

# **NORTH PERU BIRD TOURS**

## **TOUR 1 – 31<sup>ST</sup> MAY TO 21<sup>ST</sup> JUNE 2012**

**Leaders:** Detlef & Carol Davies

**Ground Agent:** Lluís Dalmau assisted by Maya Becerra Ortiz

**Participants:** Duncan Watson, Dianne Parker, Phil Palmer, Geoff De Lisle and Dallas Bishop

### **Thurs 31 May** **Lima – Tarapoto - Pumarinri**

Our 5 participants arrived at Tarapoto Airport around 10 pm, having travelled from Auckland via Santiago and Lima. Transferred in minibus with driver, Miguel, to Pumarinri Amazon Lodge, arriving c.11 pm. After a short briefing and welcome drink, but before heading for bed, we were treated to our first bird species, 2 **Tropical Screech Owls** peered out from under the roof of a storage building.

### **Fri 1 June** **Pumarinri, Huallaga River**

It was a relaxing day at the Lodge after the very long travelling day yesterday. Our group, none of whom had been to Peru before, enjoyed the variety of common species in the area between the road and the river. **Blue-grey and Palm Tanagers, Yellow-rumped Cacique, House Wren, Turkey & Black Vultures,** and **Grey-breasted Sabrewings** which were often at the hummingbird feeders. A walk up to and along the road produced **Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper, Masked Tityra, Streaked, Social & Boat-billed Flycatchers, Black-fronted Nunbirds** and **Squirrel Cuckoo**. Recent heavy rain meant that, even though the water level had dropped now, the river bank was very muddy and hard to negotiate. Waterside birds included **White-winged & White-banded Swallows, Drab Water-Tyrant, Black Phoebe** & a distant **Fasciated Tiger-Heron** on a rock downriver. A male **White-tailed** (now called **Green-backed**) **Trogon** perched in the open near the steps.

At 3 pm we went by boat upriver to Shapaja with local guide Samuel and boatman Miguel. This is always a productive option. great views of the swallows, 2 **Greater Anis, Olive** and **Crested Oropendolas** gave good flight views but tended to be concealed once perched. A distant **Laughing Falcon, Swallow-wings** on high bare snags and then distinctive in flight, **Striated & Black-crowned Night Herons** allowing close photography, **Roadside Hawk,** flocks of **Cobalt-winged Parakeets & Grey-rumped Swifts** and perhaps a bird of the day, the comical **Hoatzin** all helped to make it a very good first day.

Both Crested & Band-bellied Owls were heard at Pumarinri most nights but neither could be called into view. The deep call of Crested was thought to come from the other side of the river. One Band-bellied was seen during our recce.

### **Sat 2 June** **Pumarinri**

We took a short drive back along the road for an early start up a forest trail leading to a lovely waterfall. Along the road we had a perched **Chestnut-eared Aracari** and 3 more in flight; also a **Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher** was calling and gave good views. We then made slow quiet progress up the trail looking for antbirds, succeeding in finding **Peruvian Warbling Antbird** and **White-flanked Antwren**. Hummingbirds were evident but colours subdued in the shade, nevertheless we identified **Long-billed Starthroat, Reddish Hermit** and **White-chinned Sapphire**. In the open areas along the trail we looked at distant birds of prey and found at least 6 **Swallow-tailed Kites** and a **White Hawk** as well as the common vultures. Some forest birds were quite difficult to view well but these included good sightings of **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper** and **Greyish Mourner**. Local guide, Samuel, was with us and found us some poison

dart frogs and strange insects. Photos of other wildlife were being taken throughout the tour for identification later and Dallas has since come up with many names.

After returning to the Lodge for lunch we went out again in the late afternoon to another nearby trail which we call the Cave Trail as it eventually leads to a cave with roosting White-collared Swifts. We have also seen **Spot-winged Antbird** here and a little tape-playing resulted in great views of a male; other species like **Black-faced Antbird** and **Coraya Wren** were heard only.

