

# NORTH PERU BIRD TOURS

## TOUR 2 – 23<sup>RD</sup> JUNE TO 14<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2012

**Leaders:** Detlef & Carol Davies

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

**Participants:** Simon & Morag Fordham, Bill & Jack Moorhead, Karen Blake, Lee Mason, Nerida Silke & Peter & Rhonda Barrand

### Sat 23 June   Lima – Tarapoto - Pumarinri

After a couple of days break in Lima following tour 1, the leaders met the 9 participants for Tour 2 at the gate for the 8.10 flight to Tarapoto. We all disembarked at Tarapoto Airport around 10 pm & transferred in 2 minibuses with drivers, Miguel & Elvis, to Pumarinri Amazon Lodge, arriving c.11 pm. After short briefing and welcome drink, we all headed for bed, most of the participants having travelled from Australia.

### Sun 24 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 birding in 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**, **Grey-breasted Sabrewings** which were often at the hummingbird feeders; also **Cinnamon-throated Woodcreepers** and **Black-fronted Nunbirds**. Early morning rain cleared up for post-breakfast birding. Taking the steps down to the river, where the banks had dried considerably since the first tour, we found the typical river species of the area such as **White-winged** and **White-banded Swallows**, **Drab Water-Tyrant**, **Black Phoebe** and some common flycatchers.

Around mid-morning we did a loop trail beginning at the gate, taking the road eastwards and then descending to the river and back to the Lodge along a lower trail. We came across a mixed flock of tanagers by the road consisting of **Turquoise** and **Paradise Tanagers**, **Short-billed & Purple Honeycreepers**, **Blue** and **Black-faced Dacnis** and **Thick-billed & Purple-throated Euphonias**. Also along the road were a flock of 6 **Chestnut-eared Aracaris**, **Streaked Flycatcher**, **Blue-headed Parrots & Cobalt-winged Parakeets**. A group of monkeys appeared briefly down the trail, later identified as **Saddleback Tamarins**.

At the river, as well as species seen earlier there was a distant **Fasciated Tiger-Heron**, a **Peruvian Warbling Antbird** was reluctant to show itself well but then Carol spotted a large owl in a tree along the lower trail. a superb **Black-banded Owl** which we have not seen here before. Returning to the Lodge, 2 strange small flycatchers in the tall trees below us were identified as **Yellow-crowned Tyrannulets**, also new for the Lodge area.

In cool, cloudy conditions 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, **Olive Oropendolas**, **Pale-vented Pigeons**, **Striated & Black-crowned Night Herons** allowing close photography, 2 **Swallow-wings** on high bare snags and then distinctive in flight, a **Yellow-headed** and a juvenile **Black Caracara**, **Squirrel Cuckoo** & flocks of **Cobalt-winged Parakeets**. We moored at the sandy beach on the south side where we checked on some species we had discovered on the first tour; sure enough one **Ladder-tailed Nightjar** flushed from the same area as before and a 2 **Pied Lapwings** were feeding there but easily disturbed. Finally several comical **Hoatzins** could easily be seen from the boat in the dense overhanging bushes. After dark the regular **Tropical Screech Owls** were under the roof of the storage building.

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.

### Mon 25 June    Pumarinri

Our drivers, Miguel and Elvis took us back along the road for an early start up a forest trail leading to a lovely waterfall, a popular destination for visitors to Pumarinri but not well-known to birders yet. We have accumulated a good list of species here but the trail is narrow and it is difficult to observe some of the skulking inhabitants of this forest and to show them to the entire group. Among the easier species recorded (in addition to many of yesterday's birds) were **White-chinned Sapphire**, **Fork-tailed Woodnymph**, **Yellow-tufted Woodpecker** & **Squirrel Cuckoo**; more difficult species seen or heard by some included **Reddish Hermit**, **Chestnut-tailed Antbird**, **White-flanked Antwren** & **Black-faced** & **White-browed Antbirds**. In the clearings we enjoyed a variety of birds of prey, about 30 **Swallow-tailed Kites**, **Roadside Hawks** and one **White Hawk**. Local guide, Henri, was with us and he assisted with his knowledge of calls.

