

# A WEEK IN THE LLANOS OF COLOMBIA: HATO LA AURORA

JANUARY 27-FEBRUARY 3, 2017



Orinoco Goose. *Neochen jubata*. D. Ascanio.

**LEADERS: DAVID ASCANIO  
AND DIANA BALCAZAR**  
COMPILED BY DAVID ASCANIO

**VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.**  
2525 WALLINGWOOD DRIVE, SUITE 1003  
AUSTIN, TX 78746  
[WWW.VENTBIRD.COM](http://WWW.VENTBIRD.COM)

# A Week in the Llanos of Colombia: Hato La Aurora

November 12-20, 2016

By David Ascanio

## Photo album:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157680172253636>



Our weeklong Colombia tour started in Chingaza national park (named derived from the Muisca Amerindian), a site that offered some high Andes birding despite much of the clouds that covered the páramo (Andean habitat found above tree line). There were scarlet-bellied mountain-tanagers, glowing pufflegs, wonderful flowering orchids, a skulking Pale-bellied Tapaculo and much more. After enjoying such a rich and varied avifauna the morning gained momentum when an Andean Pygmy-Owl was found at the road edge at about eye level, thus allowing great views of it. Later in the morning, we learned about the flora of the páramo and saw an endemic *Espeletia* (locally called frailejón). Following lunch, the afternoon provided just a perfect combination for the morning with a visit

to the *Observatorio de Colibríes*, a place that gave us the chance to study and enjoy 12 species of hummingbirds, all at close distance!

The second day we took a short flight to El Yopal, located in the plains or Llanos of the Orinoco River. This vast region is part of an extensive drainage crossed by a complex network of rivers and channels. From the city of Yopal we took a fairly long (and bumpy!) road to Hato La Aurora (hato = ranch) but birds in wetlands alongside of the road kept us happy. Some of the species seen along the road included the unique Orinoco Goose and the wonderful Whistling Heron. We also saw several species of ibises (Scarlet, Buff-necked, Glossy, Sharp-tailed and Bare-faced) and enjoyed astonishing close encounters with pairs of the bizarre Horned Screamer.

But our days in Juan Solito Lodge and the contiguous Hato La Aurora were what I would call a *birding experience in the good old days*. That meant a combination of great birding, farm-like life, no phone line nor mobile signal, superb house-style meals (recipe for the lentils at the end), amazing skies with constellations such as Orion and Taurus, the Milky Way over our heads and the sensation of being in the middle of nowhere! Each morning welcomed us with new birds and every evening offered a great sunset to celebrate what we had seen. A stop in a wetland always offered a surprise and the forest gave us amazing views of wrens, manakins and tyrant-flycatchers. Every new location allowed sightings of new species such as chestnut-fronted macaws, the unique Spectacled Parrotlet, sunbitterns singing, donacobius giving its unique choreography and the common Yellow-browed Sparrow.

The night was also alive. Close to the lodge we were serenaded by pauraques while in the open grassland white-tailed nightjars flapped their wings around us. Close to wetlands, band-tailed nighthawks showed their unique white tail band and the lack of any wing band. Furthermore, a very special presentation about the life in the Llanos and the paintings by the owner rounded up a deep understanding of the melancholy accompanying the life here.



The last morning found us between groups of trees in otherwise extensive grassland (this habitat is locally called *mata*), where Cinereous Becard and Blue-crowned Parakeet were observed. Also, a contiguous wetland gave us the chance to see more waterbirds and yellow-chinned spinetail while in native grassland we were able to see a singing Grassland Sparrow.

Now that you have enjoyed the plains of the Orinoco I would like to invite you to consider visiting some other contrasting destinations with bird-rich habitats that will allow you for a holistic view of the birds of the Americas. Some of these trips are:

*Cuba: Birds and people-to-people.*

Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157643519265893/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yLRHvB1jzdl>

*Birding the Panama's Canal. A relaxed and easy tour.*

Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157648765567967/>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgnkUxwd5kw>

*The Amazon Cruise*

Photos: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/albums/72157663984130953>

Video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b3xYG0cPSo>

I look forward to seeing you again!

**Lentil recipe provided by Eunice Tumai (our cook) from the Llanos of Colombia.**

*Ingredients.* Carrots (cut in very small squares), white-russet potato (cut in very small squares), onion (also in small squares), tomato (you bed in small squares), garlic, butter, lentils, achiote, bouillon cubes, cilantro, milk.

