Suamox	6.00 - 12.00 12.30 - 16.00
Thursday, 24 th	Tandayapa Trout Farm Yanacocha	6.00 - 7.00 8.00 - 9.00 11.30 - 15.30

ECUADOR

18th to 24th April, 2008

Introduction

Ecuador is one of the smaller countries of South America, but has both a huge number of species which can be seen and also a great diversity of habitats. The Andes cut a line more or less from North to South, which results in a delineation of altitudinal environments across the East/West divide. Similar altitudes on the West of the Andes can have a totally different mix of birds on one slope as compared to the other. With this in mind, the trip was based in one area on the Western slope highlands, with the intention of exploring the mix of altitudes within this limited geographical area within the week.



The Tandayapa area is only about 2 hours from Quito, which is one of the two major airports for international flights. It thus offered a useful base for experiencing a small sample of Ecuador's birds. Tandayapa Lodge is the best known of the accommodations within the area, if not the country itself, but we chose Bellavista Lodge, which is 6km further up the slope than the former, and we found that it offered all that Tandayapa had, with the option of visiting the latter for the birds when required. Most of the birding in the vicinity is within the dense surviving forests, and hence a lot of work needs to be done to hunt down the bird parties and speciality birds. On the other hand, most of the hotspots also have bird feeders, which makes for easy birding when required. Most of the feeding stations are designed for hummingbirds, and this results in a vast array of hummers seen at very close quarters. It can be quite eye opening to witness the difference in species mix that a few hundred metres in altitude can make.

Bellavista Lodge

www.bellavistacloudforest.com

The location for this idyll in the cloud forest is superb, being located about another 6km up from Tandayapa. "Greater" Bellavista covers a large area, and much of this was reclaimed and replanted from farmed land, despite the surrounding forest looking natural on first inspection. The accommodation is more than comfortable, and blends unobtrusively into the environment. The package that we bought was for full board, and the meals are of a very good standard. Many of these couldn't be made, since we were out in the field from the early hours, but packed meals were prepared in lieu. The original idea was to spend a few days wandering the tracks around the lodge, and then use one of the drivers to deliver us to the various birding areas which couldn't be reached on foot, and to explore ourselves. However, we took up the offer of using one of the guides (Gabriel) from the lodge, who doubled up as both driver and expert guide. This worked particularly well, since many of the locations weren't straightforward, and an extra pair of locally experienced eyes (which knew what they were looking at many times more than we did!) helped our enjoyment of the trip considerably.

Despite some reports to the contrary, Bellavista does have electricity points in the rooms, using US type pins, and there is a payphone on site (a phonecard needs to be purchased from the reception).

Richard Parsons, who owns Bellavista, also owns a B&B apartment in Quito. For the princely sum of \$17 per person, this is well worth booking for one night on departure (the flight was early the next morning).

On our last full day, we birded the Old Nono Mindo Road from Bellavista to Quito, stayed the night in the apartment (visiting an excellent and reasonably priced Argentinian restaurant around the corner), and paid a flat \$20 for one of Bellavista's drivers to take us to the airport.

Other locations visited

Tony Nunnery's house

This is located about 1.8km down the track from Bellavista Lodge. Tony and his wife bought some bare pasture land 10 years ago, and proceeded to replant with indigenous vegetation. He also built the house himself. He extends a warm welcome to birders, including serving coffee and biscuits on the balcony, showing warm thanks if a donation is made towards the bird food. There is no electricity or telephone on the property (he doesn't see the need), so booking ahead is not usually possible. The mainstay of the garden is the lawn with hummingbird feeders, but there are also 17km of trails throughout the whole of the property, which can offer a great variety of extra species.



Tony Nunnery's House



Balcony feeders at Tandayapa

Tandayapa

www.tandayapa.com

Tandayapa Lodge is renowned for being one of the most famous locations in the world to view hummingbirds at close quarters. It is essentially a single storey accommodation, which was originally built on open meadow, with replanting around resulting in it having a present day forest location, with a mass of hummingbirds visiting the feeders on a restricted size balcony. There are also some trails through the forest, and a hide has been set up with night lighting to attract birds which would then feed on the nocturnal moths and other insects drawn in by the artificial lighting. We were fortunate on our single visit, since there can be a good number of people vying for position on the feeder balcony, but we missed a party of 18 as we left.

Alambi

[Alambi web site](#)

Alambi Guest House is not nearly as well known as Bellavista and Tandayapa, but is well worth a visit. It is a small B&B situated just down the valley from Tandayapa village. The rooms looked comfortable from the brief view of them that we had, but the feeder garden is very rewarding. As well as a selection of hummingbirds at very close quarters, the owners also have a lively fruit feeder, which attracted more non-hummingbird activity than those of both the better known hostels. There is also a nice stretch of river behind the lodge which can hold both Torrent Duck and White-capped Dipper.



Alambi House



Feeders at edge of Paz forest

Paz de las Aves

This is a very recent development, set up by former farmer Angel Paz. He discovered not only the presence of Giant Antpittas on his land, but also that they could be attracted by offering them worms and calling their (given) names. His subsequent business has been much more lucrative than his former profession, which is also good news both for the sustainability of his birds and land, and also for others who may be drawn to the same activities. Since that first encounter, he has now found reasonably reliable sites for other Antpittas (Yellow-breasted & Moustached being the most reliable – relatively), and also has built a hide within the forest to view an active Andean Cock-of-the-Rock lek. Booking ahead is advisable, and also a pair of walking boots and torch for the muddy walk down before first light.

Mindo

This small town is on lower slopes East of Bellavista, and has a variety of habitats surrounding. It is not too distant from Paz de las Aves, and so can be added on to the day's birding after hopefully having captured the ticks of Andean Cock-of-the-Rock and Giant Antpitta first thing in the morning.



Mindo town



Restaurant at Los Bancos

Los Bancos

More specifically, the Restaurante Mirador Rio Blanco in Los Bancos, where a good meal and variety of birds at close quarters can be lazily watched while they attend the provided food (most active is the fruit feeder, as compared with the hummingbird feeders). The property looks very inauspicious from the main street entrance, but the birds are of a high quality, and the views from the rear balcony across the river valley below breathtaking.

Milpe

www.mindocloudforest.org

This is located just outside the town of Los Bancos, and is situated in the foothills, giving a lower elevation mix of birds than those around our chosen accommodation. Both Milpe and Rio Silanche are run by the Mindo Cloud Forest Association. Milpe has an excellent open feeding area around the car park, with some reasonably open forest (good for bird parties) on the trails to the denser forests on the slopes down to the river.



Reception at Milpe



Entrance to Rio Silanche

Rio Silanche

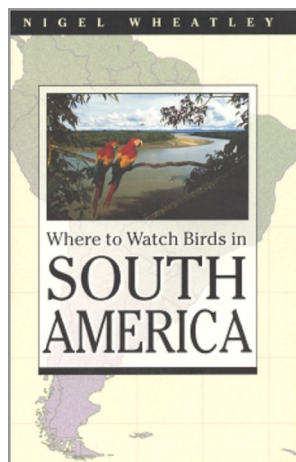
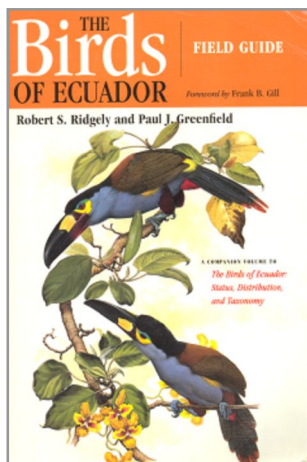
This is the second of the major forests being preserved by the Mindo Cloud Forest Association, and possibly of even more significance, since lowland rainforest is more endangered than the higher altitude plantations. Various tracks run through the forest, and are much more level than the steep sided ones we had become used to. In addition, there is a tower from which to view roving bird parties from, as well as birds overhead. A short walk away, on the main track, are African Palm Oil plantations, which signifies the threat that the land could be under.

Ranchos Suamox

www.suamoxforest.com

Abutting on to Rio Silanche is this interested piece of land, which is maintained as a fruit farm, but is very large in acreage and also attracts some excellent birds. As with some of the other sites visited, reforestation has been undertaken here. It is pleasant to be taken around the property next to the main reception for an hour or so by the owner and see some nice birds in the process. Then, as an added treat, we were given juice and a salad of a selection of the fruits grown on the farm. Delicious!

References



The best field guide available is unfortunately also designed to be used as a brick when required. "The Birds of Ecuador" by Ridgely & Greenfield is in two parts, but even the field guide on its own is monumental in size. However, with the potential number of birds being present in mind, it is an essential.

We relied on Bellavista Lodge and our guide for an indication of sites to be visited. Nigel Wheatley's "Where to Watch birds in South America" gives a flavour before you go, but doesn't go into a great deal of detail regarding the area we covered.