After returning to the Lodge in mid-afternoon, the plan was to return to the same area but on a different shorter trail which we referred to as the Cave Trail as it eventually leads to caves containing roosting White-collared Swifts. On arrival, very heavy rain had us all sheltering under the raised rear doors of the vehicles. As time went by it was decided to try this trail on a later date and accordingly we returned to the Lodge.

When rain eased flocks of swifts formed over the river, consisting of both **Grey-rumped** and **Pale-rumped**. At night we heard **Tropical Screech Owls** and **Pauraque**.

### Tues 26 June    Pumarinri, Huallaga River

Early this morning we took the boat across the river a short distance downriver to the start of a trail leading into prime forest which has produced excellent species over the last few years. We had Henri with us who was invaluable in picking out calls. As we arrived we had excellent views of 2 adult **Fasciated Tiger-Herons** on the riverside rocks. As we came ashore, rain set in which unfortunately kept on for a couple of hours during which we gathered under a shelter. From here, groups of birds appeared now and again in the tree-tops . among these were **Red-eyed Vireos**, tanagers including **Turquoise**, **Blue** and **Black-faced Dacnis**, **Thick-billed Euphonia**, **Common Tody Flycatcher** and the trip's only **Rufous-bellied Euphonia**. There were a few hummers . **Sapphire-spangled Emerald** & **White-chinned Sapphire**. When the rain eased off later we walked a short way down the trail, the only additional species of note was a **Double-banded Pygmy Tyrant** which Henri picked out on call but only showed for a few of us. From the boat back we had an **Amazon Kingfisher** and 2 **Channel-billed Toucans** flew across the river.

Much of the rest of the day was cloudy and wet so we stayed close to the Lodge and did a little birding in the clear periods. There was a **Brown-throated Three-toed Sloth** near the start of the Lamas Trail. A regular flock of tanagers in the trees near the new rooms often contained 1 or 2 **Opal-crowned**. In the evening a **Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** was calling and traced to a tree where it gave good views.

### Wed 27 June    Quebrada Upaquiuhua

This was most of a full day's excursion to a dry forest to the south. We crossed the bridge over the Mayo River, and south to the little village of Buenos Aires . on route we stopped where there was a view down to a flooded marsh which on previous visits we have looked at later in the day. This time early morning proved a good time as about 8 **Masked Ducks** were on the open water (new for the leaders) and good numbers of **Wattled Jacanas**, **American Purple Gallinules**, **Moorhens** (note that this is now split as **Common Gallinule**) and a single **Comb Duck**. Another surprise was a pair of **Black-capped Donacobius** at the far end of the marsh but giving good views through the telescope. A **Green Kingfisher** perched on a fence and roadside passerines here included an **Ashy-headed Greenlet**.

From Buenos Aires we travelled south-west on an unmade road 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.

Birds were prolific here and it was hard to keep up with the new species. Accordingly our pace up the road from about km 4 was quite slow. Among the birds in the open bushes were **Barred Antshrikes**, **Variiegated & Brown-crested Flycatchers**, **Southern Beardless** and **Mouse-coloured Tyrannulets**, an elusive **Stripe-chested Antwren**, **Green Jays**, **Tropical Gnatcatchers**, a pair of **White-lined Tanagers**, **Rufous-fronted Thornbird**, a single brief **Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher**, a pair of the very localised **Northern Slaty Antshrike**, the ground-dwelling **White-browed Antbird**, a flighty **Planalto Hermit**, while flocks of **White-eyed Parakeets & Giant Cowbirds** flew over. We stopped to check some tiny parrots . as suspected, a group of **Blue-winged Parrotlets**.

We pulled up by the entrance to a trail into taller forest at km 11. This was also productive with another pair of **Northern Slaty Antshrikes**, **Blue-crowned Trogon**, **Straight-billed Woodcreepers** and after spending some time with a skulking spinetail, we were satisfied that it was **Plain-crowned**.

Travelling back in the afternoon, we pulled by the roadside where we had a view over a wide part of the Huallaga River and some large sand islands. We had the same success here as with the first tour with **Pied Lapwings**, **Collared Plovers**, **Yellow-billed Terns**, **Ringed & Amazon Kingfishers** & at least 3 **Sand-coloured Nighthawks**, clear enough in flight when they look like strange shorebirds but very hard to spot when on the sand or on fallen logs.