*Preparation.* Boil water and drop the lentils for 5-7 minutes (turn the flame or heat off). Then wash the lentils in cold water to take the shells out. In a pan, mix the butter, achiote, bouillon cube, onion, tomato, cilantro, salt and fry. After few minutes, add water (just to cover the preparation) and pour the lentils with the carrots and the potato to boil. Once it dries, add a bit of milk.



# 2017 A week in the Llanos of Colombia

## Map of Locations



### *Itinerary:*

- 27 January 2017. Arrival.
- 28 January 2017. Chingaza national park. Observatorio de Colibríes.
- 29 January 2017. Flight to El Yopal. Transfer to Juan Solito.
- 30 January – 01 February 2017. Hato La Aurora.
- 02 February 2017. Transfer to El Yopal. Flight to Bogotá.
- 03 February 2017. Departure.

## THE BIRDLIST BOGOTA AREA

### **Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns / Ardeidae**

Great Egret. *Ardea (Egretta) alba*. A single individual was seen in a wetland near La Calera.

### **Pigeons & Doves / Columbidae**

Band-tailed Pigeon. *Patagioenas fasciata*. Small groups in Chingaza.

Eared Dove. *Zenaida auriculata*. Common in Bogotá.

### **Owls / Strigidae**

Andean Pygmy-Owl. *Glaucidium jardinii*. We enjoyed views of a rufous morph individual along the road of Chingaza national park.

### **Hummingbirds / Trochilidae**

Green Violetear. *Colibri thalassinus*. Few individuals. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Sparkling Violetear. *Colibri coruscans*. Common. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Black-tailed Trainbearer. *Lesbia victoriae*. Fairly common. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Green-tailed Trainbearer. *Lesbia nuna*. Only a pair. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Tyrian Metaltail. *Metallura tyrianthina*. Common. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Glowing Puffleg. *Eriocnemis vestita*. Common. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Coppery-bellied Puffleg. *Eriocnemis cupreiventris*. Few individuals were studied. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Shining Sunbeam. *Aglaeactis cupripennis*. What a surprise! We enjoyed views of it as it came to a feeder. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Blue-throated Starfrontlet. *Coeligena helianthea*. Without a doubt, one of the group favorite's. Just an amazing arrange of colored feathers. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Sword-billed Hummingbird. *Ensifera ensifera*. A single individual. Observatorio de Colibrías.

Great Sapphirewing. *Pterophanes cyanopterus*. The weightlifter of the hummingbirds. We appreciated the slow-motion speed of its wing beats. Observatorio de Colibrías.

White-bellied Woodstar. *Chaetocercus mulsant*. Wonderful views of males and females. Observatorio de Colibrías.

### **Antpittas / Grallariidae**

Chestnut-crowned Antpitta. *Grallaria ruficapilla*. Heard only. La Calera.

### **Tapaculos / Rhinocryptidae**

Pale-bellied Tapaculo (Matorral Tapaculo). *Scytalopus griseicollis*. Only seen briefly in few minutes.

### **Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers / Furnariidae**

Silvery-throated Spinetail (E). *Synallaxis subpudica*. Despite much of our effort and search in three locations we never got to see this endemic species. We only got a glimpse of a pair in Chingaza. So, it goes as *heard only*.

### **Tyrant Flycatchers / Tyrannidae**

White-throated Tyrannulet. *Mecocerculus leucophrys*.

Mountain Elaenia. *Elaenia frantzii*.

Tropical Kingbird. *Tyrannus melancholicus*.

### **Wrens / Troglodytidae**

House Wren. *Troglodytes aedon*.

Sedge (Grass) Wren. *Cistothorus platensis* Heard only in the Páramo.

### **Thrushes & Allies / Turdidae**

Great Thrush. *Turdus fuscater*. Common and widespread in open areas.

### **New World Warblers / Parulidae**

Blackburnian Warbler. *Setophaga fusca*. Seen in forest edge in Chingaza.

Golden-fronted Redstart (Whitestart). *Myioborus ornatus*. We enjoyed wonderful views of a small group. Chingaza.

### **Tanagers & Allies / Thraupidae**

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager. *Anisognathus igniventris*. This was one of the most beautiful birds of the Bogotá day. We never got tired to see this one. It was observed in pairs or small groups.

