

COLOMBIA BIRDING TOUR: Central Andes, Choco and Santa Marta (February 2013)

by Peter Hawrylyshyn (epna AT rogers.com)

LEADERS: Daniel Uribe, Birding Tours Colombia (daniel AT birdingtourscolombia.com, www.birdingtourscolombia.com), Oscar Laverde (around Bogota) and Wally Naranjo (around Santa Marta).

PARTICIPANTS: Peter Hawrylyshyn (Canada) and Robert Lewis (California-USA).

OBJECTIVE: After our highly successful introductory birding tour last August, we decided to return to photograph several specific endemic species which we missed, and also visit two additional important birding areas (Santa Marta and Cerro Montezuma).

LOGISTICS: During our trip we used full time 4x4's private transport provided by our guides (Grand Vitara and Toyota Land Cruiser) and special 4x4 taxis for the very rough conditions at Cerro Montezuma. We also used two domestic Avianca flights: a) Bogota-Pereira and b) Cali-Barranquilla. Having now travelled the infamous three roads at Las Tangaras, Cerro Montezuma, and Santa Marta - without a doubt, the worst/roughest road is at Santa Marta (Minca to El Dorado lodge). The road at Cerro Montezuma is a distant "second", but Las Tangaras is most certainly the road with the most precarious land slide areas. A very pleasant surprise was the efficiency of Avianca airlines on its domestic routes. All our flights departed on time, never any lost luggage, and no excessive waiting for luggage. Given the inexpensive domestic air fares, this can greatly facilitate connecting between distant birding sites in Colombia. For example - the one hour flight from Bogota to Pereira would take 8-10 hours by car.

WEATHER: In general we were lucky yet again with the weather. Although our tour had been planned to coincide with the "dry" season, the "rains" had started about a week prior to our arrival in many areas of Colombia. We had periods of steady rain at several sites - Chingaza, Montezuma, and Santa Marta. We mostly had a mix of sunny and cloudy conditions. Mornings often started with clear skies, and clouds developed as the day progressed, especially at higher elevations where at times it was mostly overcast. It just proved yet again how unpredictable the weather can be in Colombia. But overall, the weather did not restrict our birding objectives for the trip.

SITES:

Several sites which were visited last summer (Chingaza NP, Los Nevados NP, and Rio Blanco), will not be described again in this report

Laguna de Pedro Palo – The private preserve (4° 41' 8"N, 74° 22' 52"W, 2060m), which is located about 45 minutes south-west of Bogota, is operated by the local water/utility company. Although a special permit is required to visit the area around the lake itself, most of the important species can be seen along the road before reaching the security gates. Pedro Palo has some of the last remaining tracts of oak forest near Bogota, which are the preferred habitat for the endemic **Black Incas**. The area is overall quite birdy and also a fairly reliable site for Turquoise Dacnis, making it an attractive/easy half-day trip from Bogota.

Otun-Quimbaya Sanctuary – With our arrival via Pereira, Daniel strongly suggested we allow at least a half-day for this site. The lodge (4° 43' 43"N, 75° 34' 40"W, 1872m) is an easy 1 hour drive from Pereira. Accommodations are in small one bed rooms with a private shower and toilet. Although far from luxurious, the rooms were clean and the meals were very good. The birding along the trails and road past the lodge was excellent. Listening and watching the calls of the Red-ruffed Fruitcrows and **Cauca Guans** is reason enough to visit.

Cameguadua Marsh – Although this was initially planned as an optional visit (time permitting), we ended up spending almost a half-day because of the excellent birding. The marsh (4° 59' 38"N, 73° 37' 2"W, 1341m) near Chinchina, which is again owned and protected by the local water/power company, has a large reservoir with

adjacent wetlands and secondary forest. Besides the abundant waterfowl and shore birds, the key target species here was the **Grayish Piculet**. Definitely worth a visit in the early morning or late afternoon.