### Thurs 28 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. On the way we had another attempt at the Cave Trail to try for **Spot-winged Antbird**. Compared with previous visits, it was a struggle, 1 or 2 people had a view and there were brief sightings of **Dot-winged Antwren & Black-faced Ant-Thrush** . rather disappointing for most of us though.

However, exciting birds awaited us at Juan Guerra. The cultivated fields by the entrance road had a few **Blue-black Grassquits** and **Saffron Finches** and in the scrub-covered hillsides were **Black-billed Thrush**, **White-bellied Pygmy Tyrants**, **Rufous-fronted Thornbirds**, a couple of **Speckled Chachalacas** and various common tanagers and hummingbirds. As we followed the road the valley became narrower, the banks steeper and the trees taller; a stream flowed deep down on our right. A superb pair of **Troupials** were singing and showing off their bright orange plumage. A **Great Antshrike** called loudly but barely showed itself to a couple of us; more confiding were 2 or perhaps 4 **Bluish-fronted Jacamars**, **Green-backed Trogon**, a male **White-browed Antbird**, a **Rufous Casiornis**, male **White-winged Becard** and one of the big surprises of the trip, a **Chestnut-capped Puffbird**, visible just through a small window but seen by all. More subdued species included **Red-eyed Vireos**, a **Crowned Slaty Flycatcher** (identified later), **Lesser Elaenia** and the rare **Mishana Tyrannulet**. Returning to the vehicles in the early afternoon, we continued to Tarapoto and checked in to the comfortable Rio Shilcayo Hotel for late lunch, chilling out and other urban exploits.

### Fri 29 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 900m 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 a **Cock-of-the-Rock** lek and birds could soon be heard and showed reasonably well but at rather long range. We walked slowly down the road in bright

sunshine with great views over the forest and enjoyed some quality birding . a perched **White Hawk** and a **Blackish Pewee** could be viewed together, flocks of tanagers . **Masked, Bay-headed, Yellow-bellied,** and euphonias . **Thick-billed & Orange-bellied; Swallow Tanagers, Black-faced Dacnis & Short-billed Honeycreepers.** Hundreds of **White-tipped Swifts** circled above us, **Cliff Flycatchers** which breed on the cliffs on the left of the road were often in view, **Golden-faced & Yellow Tyrannulets** in the close bushes, a more distant **Mishana Tyrannulet,** great views of **Golden-collared Toucanet,** male **Lineated Woodpecker, Montane & Ocellated Woodcreepers, Bluish-fronted Jacamar & Blue-crowned Manakins.** We had our packed lunch in a Reserve Headquarters building, then driving further down the road, forest became more scattered with more disturbed habitat, we got as far as km 40. At this point a **Many-banded Aracari** was with a group of **Chestnut-eared,** a pair of **Black-bellied Tanagers** were a welcome change from the common Silver-beaked; also several **Magpie Tanagers;** during other roadside stops an **Orange-breasted Falcon** flew swiftly by, **Maroon-tailed Parakeets** were hard to make out in dense foliage but we had a good show by a couple of **Channel-billed Toucans.**

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** kept to the canopy but a **Carmioli's Tanager** showed well but briefly in the low scrub and various common tanagers, flycatchers etc completed the day.

### **Sat 30 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 in our 2 minivans and with drivers, Elvis and Ivan, who would be with us for the rest of the time. Our first stop was at Quiscarrumi Bridge where the main road crosses 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 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, Sapphire-spangled Emeralds, Rufous-crested Coquettes, Brown Violetears, Black-throated Mangos** and many more; less frequent visitors seen were **Green, Rufous-breasted & Black-throated Hermits.** Local owner Jose found us a male **Fiery-capped Manakin** perched in the open, also viewable from the raised platform.

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 km 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 **Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, Silver-backed & Saffron-crowned Tanagers** & flocks of **Scaly-naped Parrots.** Our local guide, Roberto, explained that the Owlet seen by the first tour was no longer responsive to the tape so we would need to go a little further to try for a different one. It was no problem, he managed to call it in & we will never forget that moment when it appeared and called at us from a torchlit, lichen-covered branch. On the way back a **Common Potoo** was singing and it too could be seen in the dim light perched on a high stump.