Timing and weather

The rainy season centres around February, but we still experienced the tail end of this – it is likely that the term rainy season here is purely relative and that the concept of a dry season is fictional. The rains were almost predictable, with fine weather in the mornings, and then cloud preceding rain in the afternoon. Only one day turned the tables on this, when heavy rain in the morning at Rio Silanche led to sun and high temperatures mid morning. Despite being more or less on the equator, the altitude kept the temperatures down to comfortable (sometimes cold at night), apart from when visiting the lowlands of Rio Silanche, when sun protection was needed.

The high likelihood of rain means that rainwear is a definite benefit, and an umbrella additionally helps with keeping optics dry. Whilst Wellington boots were available at the lodge for the many muddy tracks that were encountered, a good pair of waterproof walking boots are preferable, since they are sufficient to cope with the wet, and also have additional traction on the slippery mud.

The locality is on the fringes of a malarial zone, making prophylactics worthwhile. Despite the height, mosquitoes do occur, and are even more numerous in the lowlands.

SITES VISITED

Calacali

Day 1

Following an early landing at Quito, we seemed to make record time out of the airport, and quickly found our driver from Bellavista Lodge. We made good headway North out of Quito, and after firstly declining the offer of joining the throng to look at a touristy volcanic crater, Johnny obligingly stopped a little way further on when we spotted a Green-crowned Brilliant on the other side of the road. This wasn't just a brief stop, since it also happened to be the start of a trail at Calacali, which is a well known site on the New Road for one or two speciality birds.



The track we took descended down a scrub and low bush ridden hillside, overlooked a plateau containing a small horse racing circuit, and was bounded by impressive hills on most sides. Birds were present in quite good numbers here, but almost all were generally very secretive or flighty. Some of the target birds we managed to pick up were Tufted Tit-tyrant, regular Green-tailed Trainbearer, and Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch. The latter was the most common species here, but did prove difficult to pin down.

The trio of hummers was completed by a Sparkling Violet-ear, one of the few birds to sit long enough for enjoyable views. Most obliging of all was a male Southern Yellow

Grosbeak, which was resplendent when singing at the top of a couple of favoured perches. A few raptors were seen, but the only one to be definitely identified was a couple of American Kestrels. It was noticeable that the temperatures increased as the morning progressed, and we did actually get a little sunburnt for our efforts.

Bellavista Lodge

Following the sunshine of Calacali, we set off for Bellavista. The new road wasn't perfect, but did add Turquoise Jay and Great Thrush to the list. The turnoff for Tandayapa and Bellavista found the Old Road, which was more of a track than a road. We traversed the few kilometers further ascending all the time to reach the cloud forest of our destination. The temperature had dropped, as had the amount of clear skies.



Bellavista is set amongst the well forested hills which abut on to the Andes, and consists of a few lodges set amongst numerous trails. Main bird activity centres around the hummingbird feeders, which are dotted around the compound. Buff-tailed Coronets take centre stage, being the most numerous visitors to the feeding stations. They also tend to perch close to the feeders - one of the only species to regularly do so. Perhaps the most stunning bird to visit is the diminutive Booted Racket-tail, but other close contenders had to be Violet-tailed Sylph and Gorgeted Sunangel. The buzzing sound of an arriving Purple-throated Woodstar was appropriate since it even resembled a bee in appearance.

Hummingbirds almost monopolised the feeders, with the only alien intruder being a regular Masked Flowerpiercer.



Away from the feeders, there were a few more interesting birds, although these became more difficult to appreciate as the afternoon wore on with the increasing cloud and rain reducing visibility. At the dome, a Golden-crowned Flycatcher was seen a couple of times, with Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers regular in front of our room. To be fair, not many other species were seen around the lodge, but the afternoon had been very

enjoyable. We decided to pack in about half an hour before light receded due to the heavy fall of rain.

Bellavista Lodge

Day 2

We were supposed to meet up with our guide at 6am for a look around the trails of the lodge, but a misunderstanding meant that he was an hour late. This time wasn't wasted - we even managed to make our first misidentification mistake before it was light. A Turquoise Jay was found feeding a black juvenile. We totally missed the obvious - that this was the parasitic young Giant Cowbird. The hummers were up and around the feeders sharpish, with noise and activity abounding with the light of the morning barely full. A White-winged Brush-Finch was found skulking around the feeders, and sitting around the dome for some time was rewarded by a brief but spectacular Masked Trogon. At the other end of the lodge compound, a singing Azara's Spinetail was calling but only giving brief views.



We had wanted to avoid overuse of guides, since we usually prefer to find and (mis)identify birds ourselves. However, the number and variety of birds here, many in the canopy, made the presence of our guide invaluable, and this proved so as early as the first session with him pre-breakfast during the walk down the old road. He quickly picked up the first speciality. A Long-tailed Antbird was very difficult to pin down due to its skulking habits, but taping eventually led to half reasonable views. Just before the first bend in the road, a singing White-sided Flowerpiercer initiated a small bird wave, which was unfortunately a little high for ease of identification and comfort. However, we did make out Streak-necked Flycatcher, Grass-green Tanager, Golden-rumped Euphonia, and White-tailed Tyrannulet. Progress a little further down the track was highlighted by a perched Common Potoo, which was difficult to find behind shrubbery and bamboo. Suffice to say that this was a known roosting post.

Track up from Bellavista Lodge

For the late morning to lunchtime sortie, our guide took us along the track ascending from the lodge, and then back through one of the trails. We started the walk in fine weather, but most of the walk was in drizzly to moderate rain, although this did not detract from some enjoyable birding. We kicked off the walk again with a skulker, tape lured into half views - a pair of Plain-tailed Wrens at what appeared to be a nest site. Birds on the ascent were in low numbers, with the highlight being a flypast Plain-breasted Hawk.

Once at the junction of a smaller track to the right, the rain began to fall in earnest. Some way along here, we heard the first calls of Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan, and it didn't take us long to pick one out. The real birding began a little further on, when a Rusty-winged Barbtail kicked off a frenetic bird wave. One or two birds could be seen in its company, but took a short time to pick out. These first birds included Streaked Treehunter and Crimson-backed Woodpecker. Attention switched to the opposite side of the track, where there were even more birds. Cleaning off rainwater from damp lenses



found Cinnamon Flycatcher, Brown-capped Vireo, and a pair of handsome Plushcapes. I unfortunately only caught the back and tail of a Streaked Tuftedcheek. The descent down the Ocellated Tapaculo trail didn't unearth any other birds, despite taping for the trail namesake and White-fronted Nunbird.

Tony Nunnery's Place



With the rain still falling, and a fancy for some lazy seated birding for the afternoon, we walked the track down from the lodge for just over 1.7km to find this haven for hummers. Tony and his wife bought some unused pasture land 10 years ago, and now own something like 100 acres, which has been transformed into a bird oasis. He is more than happy to accept birders into his garden, which has undergone an amazing transformation due to their hard work, including building the house themselves. Thus for the price of \$5 each (to help towards the filling of the feeders), and a request not to wear boots on the upper balcony, there is the opportunity to observe a hummingbird city.



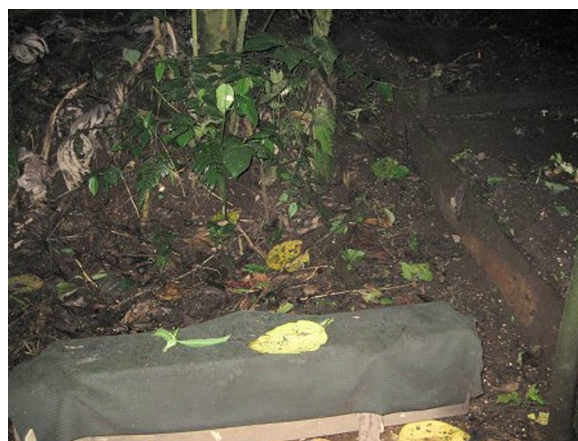
A considerable amount of time was spent on the lower balcony watching a thriving mass of hummingbirds. Numbers visiting the feeders at the lodge seemed impressive, but these were far outshone by the product of Tony's sugar feeders. Many of the species from slightly higher up were again present, but new ones such as Brown Inca, White-bellied Woodstar, Western Emerald, and Rufous-tailed Hummingbird were added. In addition, there were much higher numbers of Purple-throated Woodstar and Booted Racket-tail, with the latter having frequent squabbles in midair.

Not many birds other than hummers visited this central part of the garden, but Tony's guided tour did show the potential for variation. With a garden list of around 350, this always had to be the case. In the immediate environs of the house, we saw Black-winged Saltator, Black-capped Tanager and Slaty-throated Whitestart. A marauding flock of Red-billed Parrots kept returning to plunder the corn crop. A walk along one of the trails for a short way added Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Blue- & Black-capped Tanager, and Golden Tanager.