### Sun 3 June Pumarinri, Huallaga River

Up before daylight today for a dawn arrival at the start of a trail on the south side of the river. The boat took us a little downriver, giving us great views of the **Fasciated Tiger Heron** as we moored by the rocks. The forest is more intact here than on the Lodge side but despite previous productive visits, it was relatively silent this morning. We struggled to get satisfactory views of small antshrikes which were responding to a tape of **Plain-winged** and one was surely **Mouse-coloured**. **Peruvian Warbling Antbirds**, **White-chinned Sapphires** and **Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts** were seen but little else of note until the boat took us back upriver again in the afternoon. This time we landed on a sandy bank on the south side which had a surprise or two for us.

We flushed 2 **Ladder-tailed Nightjars** which then posed for photos on the bare rocks, 3 superb **Pied Lapwings** were on the sand, then showing the amazing wing-pattern in flight. Perched on roadside trees were **Yellow-headed Caracara** and **Plain-breasted Hawk**; **Greater Ani** and **Hoatzin** again gave great views and we enjoyed flocks of **Cobalt-winged Parakeets**, **Cocoi Heron**, **Giant Cowbirds**, **Yellow-browed Sparrow** & **Ringed Kingfisher**.

### Mon 4 June Quebrada Upaquihoa

This was a full day's excursion south over the bridge over the Mayo River, and on to the little village of Buenos Aires. From here we travelled south-west to Quebrada Upaquihoa, a dry forest area which although mainly cleared for farming, still has reasonably large areas of dry forest inhabited by some local species. Highlights early on were a briefly perched **Hook-billed Kite**, a trio of perched **Ruddy Pigeons**, **Streaked** and **Variegated Flycatchers**, **White-eyed Parakeets** and a few **Blue-winged Parrotlets**.

Progress was slow up the rough road as birding was productive, particularly around kms 4 & 11. **Ruddy Ground Doves** & **White-tipped Doves** were often flushed from the roadside. Just one tree held over 10 species, one less conspicuous one being identified later from Detlef's & Duncan's photos as a female **Black and White Tody-Tyrant**. In the denser bush we found some confiding **Barred Antshrikes**, a pair of **Stripe-chested Antwrens**, **Green Jays**, **Straight-billed Woodcreeper**, **Golden-tailed Sapphire**, **Tropical Gnatcatchers**, **White-winged Becard**, **White-lined Tanager**, **Oriole Blackbird** and the local speciality, the **Northern Slaty Antshrike**.

Returning north, we looked down from the road to a very wide part of the Huallaga river and a number of sand islands. Although distant, our telescopes zoomed in on both **Pied Lapwing** and **Collared Plover**; and another diurnal nightjar, the **Sand-coloured Nighthawk**. At least 6 of these, looking more like shorebirds than nightjars. There were a few **Yellow-billed Terns**, herons and other riverside birds.

### Tues 5 June Juan Guerra, upper Huallaga, Tarapoto

After packing to transfer to the next overnight location, we headed to a site half way back to Tarapoto. Juan Guerra, another good area of dry forest with a similar avifauna to yesterday's site. A roadside stop near Shapaja found us **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker** and a very close **Squirrel Cuckoo** but an impressive variety awaited us at Juan Guerra with **Speckled Chachalacas**, a female **Spot-breasted Woodpecker**, **Blue-crowned Motmot** (both these rather brief), 2 **Lettered Aracaris**, 2 **Bluish-fronted Jacamars**, 2 highly coloured **Troupials**, **Greyish Saltator** and **Pale-vented Pigeons**.

As we had not had time for a couple of the planned roadside stops yesterday we again crossed the Puente Colombia and found a flock of 53 **Comb Ducks** near yesterday's riverside site, also more **Sand-coloured Nighthawks, Yellow-billed Terns**, herons, egrets & an **Osprey**. A selection of water birds was visible from the road on a flooded marsh, including **American Purple Gallinules & Wattled Jacanas**. We then continued to the town of Tarapoto and checked in to the comfortable Rio Shilcayo Hotel for late lunch, chilling out and other urban exploits.

### Wed 6 June    The Tunnel, La Escalera

This was a full day out to entirely new habitat. We took with us local bird guide Henri who manages a reserve at Alto Shilcayo, outside the town and knows the area well. Heading north out of Tarapoto we spent the day at the Tunnel . the name given to a well-known birding area either side of a 100m tunnel at the summit of La Escalera at 900 m altitude. The prime habitat is cloud forest, generally dense with few trails but many special birds can be seen from the roadside.