### **Sun 1 July   Abra Patricia**

We were unlucky with the weather this morning as rain already falling at dawn continued until after 11 am. Although the hummingbirds seemed to continue to come to the feeders regardless and the occasional **Great Thrush** and **Rufous-naped Brush-Finch** appeared, we were confined to the Lodge until then. A **Tayra** which had become a regular visitor to a feeding station also braved the conditions.

Roberto took us to the main gates and westwards along the road to see what was emerging as the weather cleared up. A couple of us flushed a **White-throated Quail-Dove** from the track & we had a brief **Lulu's Tody-Tyrant**. It was surprisingly good, even in the periodic low cloud and among the prize sightings were a perched **White-rumped Hawk**, a **Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant**, a pair of **Olivaceous Siskins**, **Green & Black Fruiteaters**, **Ruddy & Band-tailed Pigeons**, **Streaked Tuftedcheek**, **Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulets**, **Bluish & White-sided Flowerpiercers**, **Blue & Black**, **Beryl-spangled**, **Blue-capped**, **Grass Green & Grey-hooded Bush Tanagers** and a smart male **Rufous-crested Tanager** (new for the leaders).

Later we drove eastwards back down the road to speciality sites Roberto knows and succeeded with reasonable views of the beautiful **Royal Sunangel**. In the evening it was time for more spotlighting, this time the target species was **Cinnamon Screech Owl**, also a difficult and range-restricted bird. Heading down the Trucho Mono, Peter spotted a male **Masked Trogon** and a female **Long-tailed Antbird** could be viewed just before dusk. The **Cinnamon Screech Owl** was another wonderful experience, the bird posed admirably for us. On the way back a troop of **Peruvian Night Monkeys** moved swiftly through.

### Mon 2 July Abra Patricia to Gocta via Rio Chido

Roberto who had led this mornings excursion on the first tour had arranged to guide elsewhere so Santos from Huembo had agreed to take his place. We left Owllet Lodge before dawn and met Santos on route before heading up to the village of San Lorenzo. From here we followed a trail recently opened for birders to get high above the village 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. On the way up there were some good species, **Mountain Velvetbreast**, **Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant**, **Streaked Tuftedcheek**, **Rufous-capped Antshrike** (very brief) & 2 **White-capped Tanagers** giving great flight views.

It was hard going but by 8.30 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**. Our tape was working well and after 15 minutes or so the bird showed very well in several places, perhaps best on an exposed log. We then worked on **Rusty-breasted Antpitta** which came past once, often hidden but giving quite good views. A Rusty-tinged Antpitta, also endemic to Peru, called a couple of times but was the most difficult of the 3, giving the briefest view to 1 or 2 of us. After getting reasonable views of 2 **Yellow-billed Caciques** in the thicket, we returned to base, passing 2 **Red-crested Cotingas & White-sided Flowerpiercers** and 2 of the ladies had **Fawn-breasted Tanagers**.

Returning to the main road, it was a short drive to Huembo, 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, returning here, took us to the most likely feeder to see the bird, and we had not long tucked into lunch on the overlooking bench when to everyone's delight a male with long spoon-ended tail feathers arrived for a feed. With a supporting cast of **Green & Sparkling Violetears**, **White-bellied Woodstars**, **Chestnut-breasted Coronets**, **Bronzy Incas** and a **Green-tailed Trainbearer**, 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.

### Tues 3 July 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. For us leaders it was our 4<sup>th</sup> time. It is about a 4 hour walk but birding would take longer. We opted not to take the horse this time as we were a larger group.

Common birds around the Lodge and during the walk included **Hooded Siskin**, **White-tipped Dove**, **Sparkling Violetear**, **White-bellied Hummingbird**, **Sierran Elaenia**, **Russet-backed Oropendola**,