Cerro Montezuma – This was the first of two key new destinations for the trip. The lodge (5° 13' 49"N, 76° 5' 1"W, 1351m) which is on the very wet western slope of the Western Andes (Choco region) in Tatama NP, is run by Leopoldina (Pola), her sister and five daughters who occupy the main building. Across the road, there is now a separate new building/cabin for guests (one large double bed room with WC, and 4 single bedrooms with a shared WC and common area). There is also a secondary guest area about 5 minutes from the main building. The main birding areas are a 2 hr drive up the mountain over very rough road conditions (previously this required horse). Given the location, the accommodations were basic, but more than adequate. All the meals were outstanding (among the best we've had in Colombia). As well, Leopoldina and her family were extremely gracious hosts – everything from moving or changing feeders/perches to the surprise birthday party. The birding here was outstanding, there were never any safety concerns, and we wished we could have had better weather and stayed longer.

KM 18 / Finca Alejandría– Km16 and Km18 are well known traditional birding sites along the highway from Cali to Buenaventura. Although some other reports have suggested that the birding in the area has deteriorated because of habitat destruction associated with construction of “weekend homes” for Cali’s upper class, we were pleasantly surprised by both the number and diversity of birds seen (103 recorded species by the lodge). Finca Alejandría is a small eco-lodge (3° 32' 21"N, 76° 36' 21"W, 1984m) about 30 minutes from Cali and is operated by Raul Nieto and his wife Elsa Ruiz. We stayed in a 3 bedroom villa about 50m directly above the main lodge which has just been acquired and is being renovated. Meals were excellent. The main attractions are the variety of tanagers and hummingbirds coming to their feeders, and the search for the **Multi-Colored Tanager** found in the adjacent forests. The balcony feeders of a nearby restaurant (Asadero La Cabaña) at Km 16 attracted twelve species of hummingbirds including the locally scarce **Blue-headed Sapphire**.

Santa Marta/Minca/ El Dorado – This was the second key, new destination for our trip. Even after all the hype/build-up, we were not disappointed by the variety of endemic birds. Minca is best seen as a lunch stop enroute to El Dorado lodge. The small tienda midway between Minca and El Dorado lodge is the most reliable site for endemic Blossomcrown and Coppery Emerald. El Dorado is justifiable the flagship lodge for Pro Aves in Colombia, but the access road to the lodge from Minca and then on up to Kennedy Peak is without doubt the roughest road we've driven in Colombia. Because of the number of endemic “Santa Marta” species which can be seen, a three-day stay is preferable.

PHOTOGRAPHS: galleries of photos from the trip can be found on the last page of the report.

ITINERARY:

February 15 - After mid-afternoon arrivals in Bogota, managed some late afternoon birding at El Venado del Oro (The Golden Deer). Overnight at the Marriott Bogota near the airport.

February 16 - Morning spent birding at Laguna Pedro Palo and Chicaque NR. Got caught in heavy afternoon traffic crossing Bogota. Late afternoon birding again at El Venado del Oro. Overnight at the Marriott Bogota.

February 17 – Morning spent at Chingaza NP, but by mid-day there was a steady rain. By 3pm departed for the airport to check in for our 5:30pm flight to Pereira. Departed Bogota in heavy rains and arrived on time in Pereira where we met Daniel, and then drove to Otun (~1 hour). Overnight at Otun-Quimbaya lodge.

February 18 – Morning spent birding the trails and road at Otun-Quimbaya. After lunch drove to Pereira to visit the botanical gardens at the University, and by mid-afternoon visited Cameduadua Marsh near Chinchiná. Dinner in Manizales and overnight at Recinto del Pensamiento Hotel.

February 19 –Morning spent at Los Nevados National Park (Nevado del Ruiz). After lunch at El Arbolito, drove back to hummingbird feeders at Recinto del Pensamiento in Manizales. By 5PM left Manizales for Rio Blanco. Over night at main lodge at Rio Blanco.

February 20 – Morning spent birding the upper trails at Rio Blanco. Early afternoon photographing hummingbirds around the main lodge. Late afternoon drove down to lower gate house and at dusk birded for Nightjars along access road to Rio Blanco. Over night at main lodge at Rio Blanco.

February 21 – Daniel and I returned to Los Nevados for the day, while Bob birded the trails at Rio Blanco with Albeiro. Over night at main lodge at Rio Blanco.