We began birding a couple of kms beyond the Tunnel at an **Andean Cock-of-the-Rock** lek and birds could soon be heard and showed reasonably well but at rather long range. Also at this spot we found a distant perched **Blackish Pewee**, close views of several **Black-faced Dacnis, Cliff Flycatchers, Bronzy Inca, Montane Woodcreeper**, 4 **Blue-crowned Manakins** including one male & a motionless **Striolated Puffbird** (credit to Henri for spotting this). Colourful tanagers included **Silver-beaked, Masked, Paradise, Swallow, Magpie, Bay-headed** and **Hepatic**; we heard **Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo** but it couldn't be enticed in. Good views of both **Golden-faced** and the rare **Mishana Tyrannulet**.

We stopped at intervals between here and the village of Pongo Cynararchi, highlights included **Channel-billed Toucans, Rose-fronted** and **Maroon-tailed Parakeets**, a single **Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, White-fronted Nunbird, Gilded Barbets, Moriche Orioles, Violaceous Jays, White-collared, Grey-rumped** and **Fork-tailed Palm Swifts**.

After lunch in the village, we retraced our steps and stopped on the Tarapoto side of the Tunnel, where the leaders have birded several times before. Two **Blue-naped Chlorophonias** were frustratingly hard to see in the canopy but a **Carmiol's Tanager** showed well in the low scrub as did **Thick-billed Euphonias**.

With plenty of commoner birds to keep us going, it was another memorable day.

### Thurs 7 June    Tarapoto to Abra Patricia

After a second night at the Rio Shilcayo Hotel, we set off c.7.15 on the start of our long journey westwards with driver, Elvis, who would be with us for the rest of the time. A smaller second vehicle with our baggage followed behind, courtesy of Ivan. Our first stop was at a spot where the main road crossed a deep ravine and below was a colony of **Oilbirds**. In the bright sunshine the birds were hard to view down below but there were many there, along with some **White-collared Swifts**.

By late morning we had reached the town of Moyobamba and just south of the town is Waqanki, a little private reserve with an impressive list of hummingbirds which visit their feeders. Looking down from a raised wooden building, it was hard to break away from the photo opportunities of **White-necked Jacobins, Golden-tailed Sapphires, Sapphire-spangled Emeralds, Rufous-crested Coquettes, Brown Violetears, Black-throated Mangos, Long-tailed Hermits** and many more.

We reached our destination just before 3 pm and were instantly welcomed by another set of hummingbirds . this time at a much higher altitude, 2,300m. The new Owlet Lodge, run by ECOAN, is set in a protected forest, well-known to birders. Hummers admired at the feeders by the Lodge included **Chestnut-breasted Coronet, Collared and Bronzy Incas, Emerald-bellied Puffleg, Green Violetear, Long-tailed Sylph, Fawn-breasted Brilliant & White-bellied Woodstar**.

Just before dusk we set out on the 900m long trail to the haunt of the **Long-whiskered Owlet**, a great rarity, only staked out for birders to see for the last few years. On route we enjoyed **Glossy Black Thrush**, **Grass Green Tanager**, **Drab & Black-eared Hemispingus**, **White-collared Jays**, **Crimson-mantled Woodpecker** and **Streaked Tuftedcheek**. Our guide, Roberto, managed to call in the **Long-whiskered Owlet** for all to see, we will never forget that moment when it flew in and called at us from a torchlit, lichen-covered branch.

### Fri 8 June   Abra Patricia

After an early breakfast we were fortunate in having a dry day to look for some special forest birds around the Lodge. First on the agenda was an early morning speciality, Roberto called a **Chestnut Antpitta** briefly to its feeding tray, just across the road from the main gates. We then walked along the road & found many common high altitude birds like **Slate-throated Whitestart**, **Sierran Elaenia**, **Rufous-naped Brush-Finch** and **White-sided Flowerpiercer**, a whole host of tanagers like **Common Bush-Tanager**, **Saffron-crowned**, **Beryl-spangled**, **Paradise**, **Bay-headed**, **Blue-capped** & a male **White-shouldered**. Near the Lodge we found the very range-restricted **Lulu's Tody-Tyrant** & the inconspicuous **Black-throated Tody-Tyrant**, a **Rusty-vented Tapaculo** made a brief appearance for one or 2 of us, an **Azara's Spinetail** was more obliging.