**American Kestrel, Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, Silver-backed Tanager & Blue and White Swallow.** Of more interest were **Maranon Thrush, Speckled Chachalaca, Golden-bellied Grosbeak, Grey-breasted Wood Wren** which were often heard but proved hard to see, even with a tape; also **Blue & Yellow & Black-faced Tanagers & Slate-throated Whitestart.** As the trail started to drop steeply, we entered better forest and birding improved. a brief **Emerald Toucanet, Russet-crowned Warbler, Tropical Parula, Streaked Xenops, Smoke-coloured Pewee & Olive-backed Woodcreeper.** Bill and Jack plunged into the pool at the foot of the Falls (but not for long . . .), then after our packed lunch we headed back. Time spent in the best part of the forest produced **Slaty-capped & Inca Flycatchers, Green-backed Trogon, Three-striped Warbler, Brown-capped Vireo & a female Rufous-crested Tanager.**

Andean Cock-of-the-Rock was heard calling a couple of times, Lee & Carol both had a view of a **White-capped Dipper** which did not hang around, and a few of those who hung back had a female **Little Woodstar.** Much later, Lee found he had a photo of a **Speckle-breasted Wren.** At dusk we heard **Pauraques** which would often land on the grass by the pool.

### Wed 4 July 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 for an hour or so, leaving the main road to rise steeply up, eventually 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, then stopped briefly to look at a flock of parrots including one which was nearly all red. We identified these as **Mitred Parakeets** with one excessively blotched one.

From the car park to the ruins was a 15 minute walk. Birding was good along this trail with **Mountain Caracara, Shining Sunbeam, Black-throated & White-sided Flowerpiercers.** As we came to the gates there was a **Sword-billed Hummingbird** causing us to create a little traffic jam for the other visiting tourists. At the same time a **Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner** skulked close to the gate.

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 **Mottle-cheeked & White-banded Tyrannulets, Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, Variable Hawk, Mountain Caracaras, Sierran Elaenia, male Glossy Black Thrush, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, 2 more Sword-billed Hummers & several Purple-throated Sunangels.** We had lunch at a restaurant in the village of Maria and returned to Gocta in time for some birding around the Lodge. Those in one of the vehicles saw 4 **Oriole Blackbirds** during a stop by the river.

### Thurs 5 July Gocta to Leymebamba – the Utcubamba River

A pair of **Golden-rumped Euphonias** perched in the morning sun during breakfast. 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 what became known as the puncture place from a little problem which occurred on the first tour (km 486) to look for Plumbeous Rails but they were not to be seen this time, instead we had a pair of **Buff-bellied Tanagers.**

We then had some excellent random birding along the Utcubamba. A couple of kms further there were **Peruvian Meadowlarks & Maranon Thrushes** in the fields, **Azara's Spinetails** in the roadside hedges, **Smoky Brown Woodpecker** in a large corner tree, **Blue & Yellow Tanagers, Tropical Pewees, Chiguanco Thrushes & a pair of Line-cheeked Spinetails.** A very persistent **Chestnut-crowned Antpitta** called from bushes which looked accessible so we made our way across & after some patience and taping, had good views of the bird with a second one briefly. We tried our **Torrent Duck** site at km 453 and succeeded in finding a male giving great views at reasonable range. No female could be seen but other familiar river birds were present. **Torrent Tyrannulet, Amazon Kingfisher & Black Phoebe;** also **Spot-**

**throated Hummingbird.** At km 449 we checked the **Fasciated Tiger Heron** nest which we had found on tour 1. The adult was not on the nest but the chick was, it had grown some bright tawny bands on its body.

We arrived in Leymebamba c.2.30 pm and after lunch we had another diversion from birding by visiting the famous Mummies Museum. We had the privilege of being guided round by the archaeologist manager, Dr. Sonia Guillen Oneeglio. Our lodging for the next 2 nights was Casa Mallqui, a set of spacious comfortable rooms attached to the Museum, along with a large dining area and open log fires. The area was great for hummingbirds and tanagers. New species up here included **Rainbow Starfrontlet** and **Black & White Seedeater**, 1 or 2 guests had a male **Rusty Flowerpiercer**.

### **Fri 6 July    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 800 m. 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 but as the sun rose, we decided to stop before the summit in order to start birding in sunshine. Early successes were several **Andean Lapwings & Mountain Caracaras** in the fields, **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager** & brief views of **Andean Flicker**. Bill found a perched **Andean Guan** which we all just managed to see through the scope. No response from taping Rufous Antpitta but Carol heard a **Quetzal** from deep down in the valley.