Rufous-browed Conebill. *Conirostrum rufum*. A single individual was observed feeding in small seeds. Chingaza.

Black Flowerpiercer. *Diglossa humeralis*. The commonest flowerpiercer of the day. Seen repeated times.

White-sided Flowerpiercer. *Diglossa albilatera*. A pair was seen at the lower end of the Chingaza road.

Bluish Flowerpiercer. *Diglossa caerulescens*. Seen briefly a couple of times. Chingaza.

### **Buntings & New World Sparrows / Emberizidae**

Rufous-collared Sparrow. *Zonotrichia capensis*. Common in open areas.

Slaty Brushfinch. *Atlapetes schistaceus*. Less vocal and more difficult to see than next species, we saw it twice.

Pale-naped Brushfinch. *Atlapetes pallidinucha*. A common (and vocal) species in Chingaza.

### **Troupials & Allies / Icteridae**

Eastern Meadowlark. *Sturnella magna*. Mostly heard in Chingaza NP.

### **Finches, Euphonias & Allies / Fringillidae**

Andean Siskin. *Spinus spinescens*. Large flock along the road between La Calera-Observatorio de Colibries. They were found feeding at seeds of a fallen eucalyptus tree and later, alongside of a dirt road foraging on seeds of grasses.

## **THE BIRDLIST**

### **LLANOS OF THE ORINOCO: HATO LA AURORA & JUAN SOLITO LODGE**

#### **Screamers / Anhimidae**

Horned Screamer. *Anhima cornuta*. We enjoyed astonishing encounters with several pairs. This land hosts a good population of screamers.

#### **Ducks, Geese & Waterfowl / Anatidae**

White-faced Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna viduata*. Fairly common in wetlands.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna autumnalis*. Common in wetlands.  
Orinoco Goose. *Neochen jubata*. We enjoyed nice views of pairs and family groups, with goslings.  
Brazilian Teal. *Amazonetta brasiliensis*. A pair was seen in the large wetland of the ranch.

### **Guans, Chachalacas & Curassows / Cracidae**

Rufous-vented Chachalaca. *Ortalis ruficauda*. Fairly common in the gallery forest.

### **New World Quail / Odontophoridae**

Crested Bobwhite. *Colinus cristatus*. A small group was seen walking along a dirt road of the ranch.

### **Storks / Ciconiidae**

Jabiru. *Jabiru mycteria*. Nice studies of the largest stork of the continent.  
Wood Stork. *Mycteria americana*. Fairly common around wetlands.

### **Cormorants & Shags / Phalacrocoracidae**

Neotropic Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*. Common.

### **Hérons, Egrets & Bitterns / Ardeidae**

Great Egret. *Ardea (Egretta) alba*. A single individual was seen in a wetland near La Calera.  
Rufescent Tiger-Heron. *Tigrisoma lineatum*. A common species observed in most wetlands.  
Cocoi Heron. *Ardea cocoi*. Seen daily. We noticed its resemblance with the Great Blue Heron.  
Great Egret. *Ardea (Egretta) alba*. This species was common everywhere, especially in shallow wetlands.  
Snowy Egret. *Egretta thula*. Common in wetlands and at sides of rivers as well.  
Little Blue Heron. *Egretta caerulea*. Mostly seen at side of rivers.  
Cattle Egret. *Bubulcus ibis*. Common in dry grassland and pastures.  
Striated Heron. *Butorides striata*. A common species in shallow wetlands.  
Whistling Heron. *Syrigma sibilatrix*. Pairs and small groups were observed in dry grassland and areas distant from wetlands.  
Capped Heron. *Pilherodius pileatus*. We saw a single individual in flight.  
Black-crowned Night-Heron. *Nycticorax nycticorax*. Few individuals were seen in the gallery forest.

### **Ibises & Spoonbills / Threskiornithidae**

White Ibis. *Eudocimus albus*. A pair was seen along with a larger group of Scarlet Ibis.  
Scarlet Ibis. *Eudocimus ruber*. This was the commonest ibis of the trip that it is regarded as the most beautiful ibis in the world.  
Glossy Ibis. *Plegadis falcinellus*. Seen only twice.  
Sharp-tailed Ibis. *Cercibis oxycerca*. Various pairs. This is the species that calls like the sound of a French ambulance.  
Green Ibis. *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*. Only seen a couple of times. We noticed its long legs.  
Bare-faced (Whispering) Ibis. *Phimosus infuscatus*. A fairly common species. Seen almost every day.  
Buff-necked Ibis. *Theisticus caudatus*. Pairs or small groups were observed poking the mud with their bill in search of arthropods.