In the afternoon we drove back down the road to speciality sites Roberto knows and succeeded with great views of the rare **Royal Sunangel** & of the elusive **Bar-winged Wood-Wren**; also a **Lyre-tailed Nightjar** roosting on a roadside rock close to the passing traffic. Also of note were a **Flame-faced Tanager's** nest with 2 well-grown young, **White-capped** & **Vermilion Tanagers** in the forest opposite the nightjar roost, 2 **Long-tailed Tyrants**, a **Chestnut-tipped Toucanet**, **Lineated Woodpecker** and an **Equatorial Greytail**, in flight only. Back at the Lodge, the group climbed the observation tower a short distance down the Trucho Mono Trail and the main species of interest was a pair of **Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulets** allowing some reasonable photos.

In the evening it was time for more spotlighting. The target species was Cinnamon Screech Owl, also a difficult and range-restricted bird. This time we headed further down the Trucho Mono Trail before dusk & on route we saw **White-collared Jays** & a **Red-hooded Tanager**; already at roost so hard to make out in the foliage; also a pair of **Chestnut-crested Cotingas** on a distant tree-top. A Rusty-tinged Antpitta called once. The **Cinnamon Screech Owl** was another wonderful experience, the bird posed admirably for us.

### Sat 9 June   Abra Patricia to Gocta via Rio Chido

We left Owlet Lodge at dawn with Roberto who had agreed to guide us up a trail recently opened for birders to get high above the village of San Lorenzo in the Rio Chido valley. The area has unfortunately been heavily logged for farming and crops but nevertheless remnant populations of rare birds, particularly antpittas still survive. It was hard going but by 9.30 we were well up the hill and tucked quietly in a dense thicket listening to the strange deep call of the endemic **Pale-billed Antpitta**. Although we all had a glimpse of the bird over the next hour or so, views were not as good as we had hoped. Other dense herbage high on this hillside reputed to hold antpittas failed to produce any response to the tape. However, other quality birds could be found in the open areas like **Azara's Spinetail**, **Smoky Bush-Tyrant**, **Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant**, **Rufous-capped Thornbill** & **Violet-throated Starfrontlet**.

Returning to the main road, it was a short drive to another hummingbird reserve with a species in high demand, the **Marvellous Spatuletail**. This unbelievable and endemic hummingbird has a very small world range in this part of Peru. Santos, the manager, took us to the most likely feeder to see the bird, and we had not long tucked into lunch on the overlooking bench when a male with long spoon-ended tail feathers arrived to everyone's delight. With a supporting cast of **Green & Sparkling Violetears**, **White-bellied Woodstars**, **Andean Emerald** & **Amethyst-throated Sunangels**, it was hard to break away. We continued to Pedro Ruiz and up the rough road to Gocta Lodge.

The Lodge is at roughly 1,800m and looks straight across to the spectacular Gocta Falls. A little surprise celebration took place tonight for one of the leaders who had a birthday today.

### Sun 10 June    Gocta Falls (the low road)

Gocta Falls has only been known to the outside world since 2006 so tourism is in its infancy. This has become a popular walk or horse-ride but is barely known as a birding site. It was therefore great to do some pioneering. It is about a 4 hour walk but birding would take longer and we took a horse and 2 guides, Eriberto & Maria to assist in carrying gear. Birding was leisurely, there were no particular targets although we had seen Cock-of-the-Rocks here 2 years ago. We were therefore pleased to find **Mitred Parakeets**, **White-bellied Hummingbirds**, **Bronzy Incas**, **Emerald Toucanets**, **Variiegated Bristle-Tyrant**, **Mottle-cheeked & Sulphur-bellied Tyrannulets**, **Streak-necked Flycatcher**, **Green Jay**, **Russet-crowned Warbler**, **Tropical Parula** & more. Chestnut-crowned Antpittas called from a distance.