As we reached the summit we were heading for the west side which was in shade. In woolly hats & gloves, we enjoyed some good bird activity, **Tyrian & Coppery Metaltails** (the latter identified later from photos), **Great Sapphirewing, Tufted Tit-Tyrants, White-banded Tyrannulets, Moustached Flowerpiercer** (poor views), **Plumbeous Sierra Finches** & lots of **Brown-bellied Swallows**.

After covering some ground along the road at high altitude, we started to descend down the rough winding road, a little tough on those suffering from vertigo, and by midday we were down at 800m and in heat we had not experienced since Tarapoto. Roadside habitat was generally dry scrub with a variety of cacti, but many disturbed areas with plantations of eucalyptus. Birds of prey were prominent . several **American Kestrels**, a **Peregrine**, a **White-throated Hawk**, a perched **Aplomado Falcon** and a **Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle** flying slowly below us. In the hot valley **Scarlet-fronted Parakeets, Croaking Ground Doves, Fasciated Wrens & Long-tailed (Peruvian) Mockingbirds** were common, a couple of **Yellow-tailed Orioles** & a **Peruvian Pigeon** in Chaconta, **Bare-faced Ground Doves** a little more elusive than on tour 1 and at our known roadside stop at km 346, we found **Inca Finches** which looked initially like Rufous-backed but on examination of photos, were after all, **Buff-bridled** which is the species we would expect here. We had some good hummers: a male **Purple-throated Woodstar, Amazilia Hummingbird & Spot-throated**. A Black-necked Woodpecker was heard calling but not showing.

We got to Chaconta, where a bridge crosses the mighty Maranon; here we retraced our route back and left time for some more late afternoon birding near the summit . apart from a brief **Masked Flowerpiercer & Bar-winged Cinclodes**, nothing else worth noting. As we descended from the summit c.5.30 there was a **Red-rumped Bush-Tyrant** perched on telegraph wires, a new bird for all of us. We were back in Leymebamba by 6 pm, in time to enjoy a little night birding . a **Band-winged Nightjar** perched on a low branch in the garden of the Casa Mallqui & a couple more flying around.

### **Sat 7 July    Leymebamba to Gocta – Utcubamba River**

Three participants had crept out before dawn and seen 2 **Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucans** in flight about a km from the Museum; these could not be found later but 2 **Variable Hawks** were seen, one much darker than the other. Early morning around the garden at Casa Mallqui produced more common hummers and tanagers. We visited Kenticafe, across the road from the Museum and spent some time photographing more hummers at feeders. Apart from the usual species, it was good to get close to **Purple-throated Sunangels**.

We left the area at mid-morning and stops on route did not produce Torrent Ducks or Dippers but the footbridge at c.km 353 gave us nice views of **Black-necked Woodpecker**; also **Hooded Siskins**, **Hepatic Tanager** & **Maranon Thrush**. This time the little wetland viewable from the puncture place produced a **Plumbeous Rail** along with 2 **Striated Herons**; also **Buff-bellied Tanagers** low in front of us.

We visited the town of Chachapoyas for a late lunch before returning to Gocta in time for some evening birding around the Lodge.

### Sun 8 July    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 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. We began with many familiar species in the secondary growth, including the sound of **Azara's Spinetails**, at least 6 calling & 2 seen. The sound of an antshrike prompted us to use the tape and as suspected it was **Rufous-capped Antshrike** . a male giving superb views. A pair of **Dusky-capped Flycatchers** of the more distinctive Andean race & 2 **Speckled Chachalacas** in the low bushy area, then several hummingbirds around one of the newly-erected shelters, **Long-tailed Sylph** and a young male **Booted Racket-tail**. Around the cliffs above were **Cliff Flycatcher** & **Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts**.

As we came into the intact primary forest we were rewarded with some unexpected species. A **White-eared Solitaire** was seen by a few of us but not showing as well as on the first tour; a **Lineated Foliage-gleaner** gave good views, then as we reached the next open area a male **Golden-winged Tody-Flycatcher** was seen well by a couple of us and a male **Lulu's Tody Tyrant** showed for longer, perhaps not as range-restricted as we thought. Flocks of tanagers moved through, **Saffron-crowned**, **Flame-faced** & **Beryl-spangled**; both **Slaty-capped** & **Inca Flycatchers** were here as on the lower trail and several **Fluorescent Flycatchers** were a new identification challenge. Loud calls of **Grey-breasted Wood Wrens** were frequent but sightings were few, likewise a **Blackish Tapaculo** called loudly but only appeared for 1 or 2 of us.