February 22 – Departed Rio Blanco by 10AM for five hour drive to Cerro Montezuma. Because of delays due to road closures, didn't arrive until 5PM. Overnight at Finca Montezuma.

February 23 – Morning was spent birding the upper slopes of Cerro Montezuma. As drizzle and rains set in, we slowly worked back down the mountain arriving back at the lodge around 4PM. Late afternoon spent photographing birds at the banana feeders. Overnight at Finca Montezuma.

February 24 – We had planned to spend a second full day at Cerro Montezuma, but because a planned national strike by coffee growers which would likely block the road from Pueblo Rico to Apia, we decided to leave while we still could. Bob and Daniel spent the early morning along the road on the lower slopes, while I put together a video at a multi-flash setup. After lunch we departed for Cali with stops at Apia and several wetlands on the west side of the Cauca Valley. We arrived at "Km18" along the Cali-Buenaventura highway by 9PM. Overnight at Finca Alejandría

February 25 – Early morning birding along the road adjacent to the lodge. Rest of the day spent photographing tanagers and hummingbirds at the feeders around the lodge. Overnight at Finca Alejandría.

February 26 – Bob and Daniel spent the morning birding along another side road, while I stayed behind at the feeders around the lodge. Departed after lunch and visited nearby restaurant Asadero La Cabaña, where we spent the afternoon photographing hummingbirds. By 6PM drove back to Cali where we took taxis to airport for our 9:15PM flight from Cali to Barranquilla. Overnight at Estellar Hotel in downtown Barranquilla.

February 27 – Early morning spent birding at Salamanca NP. Late morning drove to Santa Marta and on to Minca. Lunch at La Casona restaurant watching the hummingbirds at balcony feeders. Mid-afternoon spent birding around small tienda and private coffee plantation (~1 hour above Minca). Arrived at the lodge by 5:30PM. Overnight at Pro Aves El Dorado lodge.

February 28 – Morning spent birding the area near the radio towers atop Cerro Kennedy. Early afternoon photographing birds at feeders around the lodge. Late afternoon birding around the San Lorenzo research station. Overnight at Pro Aves El Dorado lodge.

March 1 – Early morning spent birding the area from El Dorado lodge down to the tienda. Late morning set-up to take multi-flash photos of hummingbirds around the tienda. Afternoon spent around the lodge because of steady rain showers. After dinner went looking for owls and frogs. Overnight at Pro Aves El Dorado lodge.

March 2 – Morning spent road-side birding the area from the tienda down to Minca. Lunch at La Casona. Early afternoon had heavy rain showers, continued drive back to Santa Marta. Late afternoon birding in dry forest at Mamankana Reserve. Overnight at Estellar Santa Marta Beach Resort.

March 3 – Early morning birding near Santa Marta and then at Salamanca NP. By 8AM departed for Barranquilla airport for 11AM flight to Miami.

DAILY ACTIVITY REPORTS

(Note: Birds in **bold** are Colombian endemics or near-endemics)

Transit between the lodges was often accompanied by unscheduled road side birding stops which are not always included in the following reports.

February 15

After an overnight flight from San Francisco with a connection in Miami for Bob, and a direct 6 hour flight from Toronto for myself, on time arrivals in Bogota (within 1 hour of each other) by both Air Canada and American Airlines allowed for some late afternoon birding with our guide Oscar Laverde at El Venado del Oro (4° 35' 53"N, 74° 3' 43"W, 2760m). The site, which is about 30 minutes from the airport, is on the private grounds of the Botanical Institute, had native flowering fuschia's and brugmansia where Oscar had recently seen **Blue-throated Starfrontlets**. With some patience, a single female was seen twice feeding at the fuschia bushes which also attracted several Tyrian Metaltails, a Great Thrush, and a White-sided Flowerpiercer. Green-tailed Trainbearers were seen feeding high up in a flowering pittosporum tree. A migratory Blackburnian Warbler was heard and seen in a nearby eucalyptus tree, while a House Wren was very vocal in the underbrush. As the sun set, we headed back to the Marriot Bogota for a quick light dinner and a good night's sleep.