### **New World Vultures / Cathartidae**

Black Vulture. *Coragyps atratus*. Common.

Turkey Vulture. *Cathartes aura*. Common.

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture. *Cathartes burrovianus*. Seen in fairly short and seasonally flooded grassland.

### **Hawks, Eagles & Kites / Accipitridae**

White-tailed Kite. *Elanus leucurus*. Seen only twice near El Yopal.

Gray-headed Kite. *Leptodon cayanensis*. We enjoyed nice studies of an individual in the gallery forest.

Black-collared Hawk. *Busarellus nigricollis*. A common species found along rivers and in wetlands. Feeds almost exclusively on fish although it has been reported to feed on reptiles and apple snails (*Pomacea* sp.)

Plumbeous Kite. *Ictinia plumbea*. This species might well be a local migrant in the Llanos of Colombia. We observed two individuals in two separate days.

Crane Hawk. *Geranospiza caerulescens*. We observed this species in the ranch. Scoped.

Savanna Hawk. *Buteogallus meridionalis*. A common species found in grassland and scrubby vegetation.

Great Black Hawk. *Buteogallus urubitinga*. Seen in gallery forest in the location where we saw the hoatzins.

Roadside Hawk. *Rupornis magnirostris*. I keep telling everyone in my tours that this bird should be called Riverside Hawk. It occurs at forest edge and usually along rivers. We saw it several times.

### **Sunbittern / Eurypygidae**

Sunbittern. *Eurypyga helias*. We loved seeing this species opening its wings and showing the feathers resembling a rosette on it.

### **Rails, Gallinules & Coots / Rallidae**

Gray-necked Wood-Rail. *Aramides cajaneus*. Few were seen walking across the dirt roads of the Llanos.

Purple Gallinule. *Porphyrio martinicus*. Seen in a wetland.

### **Thick-knees / Burhinidae**

Double-striped Thick-knee. *Burhinus bistriatus*. What a view of it! I believe the pair was nesting.

### **Stilts & Avocets / Recurvirostridae**

Black-necked Stilt. *Himantopus mexicanus*. Few were seen in the main wetland of the ranch.

### **Plovers & Lapwings / Charadriidae**

Pied Lapwing. *Vanellus cayanus*. This nice and well-dressed lapwing (sometimes called plover) was observed near the main wetland of the ranch.

Southern Lapwing. *Vanellus chilensis*. See in open habitats.

### **Jacanas / Jacanidae**

Wattled Jacana. *Jacana jacana*. Seen every day. Usually associated with floating vegetation.

### **Sandpipers & Allies / Scolopacidae**

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularius*. A single individual as observed twice in the main wetland of the ranch.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. Only found once near a wetland.

Lesser Yellowlegs. *Tringa flavipes*. Two individuals were seen in a shallow wetland.

Least Sandpiper. *Calidris minutilla*. More than 6 individuals were foraging in the muddy bank of a large wetland.

South American Snipe. *Gallinago paraguaiiae*. We're so thankful to Joanne's and Diana's efforts to locate this individual. And, we're still impressed on how did they find it. Seen by everyone!

### **Gulls, Terns & Skimmers / Laridae**

Yellow-billed Tern. *Sternula superciliaris*. This small tern was seen only once (3 individuals).

Large-billed Tern. *Phaetusa simplex*. This is the most common and widespread tern in the Colombian Llanos.

Black Skimmer. *Rynchops niger*. Few individuals were observed in the main wetland of the ranch.

### **Pigeons & Doves / Columbidae**

Rock Pigeon (I). *Columba livia*. El Yopal.

Pale-vented Pigeon. *Patagioenas cayennensis*. The commonest pigeon in the ranch. Seen everyday.

Plain-breasted Ground-Dove. *Columbina minuta*. This small ground-dove prefers grasslands that are seasonally subject to flood. It was seen in the ranch.

Ruddy Ground-Dove. *Columbina talpacoti*. Common in open areas and scrubby vegetation. Also seen in the gallery forest.