It was difficult to eventually tear ourselves away from the spectacle, but with a longish uphill walk to complete we left with plenty of light left. Compensation for this came in a Sickle-winged Guan perched at the top of a trackside tree, uttering its pathetic and somewhat squeaky call.

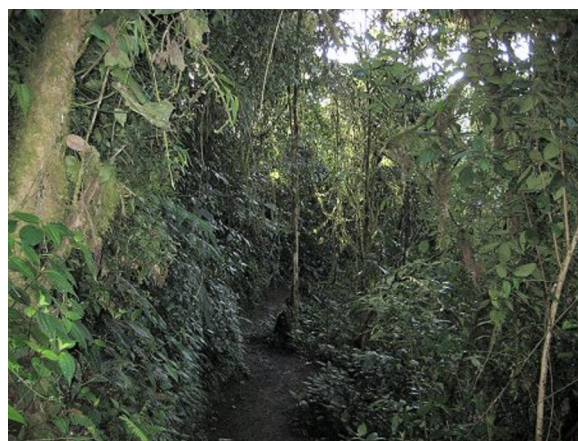
Tandayapa

Day 3



Tandayapa is reputedly one of the Holy Grails of birding, and while the visit was enjoyable, other sites were more rewarding. This may be due to the expectation surrounding the place, or even the seasonal timing. Our visit consisted of an initial walk around one of the trails, followed by the traditional viewing of the hummingbird feeders. However, one of the highlights of the day had to be completed first - the visit to the hide to wait for Immaculate Antbird. The hide is of a slightly unusual design, having full length mesh "windows" instead of shutters, and outside a light on the ground to attract moths and other insect food for the birds. The Antbird duly put in a reasonably brief appearance shortly after we arrived, which was unfortunately still in the semi dark. Not many other birds are to be seen from here, so we departed within 20 minutes of arriving.

Since the hummingbirds are guaranteed throughout the day, a walk along the Potoo Trail was decided upon. Most of this was through dense forest, and up muddy tracks, with very little birdlife on offer. Strangely, the most regular bird seen was a "world target" - 6 Andean Cock-of-the-Rocks. These were initially picked up by raucous call, and it was only the last bird which could be seen perched. It was when we were about half way around the trail that birds started to appear. First off was a small bird party which included wood-warblers and one or two other small passerines, with a Blue-capped Tanager close by.



Band-tailed Pigeons outnumbered Plumbeous Pigeons here, with small parties regularly seen. It was at this point that we had our first major mammal of the trip, with a Tyra padding its way along the horizontal branches. When we had almost completed the descent, the terrain opened up, and we spotted perched Tropical Parula, Slate-throated Whitestarts, Brown-capped Vireos, and a noisy Golden-crowned Flycatcher. The Potoo

Trail terminated at the start of the Tandayapa entrance track, which meant one more climb before the breakfast waiting in the car.

The rest of the time at Tandayapa was spent viewing the hummingbird feeders. As is usual at these throngs, hummers were in good numbers and particularly busy. The new species here included Empress Brilliant and Andean Emerald, although we realised when we saw it that one had been seen yesterday at Tony Nunnery's. One of the prevalent birds here was Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, which was always active, seldom alighting away from the feeders for long. A fruit feeder had also been stocked to try to attract families such as tanagers, but seemed to be shunned during our visit. A short time was also spent at a lower balcony where there were no feeders, leaving the watching open to varied birds. A Dusky-capped Flycatcher was the first seen, and the best views yet of Golden-naped Tanager were obtained. A Masked Trogon which had been first seen at the head of the path down to this viewing platform was subsequently refound over the steps down from the accommodation block.

Alambi

20 minutes further down the valley from Tandayapa is this smallholding. It is owned by a family who are keen to advertise its avian virtues to visiting birders, and even has a couple rooms to rent. There is a small house set in limited acreage, but its strength lies in the fact that more hummers of a different mix can be seen here, along with other birds attracted to a fruit feeder. This was the centre of attention for a mixed bag of birds, from the common Blue-grey & Lemon-rumped Tanagers, to the impressive Thick-billed Euphonia and elusive (at this location) Equadorian Thrush. The most surprising visitor of all was Pale-legged Hornero, which was first seen at the back of the bushes perched self confidently in the open, then to be joined by two others at the other side of the property. A singing Smoke-coloured Pewee sang from the top of a conifer. The hummingbird feeders were as manic as usual. Main delight here was a stunning pair of Green-crowned Woodnymphs, but Green-crowned Brilliant and White-necked Jacobin were the first of each to be seen on this trip. Andean Emeralds were as common here as at Tandayapa, but more likely to perch in the open. A Brown Violet-ear seemed very reticent, happy to remain as a wallflower most of the time away from the mayhem. King of this castle was the male Green-crowned Brilliant, which was happy to take on all comers to retain its own chunk of sugar water realty.



We ended the visit to Alambi with a short walk along the nearby river, the main quarries being Torrent Duck and White-capped Dipper. The former was probably seen as a duck like bird flew from the water, but no sign was seen of the latter. We did pick up a couple of Yellow-bellied & single female Variable Seedeaters in the process.

Paz de las Aves

Day 4

This morning was probably THE one that we had been looking forward to since planning the trip, since a visit here promised a Cock-of-the-Rock lek and one or two Antpitta species. The plot is owned by Angel Paz, who was once a farmer, but stumbled

on some tasty birds quite recently and realised its commercial potential, which not only helps with conservation, but has also greatly increased his income. We set off from Bellavista at 4.30 and arrived at the car park an hour later. This was where the best of the day (potential of special birds) was confronted with the worst - there were a lot of other birders also on the tour (over 20 in the end) which was far too many, and compounded our aversion to group birding.

Nevertheless, the throng descended snakelike down the muddy paths, most donning torches while waiting for the first light from the sun. A Barred Forest-falcon was heard above the track, but not picked out until later by a dedicated group who had already seen the Cock-of-the-rock lek. Once at the hide, all were crammed in to watch the birds plying to and fro for about an hour, although they only showed well intermittently and briefly. Much better views were had of a Crimson-rumped Toucanet preening in front of the upper hide, with an Olivaceous Piha munching on a banana.



The group then gathered next to an open shelter a little higher in the forest, where we were to witness the odd technique that Angel has employed to show off some of the birds. He appeared around the corner of the track, calling and laying down morsels of food with a pair of Dark-backed Wood-quails following. These totally wild birds eventually alighted on to a tree stump directly in front of us to complete the meal. We were then marched down to the river, where his calling and baiting played out a similar scene with a Yellow-breasted Antpitta. This bird is more elusive than the more well known local Giant Antpitta (Maria by name!), but the latter failed to materialise. While staking out 2 sites for her, other birds picked out included Streak-throated Foliage-gleaner and Tyrannine Woodcreeper.



We thankfully left the group at this point to ascend to the hummingbird feeders at the top of the trail. Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds were probably the most numerous species here, but we also added Velvet-purple Coronet to our list, and much better views of Empress Brilliant than the snippets from Tandayapa yesterday. Before leaving Angel's, a tasty breakfast overlooking the valley was accompanied by Swallow-tailed Kite and American Kestrel.

Mindo

A few miles further up the New Road is Mindo, and we reached there after popping into a small hotel at the main turnoff to look for Toucan-Barbet. None were found, but Beryl-spangled Tanager was added to our tanager list. Before reaching the restaurant

(yes, so soon after brunch) we parked up on one of the tracks in the town to find Smooth-billed Ani and a pair of elusive Slaty Spinetails. A bridge over a fast and well stocked river was then crossed, where a brief stop drummed up a White-capped Dipper, which may well have been servicing a nest under the bridge.



Timing was of the essence, since the rain started as soon as we arrived at the small restaurant, and this increased to torrential proportions as we fed, not stopping at all for the remainder of the day. This wasn't a problem at the time, since we laid back and enjoyed some very close hummers, including the first White-whiskered Hermit and small numbers of White-necked Jacobin, Brown Violet-ear, Velvet-purple Coronet, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, and Purple-throated Woodstar.



The rain hadn't ceased by the time the forest at the edge of Mindo was reached, and this made birding difficult by interfering with the optics. However, a Rufous Motmot from the car on approach certainly kept optimism high. This part of the forest contained more open land than previously encountered, and the birds started slowly, but increased when finding a bird party close to our turning back point. This included a pair of Red-headed Barbets, Lemon-rumped Tanagers, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Tropical Parula, and one or two more which may have escaped attention.

The journey back was in the rain and approaching darkness. Nightjars were searched for near to Tandayapa without success, but ample compensation came in a Common Potoo perched directly outside of the dome at Bellavista Lodge. As if not enough, a Slate-throated Whitestart was hawking insects from the lights underneath the canopy.