February 16

After an early 5:30AM departure to avoid morning rush hour traffic, we arrived at Laguna de Pedro Palo by 6:30AM. Skies were partly cloudy and the temperature was around 45F. The oak forests are the preferred habit for the **Black Inca**, which we saw but failed to photograph well at Rogitama on our trip last year. Driving thru the forest we found a curve (4° 41' 8"N, 74° 22' 52"W, 2060m) with an abundance of bomaria and gesneria flowers where we soon saw several hummingbirds chasing each other high up in the trees. Periodically they would come to the flowers to feed, and with some patience managed to track a couple to their preferred perches just inside the forest edge where we finally got excellent photos of this elusive endemic species. Other notable species seen here included Ash-browed Spinetail and Streaked Xenops. By 9AM we were ready to move on, but before leaving decided to try for the endemic **Turquoise Dacnis**. At an overlook (4° 41' 18"N, 74° 23' 1"W, 2010m) we were lucky enough to see a pair flying between some distant trees. Several Crimson-rumped Toucanets also flew into a nearby fruiting tree.

Our next stop was Chicaque which is a private Nature Reserve about 20-30 minutes from Laguna de Pedro Palo. At the restaurant we stopped for an excellent late breakfast (egg omelettes, fresh mango juice, arepas and coffee). Three hummingbird feeders have recently been put up beside the restaurant (4° 36' 25"N, 74° 18' 12"W, 2010m). The dominant species were several male and female Glowing Pufflegs which allowed excellent close-up photographs. The feeders were also visited by Sparkling Violetears, Collared Incas, and a female Mountain Velvetbreast. A female **Golden-bellied Starfrontlet** appeared twice (which is why we came). After lunch, the original plan had been to drive to San Francisco and revisit El Jardin Encantado (the Enchanted Garden). However we decided instead to return to El Venado del Oro for another attempt at the Blue-throated Starfrontlet. The drive back across Bogota took almost 90 minutes because of weekend traffic. After waiting and watching for almost 2 hours, the Starfrontlet never showed. We tried two backup sites - the main University campus (denied access) and Simon Bolivar Gardens (closed early). So by 5pm we decided to call it an early day. Overnight at the Marriot Bogota where we had an excellent steak dinner with a superb Argentinean malbec.

February 17

After another early 5:15AM start, we drove to La Calera where we again had arepas and cafe con leche for breakfast before driving up to Chingaza NP. The skies were fair/partly cloudy, and we could actually see the paramo hillsides and distant peaks. We stopped at the security check point to sign-in and paid a \$50 entry fee for our party of three. We turned right at the first major road and drove back down for about ten minutes. At the last big curve (4° 44' 12"N, 73° 50' 35"W, 3430m) just before the Water Company maintenance station, there were numerous melastomas, bomarias, bromeliads, and some large pink pasifloras in bloom attracting a variety of hummingbirds. A male **Blue-throated Starfrontlet** was seen three times, but never perched long enough for a photo. Other species included numerous Glowing Pufflegs and Tyrian Metaltails, a **Copper-bellied Puffleg**, a

White-bellied Woodstar, and a male Sword-billed Hummingbird. By 10:30AM light rains started, so we tried driving down a side-road in search of toucans, but the rains persisted. So we headed back to the hummingbird site and had an early lunch (Reuben sandwiches from Marriot) during which time the rains abated. Bob headed back down in search of the toucans, while I stayed hoping for the **Blue-throated Starfrontlet** which never showed. When Bob and Oscar returned, a mega-flock was moving through which included Pearled Treerunners(3), White-banded Tyrannulets(5), Black-capped Tyrannulet(2), Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant (1), **Golden-fronted Redstarts**(4), Superciliated Hemispingus(1), Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers (5), Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager (1), and Blue-backed Conebill (1). By noon it had become too foggy and misty for any photography, so we started our return. Several Green-tailed Trainbearers and a **Bronze-tailed Thornbill** were seen along the road near the security gate. By 3PM we were back at the Marriot, checked out, said good-bye to Oscar and headed for the airport. Our 5:30pm Avianca flight to Pereira departed Bogota on-time despite the steady heavy rains. The short 30 minute flight was uneventful and we were pleased that all luggage arrived after which we met Daniel. We opted for a quick dinner at a local fast food outlet, and then drove to Otun-Quimbaya (about 1 hour).