Scaled Dove. *Columbina squammata*. We enjoyed great views of various individuals around the lodge.

Blue Ground-Dove. *Claravis pretiosa*. Diana found a pair of this beautiful dove in a corral foraging on the ground. Well done, Diana!

White-tipped Dove. *Leptotila verreauxi*. Several individuals were observed in the gallery forest. Rarely reported in scrubby vegetation.

Eared Dove. *Zenaida auriculata*. This common dove was frequently seen in open areas.

### **Hoatzin / Opisthocomidae**

Hoatzin. *Opisthocomus hoazin*. What a superb view we enjoyed of this species, which is now known to be a very old lineage. Once said to be related with the cuckoos.

### **Cuckoos / Cuculidae**

Squirrel Cuckoo. *Piaya cayana*. Found in the gallery forest. We noticed its yellow eyering.

Striped Cuckoo. *Tapera naevia*. Heard only.

Smooth-billed Ani. *Crotophaga ani*. Found fairly common in open and semi-open areas.

### **Owls / Strigidae**

Tropical Screech-Owl. *Megascops choliba*. A pair was observed nesting inside a fence pole along the road to Fundo Nuevo. The nest had two chicks.

Great Horned Owl. *Bubo virginianus*. A pair was observed near the lodge. Bear in mind that this species might be split in the near future.

Burrowing Owl. *Athene cunicularia*. Seen nesting on dunes in the ranch.

### **Nightjars & Allies / Caprimulgidae**

Band-tailed Nighthawk. *Nyctiprogne leucopyga*. Several dozens were observed at dusk near the wetland in Hato La Aurora. Some of these individuals were flying so close to us that we got to see the white band on the tail very well!

Common Pauraque. *Nyctidromus albicollis*. Everyone enjoyed close distance views of a single individual during a night drive.

White-tailed Nightjar. *Hydropsalis cayennensis*. A male was observed flying around us as we drove across drier grassland during the night.

### **Potoos / Nyctibiidae**

Common Potoo. *Nyctibius griseus*. Great views of an individual in the gallery forest trail.

### **Swifts / Apodidae**

Short-tailed Swift. *Chaetura brachyura*. Few individuals were observed flying over open country.

### **Hummingbirds / Trochilidae**

Pale-bellied Hermit. *Phaethornis anthophilus*. One female was seen nesting at the roof lodge.

Blue-tailed Emerald. *Chlorostilbon mellisugus*. 2 males and 3 females were seen during the week.

Glittering-throated Emerald. *Amazilia fimbriata*. This is probably the most common hummingbird in the Colombian Llanos. It was seen almost every day of the tour.

### **Kingfishers / Alcedinidae**

Amazon Kingfisher. *Chloroceryle amazon*. Seen along the road between El Yopal to the ranch.

### **Puffbirds / Bucconidae**

Russet-throated Puffbird. *Hypnelus ruficollis*. We enjoyed scope views of a pair.

### **Jacamars / Galbulidae**

Pale-headed Jacamar. *Brachygalba goeringi*. Superb views of pairs near the lodge.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar. *Galbula ruficauda*. A pair was observed in the gallery forest trail.

### **Toucans / Ramphastidae**

Chestnut-eared Aracari. *Pteroglossus castanotis*. A group of about 11 individuals were observed near the lodge.

### **Woodpeckers / Picidae**

Scaled Piculet. *Picumnus squamulatus*. This tiny woodpecker was observed in the gardens of the ranch.

Red-crowned Woodpecker. *Melanerpes rubricapillus*. This species was a regular visitor to the bird feeder at the ranch.

Little Woodpecker. *Veniliornis passerinus*. 1 individual was flushed along the gallery forest trail

Spot-breasted Woodpecker. *Colaptes (Chrysoptilus) punctigula*. A pair of this open-country species was observed near the lodge.

Lineated Woodpecker. *Dryocopus lineatus*. Two pairs were observed in forested and forest-edge habitat.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker. *Campephilus melanoleucos*. A female was seen in the vicinity of the lodge.

### **Falcons & Caracaras / Falconidae**

Crested Caracara. *Caracara cheriway*. A common species in the Llanos of Colombia. It was seen every day.

Yellow-headed Caracara. *Milvago chimachima*. This was another common species in the Llanos of Colombia seen daily.