Paz de las Aves

Day 5

Today was a superb day for two reasons - a good variety of birds were seen, from a few quality targets at Paz, to lazy birding at Los Bancos restaurant, and then satisfying forest birding at Milpe, and the second being the first day with minimal rain in the

afternoon for the first time. We decided on a return to Paz because we wanted to give the Giant Antpitta another shot.

The day started well with a Band-winged Nightjar flying up from the road a few kilometres down from Bellavista, and another 1-2 (second looked like a different species) were also on the track just short of Paz. The Cock-of-the-Rock lek was a little quieter than yesterday, with seemingly fewer birds present, and they also left earlier (around 6.45). The Crimson-rumped Toucanets did return to the upper hide. Walking the short distance up to the site of yesterdays Wood-quail found the 2 Giant Antpittas in attendance. There then followed the very odd spectacle that we had already read about - Angel and brother were able to entice the birds closer by calling them and offering morsels, with one of these totally wild and impressive birds taking food from the hand. Angel also tried to find us Moustached Antpitta, which is much more elusive, but succeeded instead in unearthing another brace of Giant Antpittas, this time an adult with immature in attendance. Also along this trail was a female Masked Trogon which was stationary for some time. Another diversion at this time found a Golden-headed Quetzal - another satisfying result after having only seen one briefly overhead yesterday.



Los Bancos



Another restaurant and another set of hummingbird & fruit feeders, which proved to be an excellent choice. The frontage of the restaurant, which also has a few colourful rooms to rent, is fairly innocuous along the main street, but the view from the balcony at the rear is breathtaking, taking in the river valley below from a considerable elevation. The feeders at first looked as if they would only bring in a limited number of species, but this was proved to be totally wrong. The full length windows gave adequate screening from the birds, and also allowed photography from the interior. The hummingbird feeders were almost ignored, due to the high quality of the fruit feeders. In numbers these were dominated by tanagers, particularly the numerous Blue-grey Tanager, with lower numbers of Silver-throated & Palm. Nevertheless, it was noticeable that when the Collared Aracaris or Crimson-rumped Toucanets moved in, the smaller birds moved. Ones and twos of more wanted Tanagers included Rufous-throated, Lemon-rumped, Blue-necked, & Flame-faced. Other goodies which used the feeders were Green Honeycreeper and Ecuadorian Thrush. Underneath the feeders, an Orange-billed Sparrow put in an occasional appearance, with Pallid Dove padding around the nearby steps. One of the main prizes was a Guyaquil Woodpecker which was picked out to the rear of the property just before we left.

Milpe

Milpe is a forest reserve in the foothills, and this offers a different set of birds to the highland forests we had already encountered. The first section from the car park is fairly open and easy to cover, but this descends into a steep sided dense forest. After spotting Plain-brown Woodcreeper along the first few metres of the Grande Trail, we hit upon a superb and varied bird party. It was kicked off by a Grey-breasted Wood-wren which failed to show well. There then ensued 20 minutes or so of mayhem, with all types of families represented in the party. Picks of the bunch included many Buff-throated Foliage-gleaners, Scale-crested Pygmy-tyrant, Spotted Woodcreeper, Ornate Flycatcher, Black-capped Tyrannulet, Choco Warbler, and Fawn-breasted Tanager.



The start of the descent was greeted by a static Ecuadorian Trogon, and the birding in the denser forest from here was much harder work. Even so, we managed to pick out a Pacific Flatbill, a group of juvenile Tawny-breasted Myiobius, and Wedge-billed Woodcreeper. The level track back to the car park continued to impress, with Spotted Woodcreepers and White-bearded Manakin in the same area.

The car park feeders hadn't been given any time on arrival, but were found to hold Empress Brilliant, White-whiskered Hermit, Green-crowned Woodnymph, and a perched Green Thorntail. Just outside of the entrance, a lone tree supported a Pale-billed Woodpecker, and a short drive along the track revealed a pair of Black-mandibled Toucans.

The return to Bellavista Lodge didn't end the day's birds. A different track back was taken, which was a superb move since a Chestnut-capped Antpitta hopped in front of the car, pausing at the road edge for us to drink in its unique character. Yet more entertainment was had from a calling Strong-billed Woodcreeper seen from the car park on return to Bellavista Lodge.

Rio Silanche

Day 6

Having covered both the highlands and foothills, the decision for the last full day at Bellavista was to travel the 2 hours or so West to the lowlands around Rio Silanche, which is a river bounding now rare primary forest. This was the first day when the birding started in heavy rain, making the first hour grim walking, but this cleared as the morning progressed to peak at around 90 degrees heat and high humidity.

The initial plan was to walk to the tower, only a short distance from the car park. This started very well with a perched Broad-billed Motmot, but the short time we spent on the tower was fairly unproductive. This was also the case during the trail walk in the rain, when Woodcreepers in the guise of Plain-brown, Wedge-billed & Streak-capped were the only recipients of our attention. Bird life started to increase when we again reached the reception (which in truth was the farmer's house in disguise), with one or two goodies in his small plantation - Slaty-capped Flycatcher and Black-cheeked Woodpecker amongst them.



The return to the tower was when the interesting birding began, and also when the rain stopped and the temperature increased. On the short approach track, we picked up a small flock of tanagers and flycatchers, which was unfortunately at the top of one of the trees. Moving on once again to the tower proved fairly productive. This spot is renowned for the roving mixed flocks (mainly tanagers) which can be seen from eye level. We only picked up a few of the commoner tanagers, which did include some Blue-necked Tanagers, and a single Scarlet-browed Tanager perched in the distance. Apart from a Boat-billed Flycatcher which was perched nearby on arrival, the best birds were either overhead or in the distance. Swifts and *hirundines* were almost constantly in view, with Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift being picked out. At least 2 White-tailed Kites were hovering in the distance, and a pair of either Choco or Black-mandibled Toucans perched a little closer.

The trails were then hit again, with a lot more success in the drier conditions than earlier. Woodcreeper variety was good on this walk, with Wedge-billed, Streak-headed, Spotted & Black-striped all pinned down. The best spot was at the stream crossing, where a pair of Dot-winged Antwrens and a Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant initiated a bird party. White-flanked Antwrens were included, as well as a few Slaty-capped Flycatchers, and the aforementioned woodcreepers. A softly scolding call was identified as female Western Slaty-Antshrike.

Before leaving the reserve, we took a short stroll along the track to the palm oil plantation. The first avian interest was a collection of flowering trees which were buzzing with hummingbirds. Quite a good view was had of some which unfortunately couldn't be identified. However, a single Blue-chested Hummingbird was named after a short discussion. The palm oil plantation didn't hold a great deal to capture our attention, but wasn't totally sterile, yielding Social Flycatcher, Ecuadorian Thrush, and a few Variable Seedeaters. On leaving the reserve, we stopped to admire a pair of Masked Water-Tyrants.



Ranchos Suamox

A few kilometres further West is the Ranchos Suamox, which is a fruit plantation owned by a very friendly couple. Their property is large, and on it they grow a wide variety of fruits to sell locally, as well as offering them to guests as juices and salads. This is highly recommended - the fruit is delicious.



The owner also took us on a loop around the grounds, since it is also a very good environment for birds. Blue Ground-Doves abound, with strangely regular Pale-legged Horneros. Overhead, Rough-winged Swallows were joined by the much darker and less numerous White-thighed Swallows. A particularly good spot was a line of trees backing some of the open orchard. Zimmer's Flatbill and Bran-coloured Flycatchers were both here, as was Cinammon Becard and an unidentified barbet. Back at the restaurant, we followed up a not to be missed fruit salad with Black-crowned Tityra and Long-billed

Starthroat in the same tree, as well as White-whiskered & Stripe throated Hermit in the garden adjoining the restaurant.

Old Nono Mindo Road

Day 7

The last evening was to be at the B&B owned by Richard Parsons (owner of Bellavista) in Quito, since our flight left the next morning just before 9am. This opened the possibility of covering the Old Nono Mindo Road as part of the journey back, taking the whole day to do so. It is incredible to think that this more or less one way track was the main highway to Quito only 20 years ago. The main target was to be Yanacocha, which is in the highlands at around 10000 feet, but some excellent stops were made on the way.

Tandayapa Village

After making one or two brief stops to investigate bird activity on the descent from Bellavista, the car was parked at Tandayapa Village, and the first part of the Old Nono Mindo Road walked for an hour or so. Many Blue-and-white Swallows were on the wires over the village, and closer examination revealed their nests to be in many of the eaves of the buildings. Black Phoebes utilised the wires for their favoured water based feeding location. A flock of common tanagers was seen a little way up the road, but closer inspection unearthed a brilliant red White-winged Tanager.