February 18

We awoke to sunny blue skies and by 6AM started birding the open area and immediate trails around the main lodge (4° 43' 43"N, 75° 34' 40"W, 1872m). Wattled and **Cauca Guans** were heard and seen in the distant trees. A Gray-necked Wood-Rail perched for excellent views on a stump at close range. A flock of 15-20 Golden-plumed Parakeets flew overhead. Several species of wrens were heard (Whiskered Wren, Gray-breasted Wood Wren and Chestnut-breasted Wren) but could never be seen clearly in the thick underbrush. We soon heard the unique call of the **Red-ruffed Fruit Crows** and quickly encountered a booming lek with birds easily visible along the trail. But by the time we came back with our cameras, they had moved on deeper into the forest. By 8AM we decided to bird the road about 1 km beyond the lodge in search of tanagers. We missed on the **Multi-colored Tanager**, but did see Flame-rumped Tanagers, Blue-necked Tanagers, Blue-gray Tanagers, Golden-faced Tanagers, Green Jay, Black-winged Saltators, Montane Foliage-Gleaner, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, **Bar-crested Antshrike**, an Emerald Toucanet, Acorn and Golden-olive Woodpeckers, more Fruit-Crows, several Bronzy Incas, a White-necked Jacobin and a male Booted Racket-tail feeding at roadside flowers. A **Moustached Antpitta** was heard but never showed itself. However, the highlight for the morning was hearing and then with some patience finally seeing a **Stiles Tapaculo** just below the road beside a small stream. After a very productive morning it was time for lunch. Steely-vented and Wedge-billed Hummingbirds were seen feeding in the flower beds near the dining area.

We drove back to the botanical gardens at the University of Pereira. Amongst the feeders and flowers, we saw Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds, White-necked Jacobins, Steely-vented Hummingbirds and Black-throated Mangos. However, activity was slow because of the hot, sunny conditions, so we decided to drive on to Camegaudua Marsh (4° 59' 38"N, 73° 37' 2"W, 1341m) near Chinchiná. En-route we saw numerous Bare-faced Ibis, Black and Turkey Vultures, and Crested Caracaras. The marsh which is owned and protected by the local water/power company has a large reservoir with adjacent wetlands and secondary forest. The first surprise was to find a Common Nighthawk roosting on a low overhanging branch allowing for excellent close-up photos. A large mixed flock around a mud-flat in the reservoir included Blue-winged Teal (over 150), Cinnamon Teal (10), Black-necked Stilt (20), Snowy Egret (10), American Coot (10), Common Gallinule, Spotted Sandpiper and Southern Lapwing. Several Great Egrets, Striated and Cocoli Herons were seen along the reedy edges of the marsh, as were Pied Water-tyrant, Pied-billed Grebe and two Least Grebes with young chicks. The dry forest areas held Slaty and Pale-breasted Spinetails, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Rusty-margined Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, Black Phoebe, Cattle Tyrant, Yellow-bellied Elaenia, Smooth-billed Anis and Spectacled Parrotlets. Although it took over an hour, the highlight had to be finding an elusive **Grayish Piculet** and then seeing a flock of about ten Blue-headed Parrots feeding in the acacia trees near the main entrance. We had planned to stay for about an hour, but the birding activity was so good that we stayed over 3 hours. Finally by 18:30 it was time to leave, and we drove about 30 minutes to Manizales where we had dinner at Il Forno (one of Daniel's favourite local Italian restaurants). It was after 9:30PM when we finally arrived at the Recinto del Pensamiento Hotel which was unfortunate given the lovely hotel setting and accommodations.