Most of us continued from the viewpoint / lunch stop to the centre point of the Falls; **Emerald Toucanets** were seen along here. We returned to San Pablo after a great day. Simon produced a photo later of an **Oleaginous Hemispingus** taken somewhere today.

### Mon 9 July    Gocta to Jaen – lower Utcubamba & Maranon bridge

Some of us saw a pair of **Blue-necked Tanagers** during breakfast. We left Gocta at 8.30 for the journey to Jaen via Pedro Ruiz & Bagua Grande. We made a couple of stops along the lower Utcubamba and at a large **Cattle Egret** colony in trees by the road near Santa Elena. Here, scanning the wide sandy banks we found **Pied Lapwing** & **Collared Plover**, **Pacific Hornero** & **Saffron Finches** & seedeaters. We passed some fertile rice fields with numerous **Cattle Egrets** & other herons feeding among the local people working in the fields. A nice adult **Savanna Hawk** was perched near the road.

We crossed the Maranon at c.12 noon and got to the town of Jaen before 1 pm. We had lunch in a restaurant in town and booked in to the Hotel El Bosque. 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. We were in new habitat here and the dry scrub-covered hillsides produced a new set of common species like **Vermilion Flycatcher**, **Long-tailed Mockingbird**, **Croaking Ground Dove**, **Rufous-fronted Thornbird** & **Groove-billed Ani**. Walking around Luciano's property, he was able to show us some less familiar species like **Collared Antshrike**, **Scarlet-backed Woodpecker**, **Peruvian Pygmy Owl** & **Yellow-tailed Oriole**. Of his 3 main specialities, we succeeded with one this evening, a nice male **Maranon Crescentchest**. At dusk a few **Lesser Nighthawks** circled around the hillside & we heard a Peruvian Screech Owl.

### Tues 10 July    Gotas de Agua



In spite of quite basic facilities, Luciano was able to provide a pleasant breakfast outside, overlooking the garden with its **Long-tailed Mockingbirds** on the bird table, **Spot-throated Hummingbirds** & doves feeding on the ground. We had arrived at dawn, ready to search for Tataupa Tinamou & Little Inca Finch. Tinamous were calling near Luciano's little rickety bamboo observation tower but not showing. There were **Golden-bellied Grosbeaks, Red-crested Finches, Fasciated Wrens** & a few of the group had 2 **Stripe-headed Brush Finches**. Walking the trails, we had at least 5 **Little Inca Finches**, a pair of **Maranon Crescentchests**, a **Peruvian Pygmy Owl**, 3 **Collared Antshrikes**, **Yellow-tailed Orioles**, **Ecuadorian Ground Doves**, **Streaked Saltators**, **Short-crested Flycatcher**, **Pacific Parrotlets**, **Purple-throated Euphonias**, the local race (maior) of **Tropical Gnatcatcher** but most surprising of all, a **White-tailed Hawk** soaring right overhead. A Maranon Spinetail was heard but not seen.

After lunch and leisure back in town, we headed out again c.3.30 when Luciano took us to a marshland area with trails between rice fields. We looked unsuccessfully for Slaty Becard & Paint-billed Crake but found juvenile **American Purple Gallinules**, a young **Harris's Hawk**, **Pacific Horneros**, **White-eyed Parakeets** & a pair of **Blue Ground Doves**; also flocks of **Golden-bellied Grosbeaks** & distant seedeaters. We returned to Hotel El Bosque for a second night. Simon later showed us a photo he had taken near Luciano's house; we ID'd it as a **Rusty-fronted Tody Flycatcher**.

### Wed 11 July Jaen to Moyobamba

We decided this morning to try one more time for **Tataupa Tinamou** by going back to Luciano's for an hour or so. Before breakfast we tried the tape along the Crescentchest trail where one bird was calling quite close. Again, we got no views but just after breakfast Bill & Jack managed to get a glimpse of one. A few of yesterday's birds were around, such as **Ecuadorian Ground Dove**, **Scarlet-backed Woodpecker**, **Collared Antshrike**, **Spot-throated Hummingbird** & **Red-crested Finch**.