After one or two brief stops for more birds, including a much sought after Beautiful Jay, we pulled up at a trout farm sporting a sign with a picture of Chestnut-crowned Antpitta. This active farm is well known for regulars of this species, with a makeshift hide next to a feeding area. However, the morning feeding had come and gone, as had the antpittas. Adequate compensation came in the form of a very light coloured (juvenile?) Common Potoo a little further up the trail, sleeping motionless at the apex of a dead tree stump. The word was that Torrent Ducks could also be spotted on the rocks in the river here, but not during our visiting time.



Trout Farm



Highlands below Yanacocha

After ascending for some time and passing through spectacular scenery in the highlands, we eventually reached the outskirts of the Yanacocha area. This was a fairly open, cultivated environment, and a stop was made for a pair of Red-crested Cotingas. A study of these unearthed a dazzling Purple-backed Thornbill, with stunning looks even at some distance.

Just before the entrance to Yanacocha itself, the car was pulled up at the sound of calling Tawny Antpitta, which was quickly located, and eventually appeared in trees close to. There then followed the finding of two stunning hummingbirds. A Shining Sunbeam looked a little bedraggled, but a Sword-billed Hummingbird was an impressive site when perched against the skyline, and perhaps even more so when flying overhead.

Yanacocha



This was to be the highlight of the trip, with a walk of over 4 hours along a track to hummingbird feeders not only finding impressive birds, but also by being accompanied by breathtaking mountain scenery. The weather is generally predictable at these high altitudes, being clear in the mornings, and clouding over (or more precisely around and below) at lunchtime. Today was no exception, with rain accompanying the misty surrounds in patches throughout the afternoon.

The trail follows the wooded hillside to the left and steep valley to the right for about 2-3km, terminating in a couple of hummingbird feeding areas. Before this, a few mixed flocks and individual birds were encountered. One contained Golden-olive Woodpecker, White-throated Flycatcher, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Rufous Wren, and Streaked Tuftedcheek. Hummers were also evident here - a nice change to see the first ones away from feeders - with particular mention of a pair of Rainbow-bearded Thornbills, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Great Sapphirewing, another Sword-billed Hummingbird, Tyrian Metaltail, and a Sapphire-vented Puffleg building a nest. One of the feeder areas had passing White-banded Tyrannulet, Spectacled Whitestart, and a Pearled Treerunner.



The main feeder area consists of three small sections, and while there is not the manic frenzy of the busy feeder areas encountered at other sites this week, there was certainly plenty of activity from a variety of highland specialities. Only new species added was Golden-breasted Puffleg, but the most numerous was Buff-winged Starfrontlet. Sword-billed Hummingbirds made occasional appearances, and were an odd site when hovering while sipping from the artificial receptacles. Also here were many Masked Flowerpiercers, interspersed by the occasional Glossy Flowerpiercer.



The rain continued to fall as we returned to the car. A straightforward return journey to Quito should have followed, but a small landslide a short way down forced the use of a less well maintained secondary route. The rain had caused some mini-landslides along here, which didn't prove any great problem. However, some deep and muddy ruts in the track caused problems with the 4x4 vehicle, and at one time we had to make temporary wedges to stop the wheels from being trapped in deep mud fissures.



SPECIES SEEN

Sickle-winged Guan

Chamaepetes goudotii

1 calling late afternoon after visiting Tony Nunnery's, and picked out at the top of a tree; Bellavista Lodge - most birds were seen late afternoon near to the compost heap (9)



Dark-backed Wood-Quail

Odontophorus melanonotus

This was one of those surreal times in birding, when I had half expected the outcome, but it was still hard to believe. The large throng that was the tour groups had been assembled at what we believed was the Giant Antpitta area (Paz de las Aves). After a short time waiting, Angel appeared from the corner of the track, walking backwards and talking quietly. Moments later, he was followed dog-like by a pair of Wood-Quails, which eventually fed on his offerings of scraps directly in front of us

Turkey Vulture

Cathartes aura

6 from New Road; Alambi (~10); Paz de las Aves (2, 2); up to 8 on other days

Black Vulture

Coragyps atratus

Vultures weren't always checked, but this was the more common of the 2 species present. Alambi (~2); Paz de las Aves (~6); Paz de las Aves (10); Los Bancos (30); Common on other days



Swallow-tailed Kite

Elanoides forficatus

Paz de las Aves (6, 1)

White-tailed Kite

Elanus leucurus

Only seen in the distance from the tower at Rio Silanche (2)

Plain-breasted Hawk

Accipiter ventralis

1 flew along hillside in morning as seen from main track up from Bellavista Lodge

Grey-lined Hawk

Buteo nitidus

Bellavista track on return from Rio Silanche (1)

Roadside Hawk

Buteo magnirostris

Mindo (1 - at top of tree before entering the town); Paz de las Aves (pair mating)

Barred Forest-Falcon

Micrastur ruficollis

Paz de las Aves - 1 heard calling and flew past in semi-dark

American Kestrel

Falco sparverius

Both birds at Calacali seen hovering, 1 from above while viewing the valley below, and 1 above the hillside; Paz de las Aves (2 sightings, 1 perched, the other hunting over hillside)

Band-tailed Pigeon

Patagioenas fasciata

Tandayapa (~12)

Plumbeous Pigeon

Patagioenas plumbea

Calacali (2 separate sightings); Bellavista (6); Tandayapa (~3); Old Nono Mindo road (2)

Ruddy Pigeon

Patagioenas subvinacea

Rio Silanche (3 flew over main track from reception area)

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata*

Common on the first day of arrival in Ecuador, including in Quito; Old Nono Mindo road (3)

Blue Ground-Dove *Claravis pretiosa*

Ranchos Suamox (~12)

Pallid Dove *Leptotila pallida*

Los Bancos (1); Ranchos Suamox (2)

Pacific Parrotlet *Forpus coelestis*

Rio Silanche (1 flew overhead); Ranchos Suamox (1 perched)

Red-billed Parrot *Pionus sordidus*

What was presumably this species was seen and heard regularly around and over Bellavista. It was only when we were at Tony Nunnery's that ~10 were seen well, since they have a habit of feasting on his corn crop. 7 more were also positively identified at Mindo

Bronze-winged Parrot *Pionus chalcopterus*

Rio Silanche (1 flew over the tower)

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*

Mindo (2)

**Squirrel Cuckoo** *Piaya cayana*

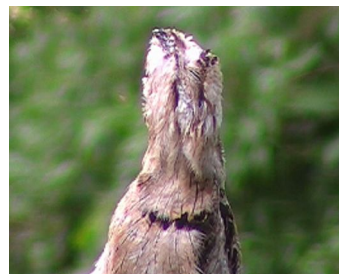
1 from Dome at Bellavista, and a further 2 heard

Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*

Old Nono Mindo road (1)

Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*

The views of these birds we saw improved each time we saw them. The first perched below Bellavista was very difficult to find, since we had to peer through bamboo and branches to find it. The second was a nighttime occurrence, sat on the top of a bare stump next to the dome at Bellavista Lodge. We had visited the Antpitta hide at the trout farm on the Old Nono Mindo Road briefly, before being shown the third bird only metres from the steep path

**Band-winged Nightjar** *Caprimulgus longirostris*

Bellavista to Tandayapa (1); Paz de las Aves (2 early - 1 only identified as this species)

Chestnut-collared Swift *Streptoprocne rutila*

~15 overhead at Bellavista. Many more over Bellavista were likely to have been this species, but the positive group were identified on call

Grey-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*

Many *chaetura* type swifts were flying over the tower at Rio Silanche, with some seen well enough when gliding low to name them as Grey-rumped

Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift *Panyptila cayennensis*

Rio Silanche (at least 2)

White-whiskered Hermit *Phaethornis yaruqui*

Mindo (1); Milpe (1); Ranchos Suamox (2)

Long-billed (Baron's) Hermit *Phaethornis longirostris baroni*

This bird initially came as something of a surprise, since we didn't expect to see it. The book has it down as Baron's Hermit, but this is considered a subspecies of Western Loong-tailed. Rio Silanche (1)

Stripe-throated Hermit *Phaethornis striigularis*

Ranchos Suamox (1) - an irregular visitor to one of the feeders, it did land on a nearby perch, but was difficult to see

White-necked Jacobin*Florisuga mellivora*

Alambi (2 males, female); Mindo (2)

**Brown Violetear***Colibri delphinae*

Alambi (2); Paz de las Aves (2); Mindo (3, 2)

Green Violetear*Colibri thalassinus*

This seemed to be the most common hummingbird in the highlands. They were not always the most numerous at feeders, but many birds were seen and heard throughout the forests

Sparkling Violetear*Colibri coruscans*

Initial fears of difficulty in separating from Green Violet-ear were dashed with the obvious size difference. Calacali (2); Tony Nunnery (~4); Tandayapa (1)