Laughing Falcon. *Herpetotheres cachinnans*. A single individual was observed flying above the canopy of the gallery forest.

American Kestrel. *Falco sparverius*. Several individuals were seen along the road between El Yopal to the ranch.

Aplomado Falcon. *Falco femoralis*. We enjoyed great views of a presumably female individual in the ranch.

### **New World and African Parrots / Psittacidae**

Mealy Parrot. *Amazona farinosa*. A single individual (this species?) was seen in flight.

Yellow-crowned Parrot. *Amazona ochrocephala*. More than a dozen individuals were observed.

This is the commonest Amazon parrot in the Llanos of the Orinoco.

Orange-winged Parrot. *Amazona amazonica*. Another common species in the Llanos of Colombia although less numerous than the previous one. It was seen every day of the tour.

Spectacled Parrotlet. *Forpus conspicillatus*. A very responsive pair was observed at – excessively- close distance from the safari truck!

Brown-throated Parakeet. *Eupsittula pertinax*. Pairs were seen in fairly open habitats.

Chestnut-fronted Macaw. *Ara severus*. Seen distant pairs in flight.

Blue-crowned Parakeet. *Thectocercus acuticaudatus*. A small flock was observed along the road outside the ranch.

### **Typical Antbirds / Thamnophilidae**

Black-crested Antshrike. *Sakesphorus canadensis*. Two pairs were observed in gallery forest.

Barred Antshrike. *Thamnophilus doliatus*. A Male was seen at edge of forest.

White-fringed Antwren. *Formicivora grisea*. We enjoyed two encounters with this species that is sometimes treated as Northern White-fringed Antwren, *Formicivora grisea intermedia*.

### **Ovenbirds & Woodcreepers / Furnariidae**

Plain-brown Woodcreeper. *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*. I am posting this species here because we might have seen it (briefly) in the gallery forest.

Striped Woodcreeper. *Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*. We observed an individual responding to playback of this species (voice from the Venezuelan Llanos). Studies of the plumage revealed a strong head pattern, pale bill quite similar to that of Straight-billed Woodcreeper but heavier. We will need to come back to this location to confirm the presence of this species there.

Straight-billed Woodcreeper. *Dendroplex picus*. We enjoyed great views of a pair.

Rufous-fronted Thornbird. *Phacellodomus rufifrons*. Several nests were seen in the ranch. A pair was observed coming to a nest to build a new chamber. Sometimes called Plain Thornbird, *P. rufifrons inornatus*.

Rusty-backed Spinetail. *Cranioleuca vulpina*. A pair was observed in the gallery forest near the lodge.

Yellow-chinned Spinetail. *Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*. Seen twice in floating vegetation in large wetlands.

Pale-breasted Spinetail. *Synallaxis albescens*. A single individual was observed in scrubby vegetation along the main road outside the ranch.

### **Tyrant Flycatchers / Tyrannidae**

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet. *Camptostoma obsoletum*. This species was common in open areas.

- Mouse-colored Tyrannulet *Phaeomyias murina*. A single (and surprisingly reclusive) individual as observed in scrubby vegetation.
- Yellow Tyrannulet. *Capsiempis flaveola*. A pair was observed in riverine forest near the Hoatzin site.
- Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii*. It was seen only once at edge of gallery forest. Better called by voice!
- Yellow-bellied Elaenia. *Elaenia flavogaster*. We had nice studies of an individual with a split crest, thus showing its coronal patch. Also seen in El Yopal airport.
- Yellow crowned Tyrannulet. *Tyrannulus elatus*. One individual was seen in El Yopal airport.
- Pale-tipped Tyrannulet. *Inezia caudata*. Surprisingly hard to see but eventually found in edge of gallery forest.
- Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant. *Atalotriccus pilaris*. A common species usually found in scrubby vegetation. More than 4 individuals were seen.
- Common Tody-Flycatcher. *Todirostrum cinereum*. Pairs were seen almost daily.
- Fuscous Flycatcher. *Cnemotriccus fuscatus*. 2 pairs were observed in scrubby vegetation contiguous to a wetland. I notice that these individuals were duller (with darker breast) than the ones I see in the Venezuelan Llanos.
- Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. Nice studies in El Yopal airport.
- Pied Water-Tyrant. *Fluvicola pica*. Seen several times in floating vegetation in shallow areas of wetlands and along channels.
- White-headed Marsh Tyrant. *Arundinicola leucocephala*. Seen in floating vegetation in shallow areas of wetlands.
- Cattle Tyrant. *Machetornis rixosa*. Common in open areas. We enjoyed seeing perched on the back of capybaras.
- Short-crested Flycatcher. *Myiarchus ferox*. A pair was seen in scrubby vegetation.
- Brown-crested Flycatcher. *Myiarchus tyrannulus*. This was the commonest *Myiarchus* in the ranch. Seen every day.
- Great Kiskadee. *Pitangus sulphuratus*. The second most common and widespread tyrant-flycatcher in the ranch.
- Boat-billed Flycatcher. *Megarynchus pitangua*. Pairs and singles were seen almost daily.
- Rusty-margined Flycatcher. *Myiozetetes cayanensis*. Seen frequently in open areas and forest edge.
- White-bearded Flycatcher (E) *Phelopsia inornata*. A pair was enjoyed as they were displaying. Tony called our attention about the difference in speed and depth of wing beat between the two individuals. I will have to check if this pattern repeats in other locations.
- Piratic Flycatcher. *Legatus leucophaeus*. A single one was observed repeated times near the lodge.
- Tropical Kingbird. *Tyrannus melancholicus*. This is probably the commonest tyrant-flycatcher in open areas. Seen every day.
- Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savanna*. Up to a dozen individuals were seen in the ranch. Resident race?