The scrub behind the Lodge was great for birding in the late afternoon, producing species like **Buff-bellied Tanager**, **Black & White Seedeater**, **Hooded Siskin**, **Silver-backed & Paradise** (once) **Tanagers & Golden-bellied Grosbeak**. At dusk we heard **Pauraques** which would often land on the grass by the pool.

### Mon 11 June    Kuelap Archaeological Site

Today was set aside as a change from birding but in practice it was a hard ask as birds are absolutely everywhere in rural Peru. We left c.8.30 going south up the valley, leaving the main road to rise steeply up to over 3,000m at the entrance to the ruins. Kuelap was the home of an ancient civilisation known as the Chachapoyas who remained undefeated by the Incas until shortly before the Spanish conquest. We picked up our English-speaking guide, Ronald, and then on route we had a puncture so while this was being repaired, we were, of course, birding. We happened to have a vantage point over a small wetland where we spotted 3 **Plumbeous Rails**, 2 adults & a juvenile.

Ronald gave an excellent account as we toured the awe-inspiring ancient buildings. The site was not completely excavated so tall vegetation covered some areas. Here we found **White-browed Chat-Tyrant**, **Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulets**, **Rufous-naped Brush-Finch**, **Mountain Caracaras**, **Sierran Elaenia** & **Mitred Parakeets**. We returned to lunch at a restaurant in the village of Maria and returned to Gocta in time for some birding around the Lodge.

### Tues 12 June    Gocta to Leymebamba – the Utcubamba River

We left Gocta c.8 am heading back southwards up the valley but continuing on the main road to the Andean town of Leymebamba for a 2 night stay. We made a few roadside stops, first at the puncture place from yesterday (km 486) for another view of the **Plumbeous Rails**, along with **Buff-bellied Tanagers & Striated Heron**. We tried our **Torrent Duck** site and succeeded in finding a pair giving great views but they are very shy and soon swim away or hide in the vegetation. Along the river were several other typical Andean river birds like **Amazon Kingfisher & Torrent Tyrannulet**, again, Chestnut-crowned Antpittas were calling, clearly a commoner bird than one might think.

At km 449 a **Fasciated Tiger Heron** took off from a rock in the river and flew up into a tree. Looking up there we found it had landed on its nest where there was a young chick. Seeing the parent bird staring across at us with neck stretched and its bill pointing up between its 2 yellow eyes was unforgettable.

We arrived in Leymebamba c.2.30 pm and after lunch we had another diversion from birding by visiting the famous Mummies Museum. Our lodging for the next 2 nights was Casa Mallqui, a set of spacious comfortable rooms attached to the Museum, a large dining room and open log fires. The area was great for hummingbirds and tanagers. Up a short hill opposite the Museum entrance is Kenticafe, combining hummingbird feeders with a cafe and a few quality rooms. As well as hummers seen previously, we added **Rainbow Starfrontlet**, **Spot-throated Hummingbird**, **Purple-throated Sunangel** & the rare **Little Woodstar** to the list.

### Wed 13 June Abra Barro Negro – Leymebamba to the Maranon at Chaconta & back

This was an ambitious day in which we travelled the winding Andean road up to 3,600m at Abra Barro Negro and then down to the Maranon at just 800m. We left before dawn, flushing a few unidentified nightjars from the road, arriving at the highest point at 6.30 am. It was very cold up here and although 2 hardy souls were in shorts the rest of us had woolly hats and gloves! The vegetation on the Maranon side of the mountain was in shade but there was considerable birdsong so we persisted in walking sections of the road. High altitude highlights were **Andean Flicker**, sometimes perched on fence posts, **Mountain Caracara**, very smart in flight but often on the ground, **White-chinned Thistletail**, skulking in the dense bush, **Tufted Tit-tyrant**, **Shining Sunbeam**, **Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant**, a brief **Bar-winged Cinclodes**, **Paramo Pipit**, **Brown-bellied Swallow**, numerous overhead, the beautiful **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager**, **Plumbeous Sierra Finch** & **White-banded Tyrannulet**.