Green Thorntail*Discosura conversii*

A very wet bird was perched at the top of one of the lower bushes in Milpe car park

Western Emerald*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus*

Tony Nunnery's (2); Tandayapa (~4); Alambi (2)

**Green-crowned Woodnymph***Thalurania fannyi*

Alambi (male and female); Mindo (1); Milpe (2); Rio Silanche (2); Ranchos Suamox (1); Old Nono Mindo Road trout farm (1)

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird*Amazilia tzacatl*

Very common, very noisy, and very aggressive towards other hummingbirds! Tony Nunnery 's (~2); Tandayapa (~14); Alambi (~10); Paz de las Aves (~6, 2); Mindo (4); Los Bancos (~6); Rio Silanche (~6); Ranchos Suamox (2)

**Andean Emerald***Agyrtria franciae*

Tandayapa (~10); Alambi (~10); Paz (~4); Mindo (~3); Los Bancos (2)

**Purple-chested Hummingbird***Polyerata rosenbergi*

Ranchos Suamox (at least 1)

Speckled Hummingbird

Adelomyia melanogenys

Bellavista Lodge (~6) on most days; Tony Nunnery's (~10); Bellavista Forests (2); Tandayapa (2); Paz de las Aves (1)



Fawn-breasted Brilliant

Heliodoxa rubinoides

Road to Bellavista (1); Bellavista (2); Tony Nunnery's (~10); Tandayapa (~6); Alambi (~2); Paz (~12); Mindo (~4)

Green-crowned Brilliant

Heliodoxa jacula

Calacali (2); Alambi (male & female); Paz (~4); Milpe (1)



Empress Brilliant

Heliodoxa imperatrix

Tandayapa (1); Paz de las Aves (1)

Buff-tailed Coronet

Boissonneaua flavescens

This was the most common visitor to the feeders at Bellavista, and was also the species most likely to perch for some time. Bellavista Lodge (~30, ~20, ~6); Tony Nunnery's (~20); Bellavista (~20); Paz de las Aves (~3)



Velvet-purple Coronet

Boissonneaua jardini

Paz de las Aves (3, 2); Mindo (2, 1)

Shining Sunbeam

Aglaeactis cupripennis

This species had been half expected at the Yanacocha feeders, but the only one seen was perched on a horizontal branch in a field from the Old Nono Mindo road, on the outskirts of the Yanacocha area

Brown Inca

Coeligena wilsoni

Tony Nunnery's (2); Tandayapa (1); Alambi (1); Paz de las Aves (2); Mindo (1,1)



Collared Inca

Coeligena torquata

Bellavista Lodge (~4, 1); Tony Nunnery's (2); Tandayapa (1); Mindo (1)



Buff-winged Starfrontlet

Coeligena lutetiae

The most common hummingbird at Yanacocha (~20)

Sword-billed Hummingbird

Ensifera ensifera

This bird is impressive both in flight, when it looks like a flying missile, and when perched, since the bill is so long that it needs to hold its head at an angle. A high altitude specialist, the long down facing flowers which it feeds on were seen on the ascent before the bird itself. An initial bird was seen just before Yanacocha, with another ~5 in the reserve, mainly visiting feeders



Great Sapphirewing

Pterophanes cyanopterus

Yanacocha (~6)

Gorgeted Sunangel

Heliangelus strophianus

Bellavista Lodge (2, 1); Tony Nunnery's (2); Bellavista (2)



Sapphire-vented Puffleg

Eriocnemis luciani

The first bird seen was building a nest below the track at Yanacocha, with the bird regularly revisiting the half finished cup and then landing briefly on a nearby perch before moving off. Another ~5 were visiting the feeders

Golden-breasted Puffleg

Eriocnemis mosquera

Yanacocha (~4)

Purple-bibbed Whitetip

Urosticte benjamini

Bellavista Lodge (1); Tony Nunnery 's (2); Tandayapa (1); Alambi (male & female); Paz de las Aves (1); Mindo (2,1)



Booted Racket-tail*Ocreatus underwoodii*

This was probably the hummingbird with the most unexpected "wow" factor. It looks good in the books, but they don't do justice to its diminutive size and character. Bellavista Lodge (~10, ~10, ~6 mainly males); Tony Nunnery's (~30); Tandayapa (~25); Alambi (~10); Paz de las Aves (1); Mindo (3)



Male



Female

Green-tailed Trainbearer*Lesbia nuna*

This is a difficult one, since the reports and local information indicate that Black-tailed is a much more common Trainbearer. However, the males which were seen well had the green tails with black terminal band. Calacali (~12)

Purple-backed Thornbill*Ramphomicron microrhynchum*

Only 1 was picked up, perched on an extended branch in the meadows high up along the Old Nono Mindo road

Tyrian Metaltail*Metallura tyrianthina*

Yanacocha (3)

**Rainbow-bearded Thornbill***Chalcostigma herrani*

Yanacocha (1 pair)

Violet-tailed Sylph*Aglaiocercus coelestis*

The female was found first when perched, before the two were involved in a mid air tussle. Bellavista Lodge (1); Tony Nunnery's (~10); Tandayapa (~10); Alambi (~2); Paz de las Aves (~8); Mindo (3)

**Long-billed Starthroat***Heliomaster longirostris*

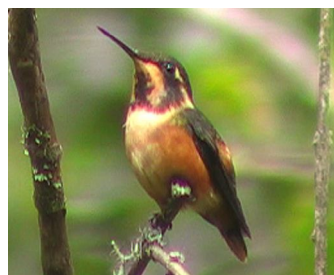
Ranchos Suamox (1)

Purple-throated Woodstar*Calliphlox mitchelli*

Quite often picked up on sound before they were seen, they not only sound like a bumble bee, but can even resemble one in flight. Bellavista Lodge (1, 1, 2); Tony Nunnery's (~10); Tandayapa (~20); Alambi (~15); Paz de las Aves (2); Mindo (2)



Male



Female

White-bellied Woodstar

Chaetocercus mulsanti

Tony Nunnery's (2); Tandayapa (1)



Ecuadorian Trogon

Trogon mesurus

Milpe (1)

Masked Trogon

Trogon personatus

Bellavista Lodge (1 at Dome); Tandayapa (2 sightings); Paz de las Aves (1 female); Track back to Bellavista (1)



Male



Female

Golden-headed Quetzal

Pharomachrus auriceps

Paz de las Aves (1)

Rufous Motmot

Baryphthengus martii

Mindo (1)

Broad-billed Motmot

Electron platyrynchum

Ranchos Suamox (1)

Red-headed Barbet

Eubucco bourcierii

Mindo (1 pair)

Crimson-rumped Toucanet

Aulacorhynchus haematopygus

Paz de las Aves (1, 3); Los Bancos (2)



Collared Araçari

Pteroglossus torquatus

Los Bancos (2); Milpe (2)

Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan

Andigena laminirostris

4 singles all seen in the rain during our walk on the track up from around Bellavista Lodge



Black-mandibled Toucan

Ramphastos ambiguus

Milpe (2); Ranchos Suamox (2 probably of this species). Two toucans were also viewed from the tower at Rio Silanche, but may have been Black-mandibled

Black-cheeked Woodpecker

Melanerpes pucherani

Los Bancos (1); Ranchos Suamox (2); Rio Silanche (2)



Golden-olive Woodpecker

Colaptes rubiginosus

Yanacochoa (1)

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker

Colaptes rivolii

Tony Nunnery's (1); Bellavista (1)

Lineated Woodpecker

Dryocopus lineatus

Milpe (1)

Ranchos Suamox (1)

Guayaquil Woodpecker

Campephilus guayaquilensis

Los Bancos (1 male) – landed on a vertical branch behind the fruit feeding station



Pale-legged Hornero

Furnarius leucopus

Alambi (3); Rio Silanche (3); Ranchos Suamox (4)

Azara's Spinetail

Synallaxis azarae

Very elusive. 1 was calling at Bellavista Lodge, and only showed briefly on several occasions. More were heard elsewhere, but were usually in thick vegetation

Slaty Spinetail

Synallaxis brachyura

Mindo (2)

Red-faced Spinetail

Cranioleuca erythroptus

Milpe (2)

Rusty-winged Barbtail

Premnornis guttuligera

Bellavista Forests (1)

Pearled Treerunner

Margarornis squamiger

Yanacochoa (2)

Streaked Tuftedcheek

Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii

Yanacochoa (1)



Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner

Anabacerthia variegaticeps

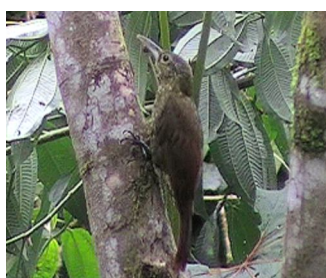
Paz de las Aves (1)