February 19

After an early 5:15AM start, we reached the top of Los Nevados del Ruiz by 6:30AM. We had an appetising breakfast at El Arbolito before continuing on to main gate at Las Brisas (4° 56' 1"N, 75° 21' 1"W, 4120m). This time we were in luck – cloudy but no wind. A male **Bearded Helmetcrest** finally showed and we soon got excellent perched views/photos and videos of it feeding on insects in the *frailejones* (Espeletia) flowers. While waiting for the Helmetcrest, we also saw Andean Tit-Spinetail, White-chinned Thistletail, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant and a Tawny Antpitta. But by 9AM fog and high winds rolled in, so we departed. Daniel soon spotted a bank-side nest hole about five feet above the road under the grassy overhang which was guarded by a pair of Stout-billed Cinclodes. As we stopped the car, one adult flew to nearby bush where it began calling and displaying. We continued down the old Los Nevados-Manizales road towards the abandoned Termales hotel (4° 58' 13"N, 75° 22' 45"W, 3520m). Here again we saw several female **Black-thighed Pufflegs** but failed to find the male for which we were searching. In the nearby abandoned garden area we saw several female Rainbow-bearded Thornbills, a male Great Sapphire-wing, a **Golden-breasted Puffleg**, several Black and Glossy Flowerpiercers, Pale-naped Brush-Finch and **Golden-fronted Redstarts**. Unlike last summer, there were no Shining Sunbeams. Unfortunately by 11:30AM, we were again surrounded by fog and mist, so decided to move on. We drove back up to El Arbolito for a delicious trout lunch. Afterwards we encountered a 30 minute delay due to a temporary road closure for ongoing construction along the main highway, and finally got back to the hummingbird feeders at Recinto del Pensamiento (5°2'25"N, 75° 26'44"W, 2192m) by 3:30PM. Although we saw the same species as last year – Green Violetear, Sparkling Violetear, Long-tailed Sylph, Bronzy Inca, Buff-tailed Coronet, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Andean and Western Emeralds, Rufous-tailed and Steely-vented Hummingbirds, there were far fewer birds and overall activity was very slow (likely due to the recent very dry conditions). After getting photos of some specific species, we left Manizales by 5 PM for the main lodge at Rio Blanco. En-route we stopped to photograph a male Golden-headed Quetzal perched beside the road on a mossy branch (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yDzw629dXvM>) . Once again dinner (chicken and rice) was excellent.



Sunrise at Los Nevados del Ruiz



Las Brisas Ranger Station

February 20

Unlike last year, we wanted to make sure we had at least a full day to explore Rio Blanco. Weather conditions were favourable – mostly partly cloudy or overcast with no rain. From 6:30AM – 7:30AM we birded and photographed around the lodge. Then by 8AM we headed up to the antpitta feeding sites with Albeiro (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=twMGCDHPIKU>). We saw and photographed the **Brown-banded**, Chestnut-naped, Chestnut-crowned and Slate-crowned Antpittas. Unlike last year, the Green-and-Black Fruiteater and Undulated Antpitta were absent. For the rest of the morning we explored the upper trails where we encountered several large flocks. Notable species seen included Andean Motmot, Emerald Toucanet, Pearled Treerunner,

Long-tailed Antbird, Blackish Tapaculo, Golden-faced Tyrannulet, Black-eared Hemispingus, Gray-hooded Bush-Tanager, Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager, and many more. Several migrant Blackburnian and Canada Warblers were also seen. After lunch we spent a couple of hours testing some new photographic equipment at a multi-flash hummingbird setup on the upper balcony at the main lodge. The aggressive Buff-tailed Coronets (many of whom were molting) kept other species away from the feeders. A male Long-tailed Sylph and Sword-billed Hummingbird perched and fed among the pink flowers on the passiflora vines. The other flowers in the garden attracted Tourmaline Sunangel, Collared Inca, Green Violetear, Speckled Hummingbird and Tyrian Metaltail. By late afternoon we drove down to the lower gate house. The abutilon flowers along the fence attracted Bronzy Inca, Wedge-billed Hummingbird, White-bellied Woodstar and Speckled Hummingbird. Our main objective had been to find a male Green-fronted Lancebill which Albeiro had observed hawking for insects over a fallen tree at the base of the small dam. Although we saw the bird, it was too dark for photography. We decided to drive further down the road to a curve frequented by nightjars. About 30 minutes after sunset, we finally saw and photographed a female Lyre-tailed Nightjar perched on a cliff-side stump. A male with its resplendent long tail feathers flew by several times, but never landed. On the drive back up to the lodge we tried our luck with some owls - heard both Rufous-banded Owl and White-throated Screech-Owl. Once again, Rio Blanco lived up to its reputation as one of Colombia's top birding sites.