As we descended on the winding road, vegetation changed and eventually we were in dry scrub and cacti. Later roadside stops found us in heat we had not experienced since Tarapoto. A different set of birds greeted us down here like **Bare-faced Ground Doves**, **Long-tailed Mockingbirds**, **Chiguanco Thrush**, **Tropical Pewee** & **Hepatic Tanager**; **American Kestrels** & **Scarlet-fronted Parakeets** were common. Two specialities on our wish-list were **Buff-bridled Inca Finch** & **Black-necked Woodpecker** and these were quite easily found at km 346. After lunch near Chaconta, we turned back and left time for some more late afternoon birding near the summit. We were back in Leymebamba just after dark at 6.15 pm.

### Thurs 14 June Leymebamba to Gocta – Utcubamba River

Early morning around the garden at Casa Mallqui rewarded us with a fine **Golden-bellied Grosbeak**, visible through the dining room window during breakfast, **White-sided Flowerpiercer**, **Maranon Thrush**, **Buff-bellied Tanager**, a pair of **Hepatic Tanagers** and then the amazing **Sword-billed Hummingbird**, a great finish to this part of the trip. We then headed back downriver, stopping to see the **Fasciated Tiger Herons** again, the parent was again brooding the chick. We didn't find the Torrent Ducks again but on the same stretch of river, our driver, Elvis, spotted 2 **Neotropical River Otters**, an adult and a youngster making their way slowly along the far bank, giving us superb views and photos.

After visiting the attractive town of Chachapoyas for lunch, we returned to Gocta Lodge in good time for some birding before dusk. Incredibly, a few of us managed to see a male **Marvellous Spatuletail** only 5 minutes walk for the Lodge. As far as we know, a first for this locality but it has been recorded from elsewhere in the valley. Other species in the surrounding scrub included **Azara's Spinetail**, **Southern Beardless Tyrannulet**, a fine male **Blue-necked Tanager** and a flock of **Hooded Siskins**.

### Fri 15 June Gocta Falls (the high road) – from San Pablo

Today we walked the trail which looks from the Lodge like crossing the face of a precipice. It starts from the village of San Pablo, a half hour drive away and in fact once you are there the steep drop is not even visible. With far less gradient and fewer people, we found it better for birding than the more used trail from Gocta Lodge. Starting through secondary growth, we recorded some common hummingbirds and flycatchers, **Scarlet-fronted Parakeets**, **Tropical Pewee**, a male **Yellow-bellied Seedeater**, **Streaked Saltators**, at least 3 **Azara's Spinetails** calling and **White-tipped Swifts** overhead.

As we came into the intact primary forest we were rewarded with some very unexpected species. A **White-eared Solitaire** was seen on the ground collecting nest material and calling later, **Grey-breasted Wood Wrens** gave brief views, several tanagers including **Silver-backed** & **Buff-bellied**; **Maranon Thrushes**, **Streak-necked Flycatcher**, **Rufous-naped Brush Finches**, a **Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet**, a male **White-winged Becard** and a skulking bird which was elusive until it responded to some random sounds on the tape. Close views and photos followed, it was clearly a small furnarid, most of its plumage resembling Spotted Barbtail but responding to the tape of Rusty-winged. The rufous tail and trace of red in the wings eventually confirmed it as a juvenile **Rusty-winged Barbtail**. Chestnut-crowned Antpittas were calling and

given time we might have called one in. We had taken our time birding & taking photos so we did not go further than the side trail leading to the viewpoint to the Falls.

**Pauraques** were again seen well after dusk.

### Sat 16 June    Gocta to Jaen – lower Utcubamba & Marañon bridge

We left Gocta at 8.30 & were held up in Pedro Ruiz for about an hour because of a major procession. We made a couple of stops at sandy sites along the Utcubamba, producing **Fasciated Tiger Heron**, and a brief pair of **Torrent Ducks** for some of us. A good spot in the lowlands further west was at a large **Cattle Egret** colony in trees by the road near Santa Elena. Scanning the wide sandy banks we found **Pied Lapwing & Collared Plover**, **Pacific Hornero** & **Southern Rough-winged Swallows**. We passed some fertile rice fields with numerous **Cattle Egrets** & other herons feeding among the local people working in the fields. We were then in new habitat of dry scrubby hills with a noticeably different avifauna. **Vermilion Flycatchers** are always exciting the first time, they were seen most days from here on.