We then left Jaen c.8.30 and with a very long drive ahead, stops were limited, first in Pedro Ruiz for petrol & ice cream. 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 species, this time in dry sunshine. There was no sign of the roosting Lyre-tailed Nightjars but the accompanying **Cinnamon Flycatcher** was on its usual perch.

As we approached Moyobamba, our tired drivers persuaded us to go straight to the Hotel Puerto Mirador, a quality hotel similar to the Rio Shilcayo. Earlier plans to go spotlighting at Morro de Calzada did not materialise. Instead there was some good birding in the grounds of the hotel and between us we found **Gilded Barbet**, **Barred Antshrike**, **Short-crested Flycatcher**, various tanagers including **Blue-necked** & (for a few) **Burnished Buff**.

### Thurs 12 July Morro de Calzada – Moyobamba to Tarapoto

Calzada is a small village about 15 mins drive west of Moyobamba and the Morro a tall isolated hill, covered in forest and holding a good variety of birds. We packed, had breakfast & left early, but not before finding the **Burnished Buff Tanagers** near the hotel entrance. We stopped at the ponds along the road to the Morro at 7.30 am. No crakes were calling but 2 **Long-tailed Tyrants** were seen well a little further back & 5 **Swallow-tailed Kites** were perched in a nearby tree, preening. Between here and the entrance to the reserve itself we observed a very good variety of birds, such that we did not have time to go up the steep forest trail at all. Species included **Grey-breasted Martins**, **Short-tailed Swift**, **Variiegated Flycatcher**, **Orange-bellied Euphonias**, **Chestnut-bellied Seed Finch**, **Wedge-tailed Grass Finches**, **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**, **Chestnut-eared** & **Lettered Aracaris**, **Lafresnaye's Piculet**, **White-winged Becard**, **Yellow-crowned Elaenia**, **Gilded Barbet** & a light phase **Short-tailed Hawk** in flight, perhaps the same bird as seen here by the first tour.

We left the area by 11.30 am & completed the journey back to Tarapoto and stayed for a final night at Pumarinri. Roadworks at a landslide on the Shapaja Road held us up for nearly an hour. The afternoon was

at leisure but some went birding . tanagers, swifts, **Drab Water Tyrant**, **Grey-breasted Sabrewing**, **Black-fronted Nunbird**, **Olive Oropendola**, **Tropical Screech Owl**, **Ferruginous Pygmy Owls**, etc. were seen.

### Fri 13 July    Tarapoto to Lima – Pantanos de Villa Wetlands and Coast

In the morning we all 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. Carol produced a fine packed lunch for us which we ate during the half hour journey by comfortable minibus 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**, ducks like **Cinnamon Teal**, **Andean Ruddy Ducks**, **White-cheeked Pintail**, and flocks of gulls like **Grey-hooded**, **Belcher's** & **Kelp Gulls**. From the observation tower, we were lucky to see 2 **Yellow-crowned Night Herons**, a rarity this far south. We succeeded in finding the beautiful **Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant** in the dense waterside vegetation.

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**, **Willetts**, **American Golden Plovers**, **Turnstones** & **Killdeer**; **Black Skimmers** formed a tight flock on the beach & **Inca Terns** were numerous along the shoreline. Offshore **Peruvian Pelicans** formed small groups, distant **Guanay Cormorants** passed occasionally and **Peruvian Boobies** were common further out to sea.

### Sat 14 July    Lima to Auckland

After our final night, we arrived at the airport late morning for the 1 pm flight home. For the leaders it was an onward flight to Iquitos for some birding in a new place, and thence to Bolivia & Brazil.

This trip had recorded over 400 bird species and some good mammals such as Peruvian Night Monkey & Three-toed Sloth; also a variety of poison dart frogs, reptiles and snakes, and a great many insects and other fascinating small creatures.

The leaders trust that their second 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 Pumarinri, 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 Bill, Peter & Rhonda for their DVDs; Bill, Lee and Simon for sharing lots of photos and ID discussions and to Lee also for identifying from photos so many of the insects and other little creatures we enjoyed.