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner

Philydor rufum

First seen in the mixed bird party at Milpe, they proved to be quite a common sight (~10)

Striped Treehunter	<i>Thripadectes holostictus</i>
Bellavista Forest (2)	
Tyrannine Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocincla tyrannina</i>
Paz de las Aves (1)	
Plain-brown Woodcreeper	<i>Dendrocincla fuliginosa</i>
Milpe (3); Rio Silanche (1)	
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Glyphorhynchus spirurus</i>
Milpe (2)	Rio Silanche (3)
Strong-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphocolaptes promeropyrhynchus</i>
First picked up on call this was the last bird seen one evening at Bellavista Lodge (1)	
Black-striped Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus lachrymosus</i>
Rio Silanche (1)	
Spotted Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus erythropygius</i>
Milpe (2); Rio Silanche (2)	



Streak-headed Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes souleyetii</i>
Rio Silanche (~5)	
Montane Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger</i>
Bellavista Lodge (6); Bellavista area (3); Paz de las Aves (1)	
Western Slaty-Antshrike	<i>Thamnophilus atrinucha</i>
An elusive female was first picked up on call Rio Silanche, shortly after watching a bird party next to the stream for some time	
White-flanked Antwren	<i>Myrmotherula axillaries</i>
Rio Silanche (2 pairs)	
Dot-winged Antwren	<i>Microrhopias quixensis</i>
Rio Silanche (3 males, 1 female) in the mixed bird party next to the stream. They were constantly seen over about 20 minutes in the mixed bird party next to the stream. Walking up the track from the bridge gave much closer encounters	
Long-tailed Antbird	<i>Drymophila caudata</i>
1 elusive bird on trackside below Bellavista	
Immaculate Antbird	<i>Myrmeciza immaculate</i>
Tandayapa (1 male). The blind here has been more or less built with this bird in mind. An early arrival seems to be required, and the bird we saw was seen before full light (around 6.20 am)	
Giant Antpitta	<i>Grallaria gigantean</i>
This is the bird which originated the idea of Paz de las Aves. Angel Paz discovered their presence on his farmland a few years ago, and has managed to regularly entice them into the open with worms and calls. "Maria" seems to be the most regular female, but we didn't manage to see any on our first visit. This was the main reason for our return the next morning, and we were rewarded with not only Maria and partner at the regular spot, but also a third adult with an immature in tow at a spot further up	
Chestnut-crowned Antpitta	<i>Grallaria ruficapilla</i>
None were seen at the trout farm on the Old Nono Mindo Road, but we did have one crossing the track early evening on the track approaching track to Bellavista Lodge when returning from Milpe	
Yellow-breasted Antpitta	<i>Grallaria flavotinca</i>
1 called to the side of the stream at the bottom of the Paz.de las Aves forest by Angel. This was the first Antpitta of the trip	



Tawny Antpitta *Grallaria quitensis*

2 separate birds seen, both perched in trees - Old Nono Mindo road (1), Yanacocha; (1)

Black-capped Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias nigrocapillus*

Milpe (1)

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*

Mindo (1 in clearing)

White-throated Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus leucophrys*

Yanacocha (2)

White-tailed Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus poecilocercus*

This species can be easily confused with White-banded Tyrannulet, since the white in the tail can usually only be seen in flight, and the off white wingbars can look lighter, similar to its comparator species. Once a little experience of them was had, ~10 were seen in the Bellavista forests

White-banded Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus stictopectus*

Once seen, the wingbars on this species are a much cleaner white than on White-tailed, and they also appear to prefer a higher altitude. Yanacocha (~4)

Tufted Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes parulus*

Calacali (3)

Streak-necked Flycatcher *Mionectes striaticollis*

Bellavista forests (3); 1 from Bellavista dome; Tandayapa (1)

Slaty-capped Flycatcher *Leptopogon superciliaris*

Mindo (1); Rio Silanche (~6)

Bran-coloured Flycatcher *Myiophobus fasciatus*

Ranchos Suamox (1)

Ornate Flycatcher *Myiotriccus ornatus*

Milpe (3)

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant *Lophotriccus pileatus*

Milpe (1 in the bird party next to the stream); Rio Silanche (1)

Pacific Flatbill *Rhynchocyclus pacificus*

Milpe (1 in the deeper forest)

Zimmer's Flatbill *Tolmomyias assimilis*

Ranchos Suamox (1)

Tawny-breasted Myiobius *Myiobius villosus*

The 3 juveniles at Milpe initially offered a few problems. The first was that they were difficult to get good views of, and when they did show, the breast colour was partly concealed. However, the brief glimpses showed the more tawny colouration of this bird compared to Sulphur-rumped & Black-tailed Flycatchers. Another point of note is that it is the only one of the three likely to be seen in the foothills

**Sulphur-rumped Myiobius** *Myiobius sulphureipygius*

This species and Black-tailed Flycatcher both favour the lowlands. The 2 birds at Rio Silanche showed the buffy wash on the upper breast to separate from the cleaner yellow on Black-tailed Flycatcher

Cinnamon Flycatcher *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomeus*

Bellavista forest (1)

Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans*

Trout farm in Tandayapa village (2, 1); Mindo (1); Paz de las Aves (2); Tandayapa (2), Trout farm on Old Nono Mindo Road (2)

**Smoke-coloured Pewee** *Contopus*

fumigatus

Alambi (1); Mindo (1); Paz de las Aves (1)

**Masked Water-Tyrant***Fluvicola nengeta*

Rio Silanche (2)

Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant*Ochthoeca fumicolor*

Old Nono Mindo road (1)

Social Flycatcher*Myiozetetes similis*

Rio Silanche (~12); Tandayapa (1)

**Golden-crowned Flycatcher***Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*

Bellavista Lodge (2); Tandayapa (1); Tandayapa village (1)

**Boat-billed Flycatcher***Megarynchus pitangua*

Rio Silanche (1 from the tower)

Tropical Kingbird*Tyrannus melancholicus*

Alambi (2); Mindo (5); Foothills (~12); Ranchos Suamox (2)

Dusky-capped Flycatcher*Myiarchus tuberculifer*

Tandayapa (1)

**Red-crested Cotinga***Ampelion rubrocristatus*

Old Nono Mindo road - 2 perched in the meadows at a high altitudes

Andean Cock-of-the-rock*Rupicola peruviana*

In addition to the promise of Giant Antpitta at Paz de las Aves, there is also stakeout a little lower in the forest for this species. Angel and his cohorts have assembled two hides which overlook a regular lek, and we visited this on both mornings in the forest. Since the birds display first thing in the morning (and to a lesser extent in the evening), we had to be at the car park for 5.30 am, then to walk for half an hour down through the forest in the dark to arrive before first light. ~3 males were displaying on both mornings, but seemed to disperse relatively early, within less than an hour after first light. These weren't the only birds seen since 3 groups totalling 6 had been found in Tandayapa the day before, and a female was on the ascent of the Old Nono Mindo road

Olivaceous Piha*Snowornis cryptolophus*

1 eating the fruit in front of the upper Cock-of-the-Rock Rio Silanche (1)

**White-bearded Manakin***Manacus manacus*

Milpe (1 seen); Rio Silanche (1 heard)

Black-crowned Tityra*Tityra inquisitor*

Ranchos Suamox (1 pair)

Cinnamon Becard*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*

Ranchos Suamox (1)

Brown-capped Vireo*Vireo leucophrys*

Bellavista forests (1); Tandayapa (4); Bellavista Lodge (1)

Turquoise Jay*Cyanolyca turcosa*

1 from New Road; 1 near to Tandayapa; ~20 around Bellavista, including 1 feeding Giant Cowbird

Beautiful Jay*Cyanolyca pulchra*

Nono Mindo road (1). A very difficult species to locate. One was seen after picking out the call at the base of the Old Nono Mindo road (1)

**Blue-and-white Swallow***Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*

Transfer from airport to Bellavista (~30 including Quito); Bellavista area (~10); Tandayapa / Alambi (~50); Paz de las Aves (~10); few in foothills and lowlands; Tandayapa (20+)

Brown-bellied Swallow*Notiochelidon murina*

Yanacocha (30+)

White-thighed Swallow*Neochelidon tibialis*

Ranchos Suamox (10)

Southern Rough-winged Swallow*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

Alambi (1); Paz de las Aves (2); Mindo (2); Lowlands (Quite common)

Rufous Wren*Cinnycerthia unirufa*

Yanacocha (4)

**Plain-tailed Wren***Thryothorus euophrys*

Pair at probable nest up from Bellavista, which were very elusive

House Wren*Troglodytes aedon*

Los Bancos (1), Paz (1)