We crossed the Marañon at c.12 noon and got to the town of Jaen before 1 pm. Lunch was at the Hotel El Bosque where we booked in for 2 nights. After an afternoon's rest we drove the 20 minute ride to Gotas de Agua, a privately-owned reserve owned by local entrepreneur, Luciano who had agreed to guide us and try and show us his bird specialities. This first evening he was unavailable but his 2 sons took his place. **Croaking Ground Doves**, **Long-tailed Mockingbirds**, **Groove-billed Anis** & **Vermilion Flycatchers** were common, **Silver-backed Tanager**, **Yellow-tailed Oriole**, **Streaked Saltator** & **Green Jay** also seen but 3 highly sought-after species needed more effort & ideally some enticement with a tape. We managed to get a view of a **Little Inca Finch** but the other 2 would have to wait until tomorrow. At dusk a flock of **Lesser Nighthawks** circled around the hillside & we heard a Peruvian Screech Owl.

### Sun 17 June    Gotas de Agua

After an early and rather scanty breakfast, we left for the reserve again at 6 am. Early morning with Luciano himself as guide proved the way to see the specialities. Although only the 2 leaders had a glimpse of a **Tataupa Tinamou**, we all had good views of 3 **Marañon Crescentcheats**, one pair close to the road appearing without any prompting, and 3 **Little Inca Finches**. A **Peruvian Pygmy Owl** was perched just outside Luciano's house and **Long-tailed Mockingbirds** were very confiding as they fed at the bird table. Along the surrounding trails we found **Peruvian Pigeon**, **Spot-throated & White-bellied Hummingbirds**, a brief **Scarlet-backed Woodpecker** (which had a nest in the corner post of the observation tower), **Rufous-fronted Thornbirds** and their huge stick nests, great views of a pair of **Collared Antshrikes**, **Brown-crested Flycatcher**, the local race (maior) of **Tropical Gnatcatcher**, **Purple-throated Euphonia**, **Streaked Saltators**, 4 **Yellow-tailed Orioles** and several **Saffron Finches** & **Golden-bellied Grosbeaks**.

After a break back at the hotel where some of us had a refreshing swim, and a meal in town, we returned to the marshes & rice paddies below the scrub-covered hills looking for marsh birds, up to dusk. We did not find any crakes (which undoubtedly lurk in there) but **Pacific Horneros**, a juvenile **Harris's Hawk** & a juvenile **Savanna Hawk** were new for the trip.

### Mon 18 June    Jaen to Moyobamba

We left Jaen c.7.30 and with a very long drive ahead, stops were limited. Roadside doves which we originally passed off as Ruddy Ground Doves were later identified as **Ecuadorian Ground Doves**. As we would be passing Abra Patricia, this was an ideal spot to eat our packed lunch . under the shelters overlooking the hummingbird feeders where we had another photography session of the same set of species. A female **Andean Cock-of-the-Rock** flew across the road & another stop for the **Lyre-tailed Nightjars** revealed 2 birds roosting close together on the roadside rocks. Neither of them had the long tail streamers of the adult male so they will both have been females or young.

As we approached Moyobamba, we spent half an hour at Yacumama where we had previously had a view of Russet-crowned Crane, but this time none were calling. Spending the rest of the time until dusk at the approach to Morro de Calzada, Russet-crowned Cranes were calling by a couple of roadside ponds but not coming into view; nevertheless it was quite productive with **Plumbeous Rail**, **American Purple Gallinule**, a confiding pair of **Bluish-fronted Jacamars**, **Turquoise Tanagers** & **Orange-bellied Euphonias**. After dark a Rufous Nightjar responded to our tape . it was clearly quite close but despite following it for nearly half an hour, it gave us the slip.

We checked in to the Hotel Puerto Mirador in Moyobamba for one night, a quality hotel similar to the Rio Shilcayo.