### **Manakins / Pipridae**

Wire-tailed Manakin. *Pipra filicauda*. We nailed this species very well when seeing a pair moving around the lek.

### **Tityras & Allies / Tityridae**

Cinereous Becard. *Pachyramphus rufus*. A male was observed in scrubby vegetation contiguous to the forest.

White-winged Becard. *Pachyramphus polychopterus*. Seen in gallery forest.

### **Vireos, Shrike-Babblers & Erpornis / Vireonidae**

Rufous-browed Peppershrike. *Cyclarhis gujanensis*. A secretive individual was finally seen after some effort in scrubby woodland.

### **Crows, Jays & Magpies / Corvidae**

Violaceous Jay. *Cyanocorax violaceus*. A pair came frequently to the bananas hanging from a mango tree in front of the dining room.

### **Swallows / Hirundinidae**

White-winged Swallow. *Tachycineta albiventer*. Few individuals were observed in the main wetland.

Barn Swallow. *Hirundo rustica*. 400+ individuals were observed near a wetland.

### **Wrens / Troglodytidae**

House Wren. *Troglodytes aedon*. This is a fairly common species in the Colombian Llanos. It was observed in all days in open habitats.

Bicolored Wren. *Campylorhynchus griseus*. Several pairs were seen near palm trees.

Rufous-and-white Wren. *Thryophilus rufalbus*. Some participants in the gallery forest walk saw this skulking species.

Buff-breasted Wren. *Cantorchilus leucotis*. A pair was observed in the gallery forest trail.

### **Gnatcatchers / Polioptilidae**

Tropical Gnatcatcher. *Polioptila plumbea*. A pair was observed in scrubby vegetation.

### **Donacobius / Donacobiidae**

Black-capped Donacobius. *Donacobius atricapilla*. A species associated with wetlands. We enjoyed seeing its unique choreography.

### **Thrushes & Allies / Turdidae**

Pale-breasted Thrush. *Turdus leucomelas*. Seen in El Yopal airport.

Black-billed Thrush. *Turdus ignobilis*. This species was the commonest one in the ranch.

### **Mockingbirds & Thrashers / Mimidae**

Tropical Mockingbird. *Mimus gilvus*. This common species was seen in every day of the tour.

### **Wagtails & Pipits / Motacillidae**

Yellowish Pipit. *Anthus lutescens*. What a view we enjoyed of an individual in a seasonally flooded grassland!

### **Warblers / Parulidae**

Yellow Warbler. *Setophaga petechia*. This species was first seen in the riverine forest of the ranch and later in El Yopal airport.

Blackpoll Warbler. *Setophaga striata*. This boreal migrant can reach lowlands in South America and the Llanos are no exception. We enjoyed a breeding-plumage male and two other individuals in El Yopal airport.

### **Tanagers & Allies / Thraupidae**

Masked Cardinal. *Paroaria nigrogenis*. A recent split from the Red-capped Cardinal. It was observed near every wetland visited.