Grey-breasted Wood-Wren*Henicorhina leucophrys*

1 at Dome of Bellavista; Milpe (4). Very difficult to see well

Great Thrush*Turdus fuscater*

1 from New Road; Bellavista (3); Bellavista Lodge (1); Mindo / Yanacocha / Quito (40+)

Ecuadorian Thrush*Turdus maculirostris*

Alambi (1); Mindo (1), Paz (1); Los Bancos (1); Milpe (1); Rio Silanche (1); Ranchos Suamox (1)

**White-capped Dipper***Cinclus leucocephalus*

Mindo (1). Seen twice under bridge over river - may have been tending a nest

Thick-billed Euphonia*Euphonia lanirostris*

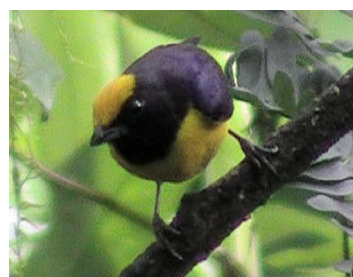
Alambi (1); Mindo (1); Ranchos Suamox (1 male, 2 females)

Golden-rumped Euphonia*Euphonia cyanocephala*

Pair Bellavista forest

Orange-bellied Euphonia*Euphonia xanthogaster*

Los Bancos (2 males, 1 female), Milpe (1 male)

**Hooded Siskin***Carduelis magellanica*

Calacali (3)

Tropical Parula*Parula pitiayumi*

Tandayapa (2); Mindo (1); Milpe (1)

Blackburnian Warbler*Dendroica fusca*

Bellavista Lodge (1); 2 alongside Bellavista dome; Milpe (1)

Slate-throated Whitestart*Myioborus miniatus*

New Road on transfer from airport to Bellavista (1); Bellavista Lodge (3); Bellavista forests (2); Tandayapa (3); Dome in evening at Bellavista Lodge, catching insects from the lights (1); Paz de las Aves (2); Los Bancos (1); Tandayapa (3), Trout farm (1)

**Spectacled Whitestart***Myioborus melanocephalus*

Yanacocha (~6). Seems to prefer higher altitudes than Slate-throated

Choco Warbler*Basileuterus chlorophrys*

Milpe (1). At first confused with Russet-crowned Warbler.

Russet-crowned Warbler*Basileuterus coronatus*

1 at Bellavista Lodge, 3 in forest

Bellavista (2), Tandayapa (1)

Three-striped Warbler*Basileuterus tristriatus*

1 Bellavista forests; Tandayapa (1); Milpe (3)

Giant Cowbird*Molothrus oryzivorus*

1 juvenile being fed by a Turquoise Jay. It was only a step or two from us in the grounds of Bellavista Lodge early the first full morning



Scrub Blackbird

Dives warszewiczi

Mindo (2); Near Milpe (3); Road back from lowlands (3)

Bananaquit

Coereba flaveola

The grey throated form is present in this area. Paz de las Aves (1); Mindo (2); Ranchos Suamox (1)



Rufous-collared Sparrow

Zonotrichia capensis

Bellavista Lodge (2, 1); Quito(2); Alambi (2); Paz de las Aves (~6), 2; Mindo (~10); Track to Bellavista (1); Old Nono Mindo Road (~20)

Orange-billed Sparrow

Arremon aurantiirostris

Los Bancos (1)

Choco Brush-Finch

Atlapetes crassus

Milpe (1); Old Nono Mindo road (3); Yanacocha (~10)

Yellow-breasted Brush-Finch

Atlapetes latinuchus

Yanacocha (~6)

White-winged Brush-Finch

Atlapetes leucopterus

Bellavista Lodge (~3); Mindo (1)



Black-eared Hemispingus

Hemispingus melanotis

2 in Bellavista forests

White-shouldered Tanager

Tachyphonus luctuosus

Rio Silanche (1 pair)

White-lined Tanager

Tachyphonus rufus

Alambi (1); Mindo (female)



Lemon-rumped Tanager

Ramphocelus icteronotus

Alambi (~6 females); Mindo (1 male, 3 females); Los Bancos (1 male, 1 female); Milpe (1); Ranchos Suamox (~6); Rio Silanche (~20)



Male



Female

Blue-capped Tanager

Thraupis cyanocephala

Tony Nunnery's (~8); Tandayapa (1)

Blue-grey Tanager

Thraupis episcopus

Alambi (~6); Mindo (~15); Los Bancos (~20); Rio Silanche (~20); Ranchos Suamox (~15); Tandayapa (2)



Palm Tanager

Thraupis palmarum

Mindo (2); Los Bancos (2), Milpe (1); Rio Silanche (2)

Hooded Mountain-Tanager

Buthraupis Montana

Trout farm (3)

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager

Anisognathus igniventris

Old Nono Mindo road (3); Yanacocha (~6)



Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager

Anisognathus somptuosus

The high-pitched chipping call is one heard often in the highlands. Bellavista Lodge (4), 4; Bellavista area (~8); Tandayapa (3), Paz de las Aves (~6, 3); Tandayapa (4)



Grass-green Tanager

Chlorornis riefferii

2 in forests from the track ~100 metres below Bellavista Lodge

Golden-crowned Tanager

Iridosornis rufivertex

Mindo (1)

Golden Tanager

Tangara arthus

Bellavista Dome (2); Tony Nunnery's (2); Tandayapa (2); Alambi (1); Mindo (1); Los Bancos (~4); Milpe (2); Tandayapa (2)

Silver-throated Tanager

Tangara icterocephala

Alambi (1); Los Bancos (~10); Ranchos Suamox (2)



Flame-faced Tanager

Tangara parzudakii

Los Bancos (2 visiting fruit feeders)

Rufous-throated Tanager

Tangara rufigula

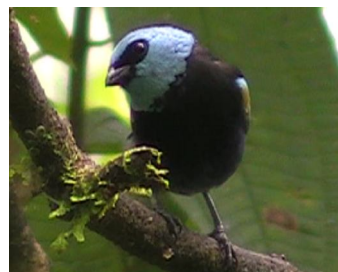
Los Bancos (2 visiting fruit feeders)

Golden-naped Tanager*Tangara ruficervix*

Bellavista forest (2); Tandayapa (1)

Blue-necked Tanager*Tangara cyanicollis*

Los Bancos (2); Rio Silanche (4), Ranchos Suamox (2)

**Beryl-spangled Tanager***Tangara nigroviridis*

Mindo (1)

Black-capped Tanager*Tangara heinei*

Tony Nunnery's (3)

Green Honeycreeper*Chlorophanes spiza*

Los Bancos (1 male, 1 female)

**Scarlet-browed Tanager***Heterospingus xanthopygius*

Rio Silanche (1 in the distance from the tower)

Blue-backed Conebill*Conirostrum sitticolor*

Yanacocha (4)

Glossy Flowerpiercer*Diglossa lafresnayii*

Yanacocha (3)

Black Flowerpiercer*Diglossa humeralis*

Nono Mindo road (2); Yanacocha (2)

White-sided Flowerpiercer*Diglossa albilatera*

Tony Nunnery's (2); Bellavista area (4); Alambi (1); Tandayapa (1)

**Masked Flowerpiercer***Diglossopsis cyaneus*

Seen regularly, usually in the vicinity of hummingbird feeders. Bellavista Lodge (3, 1); Bellavista area (~4); Yanacocha (~10)

**Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch***Phrygilus plebejus*

Calacali (~20)

Blue-black Grassquit*Volatinia jacarina*

Ranchos Suamox (1); Old Nono Mindo road (2)

Variable Seedeater	<i>Sporophila corvine</i>
Alambi (1 female); Mindo (1 male); Near Milpe (1 male); Rio Silanche (~10)	
Yellow-bellied Seedeater	<i>Sporophila nigricollis</i>
Alambi (2)	Paz (1 pair) Rio Silanche (1)
Band-tailed Seedeater	<i>Catamenia analis</i>
Calacali (~10)	



Dusky Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus semifuscus</i>
Bellavista area (~10); Bellavista Lodge (4); Paz de las Aves (1); Mindo (1); Milpe (2)	
Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager	<i>Chlorospingus flavigularis</i>
Milpe (2)	

White-winged Tanager	<i>Piranga leucoptera</i>
Tandayapa village - 1 next to the track a short way up the Old Nono Mindo Road	

Plushcap	<i>Catamblyrhynchus diadema</i>
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This is generally very difficult to catch up with, but we were lucky enough to pin down 2 in the bird party in rest, on the walk uphill from Bellavista Lodge

Southern Yellow Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus chrysogaster</i>
Calacali (2)	

Buff-throated Saltator	<i>Saltator maximus</i>
Alambi (1); Ranchos Suamox (1)	



Black-winged Saltator	<i>Saltator atripennis</i>
Tony Nunnery's (2); Tandayapa (2 - 1 building nest)	

TOTAL SPECIES = 211