### **Tues 19 June    Morro de Calzada – Moyobamba to Tarapoto**

Calzada is a small village about 15 mins drive west of Moyobamba and the ~~M~~Morroqis a tall isolated hill, covered in forest and holding a good variety of birds. The roadside ponds produced **Long-tailed Tyrants** and a perched light phase **Short-tailed Hawk**. After meeting the local manager, Manuel, we found **Black-faced Tanagers**, **Swallow Tanagers** & **Lesser Elaenia** near the car park. We then climbed part way up the hill itself, finding some exciting species, but birding was difficult in the dense forest. A trogon which took a while to see properly & which we were hoping might be Blue-crowned turned into a nice male **Green-backed Trogon**. Also taking a while to see properly was a fine **Rufous Motmot** & an **Olivaceous Woodcreeper** appeared as we returned to the foot of the trail. Some of us also saw a troop of c.6 **Saddleback Tamarin** monkeys.

We completed the journey back to Tarapoto and to the Rio Shilcayo Hotel. A last chance to enjoy and photograph some common birds here, such as **Gilded Barbets**.

### **Wed 20 June    Tarapoto to Lima – Pantanos de Villa Wetlands and Coast**

In the morning both guests and guides took a flight from Tarapoto to Lima with a view to birding in a coastal region close to the capital. This flight and flying home to Auckland could not be done on the same day. We transferred to the Hotel El Condado in the affluent area of Miraflores in the south-east of the city. After grabbing some lunch to eat on route, a comfortable taxi took us to Pantanos de Villa, a protected wetland area with trails & a visitor centre.

Birding here was quite superb, the lakes were spread with flocks of herons, egrets, **Neotropic Cormorants**, **Common Gallinules** & **Andean Coots**, **Great & Pied-billed Grebes**, **Killdeer** & **Black-necked Stilts**, ducks like **Cinnamon Teal**, **Andean Ruddy Ducks**, **White-cheeked** & **Yellow-billed Pintail**, and flocks of gulls like **Grey-hooded**, **Belcher's** & **Kelp Gulls**. We succeeded in finding 2 speciality passerines in the dense waterside vegetation, the **Wren-like Rushbird** and the beautiful **Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant**.

It was a short distance from the lakes to the seashore and the large coastal lagoon and the sandy beach were equally alive with birds - more herons & egrets, **Puna Ibis** & **Roseate Spoonbill** (this was a wanderer, not usually occurring this far south), gulls included **Grey**, **Franklin's** & a couple of **Andean**. Shorebirds on the beach included **American Oystercatchers**, **Whimbrel**, **Willetts**, **Turnstones** & **Killdeer**; **Black Skimmers** formed a tight flock on the beach & Inca Terns were numerous along the shoreline. Offshore, **Peruvian Pelicans** formed small groups and **Peruvian Boobies** were common out at sea.

### **Thurs 21 June    Lima to Auckland**

After our final night, we arrived at the airport mid-morning for the 1 pm flight home. For the leaders it was a couple of days break before the start of Tour 2.



The tour had recorded 333 species of birds, most of which were previously unknown to our participants, also a few mammals such as monkeys, the Tayra and those amazing River Otters; poison dart frogs, reptiles and snakes, and a great many insects and other fascinating small creatures.

The leaders trust that their first tour in Peru was enjoyed by all and we hope that future tours will follow in the same way. We wish to thank Lluís Dalmau for his extensive advice in the preparation of the tour and his contacts and introductions, and his very capable personal assistant, Maya Becerra Ortiz, for all her efforts both before and during the tour to see that everything was arranged and booked where necessary, sorting out the occasional hitch and fitting everything in place; also the managers & assistants at Pumarini, Rio Shilcayo & Gocta Lodge. We thank our tireless drivers, Elvis, Miguel and Ivan who supported us throughout and put up with our limited Spanish; also our local guides who found so many rare species for us and shared their specialist knowledge of wildlife, history and culture.

We thank our participants for coming and sharing such a great experience with us; a special thank you to Duncan for the superb DVD and for testing our ID skills later with sets of mystery birds and to Dallas for identifying from photos so many of the insects and other little creatures we enjoyed.