Hooded Tanager. *Nemosia pileata*. A family group was seen in scrubby vegetation.  
White-lined Tanager. *Tachyphonus rufus*. Males and females were seen in various days.  
Silver-beaked Tanager. *Ramphocelus carbo*. Small groups were observed in the ranch open habitats.  
Blue-gray Tanager. *Thraupis episcopus*. This common species was seen every day.  
Palm Tanager. *Thraupis palmarum*. This was another common species seen every day.  
Burnished-buff Tanager. *Tangara cayana*. This species was first seen by Rebecca and later observed by all.  
Orange-fronted Yellow-Finch. *Sicalis columbiana*. A fairly common species observed in open areas with short (seasonally flooded) grasses.  
Saffron Finch. *Sicalis flaveola*. A fairly common species observed in open areas with scrubby vegetation.  
Ruddy-breasted Seedeater. *Sporophila minuta*. Pairs were seen in tall grasses.  
Large-billed Seed-Finch. *Oryzoborus crassirostris*. A male singing from atop of a small bush was observed along the road outside the ranch. /  
Gray Seedeater. *Sporophila intermedia*. Males of the ringed-necked form were observed in the ranch.  
Bananaquit. *Coereba flaveola*. A common species found in the Colombian Llanos. It was seen every day.  
Grayish Saltator. *Saltator coerulescens*. Heard in the ranch and later seen in El Yopal airport.

#### **Buntings & New World Sparrows / Emberizidae**

Grassland Sparrow. *Ammodramus humeralis*. Seen in tall grasses.  
Yellow-browed Sparrow. *Ammodramus aurifrons*. Common in short grasses.

#### **Troupials & Allies / Icteridae**

Eastern Meadowlark. *Sturnella magna*. Found in open grasslands.  
Carib Grackle. *Quiscalus lugubris*. This species was common around the dining room area.  
Oriole Blackbird. *Gymnomystax mexicanus*. Pairs or family groups were found associated with wetlands and scrubby vegetation.  
Shiny Cowbird. *Molothrus bonariensis*. Surprisingly seen only once.  
Giant Cowbird. *Molothrus oryzivorus*. A pair was seen in the main house of the ranch.  
Venezuelan Troupial. *Icterus icterus*. Great views of this species, the national bird of Venezuela!  
Yellow Oriole. *Icterus nigrogularis*. Two individuals were seen along the road to the ranch.  
Yellow-rumped Cacique. *Cacicus cela*. Large flocks (80+ individuals) were observed.  
Crested Oropendola. *Psarocolius decumanus*. Pairs were seen daily.

#### **Finches, Euphonias & Allies / Fringillidae**

Purple-throated Euphonia. *Euphonia chlorotica*. A pair was observed nesting at the base of a bromeliad. Also seen in El Yopal airport.  
Thick-billed Euphonia. *Euphonia lanirostris*. This one was seen also nesting but inside palms leaf hanging from the crown shaft of the tree.

### **OTHER SPECIES LIST**

LLANOS OF THE ORINOCO: HATO LA AURORA & JUAN SOLITO LODGE  
Lesser Tamandua. *Tamandua tetradactyla*. One individual as observed roosting low in a tree.  
Red Howler Monkey. *Alouatta seniculus*. We saw a group of this primate along the gallery forest trail.

Capybara. *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*. This is the largest rodent in the world and it was seen in all wetlands visited.

Black Agouti. *Dasyprocta fuliginosa*.

Fishing bat spp. *Noctilio spp.*

Crab-eating (Savanna) Fox. *Cerdocyon thous*. A single individual as observed wandering around short grassland at night. I am pretty sure that its mate was around but not see.

White-tailed Deer. *Odocoileus virginianus*. This species apparently colonized South America when the land bridge at the Panama isthmus was uplifted. It was fairly common in the ranch.

Little Brown Bat. [Molossidae]. This is probably the species seen flying at low distance at dusk in open areas.

Green Iguana. *Iguana iguana*.

Tegu Lizard. *Tupinambis teguixin*.

Spectacled Caiman. *Caiman crocodilus*.

Llanos Sidenecked Turtle. *Podocnemis vogli*. Common in wetlands.

Common House Gecko. *Hemidactylus frenatus*.

Leaf cutter Ants. *Atta* or *Acronymex sp.*

Fire Ants. *Solenopsis sp.*