February 21

This day had originally been planned as a backup day for "bad weather". Bob decided to bird the upper trails with Albeiro, while I headed back up to Los Nevados with Daniel. Our main objective was to photograph a female **Bearded Helmetcrest** which we had yet to see. Once we got above the lower layer of clouds, we found clear skies with no wind at sunrise. We had no luck at our first stop (the patch of Senecio yellow flowers behind the old café), and soon drove on to the main gate at Las Brisas. Although we got some more great photos of a male **Bearded Helmetcrest** showing its iridescent gorget, still no females. Soon the winds picked up bringing more clouds and fog, so again we headed back down the old Los Nevados-Manizales road. At the first big curve where the road descends, our luck changed when we found several female Helmetcrests and soon had gotten some good photos. We continued further down the road, but failed to find any Mountain Avocetbill. We had to stop at the abandoned garden below the Termales Hotel because of road repairs, where we did finally manage to get photos of a male Rainbow-Bearded Thornbill and a male **Black-thighed Puffleg**. While there, we saw a large flock and managed to get good close-up photos of Blue-backed Conebill, Pearled Tree-runner and Golden-crowned Tanager. By late morning, the fog and mist again made photography impossible, so we headed back up to El Arbolito for lunch (trout and plantain fries). It is easy to see why the small diner is a favorite lunch stop for local farm hands and truck drivers. After another delay due to road closures, we arrived back at Rio Blanco by about 4PM. Plans to photograph the Green-fronted Lancebill at the lower dam were interrupted by 20-30 minutes of heavy rain, after which it again became too dark.

Bob and Albeiro had mostly overcast conditions, and had to return to the lodge by 10:30AM due to heavy rain which lasted for over an hour. The highlight of their morning was watching and photographing a Flammulated Treehunter bringing leaves and building a nest in an old motmot hole. Other new species included Capped Conebill, Broad-winged and White-rumped Hawks, Russet-crowned Warbler, Pale-edged Flycatcher, Black-billed Peppershrike, Blue-and-Black Tanager, and Beryl-spangled Tanager. After dinner, Daniel found a Band-winged Nightjar near the main lodge which gave Bob plenty of good photos.

February 22

After an early 6AM breakfast, Bob, Daniel and Albeiro drove to the upper trails near the workstation. Birding was again good and notable new species included Ash-colored Tapaculo (heard), Yellow-bellied Chat Tyrant, Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Sickle-winged Guan, Brown-capped Vireo (heard), Summer Tanager, Black-crested Warbler and Andean Siskin. I stayed behind at the main lodge hoping to photograph a Purple-backed Thornbill which we'd seen feeding at a nearby flowering bush. Unfortunately, several Buff-tailed Coronets had

built nests in the bush, and immediately drove the Thornbill away before it could feed or perch for photos. By 10AM it was time to leave Rio Blanco for Cerro Montezuma.

This was one of the longest drives for the trip. We left Manizales, drove to Pereira where we had a short lunch break, and then at about the half-way point to Cartago, we turned west towards La Virginia where we crossed the Cauca River. From there it was about 30 minutes to Apia, where we encountered an unexpected 30 minute delay due to a temporary road closure and finally got to Pueblo Rico by about 3PM. Daniel had pre-arranged for us to transfer to heavy-duty 4x4 taxis for the final 10km stretch of rough road to the lodge which still took us over an hour. We spent the last hour of day-light setting up some new perches at the banana feeders, and photographing the Blackish Rails with their chicks around the pond. Due to another group over-staying, Bob and I had to share accommodations.



Finca Montezuma



Our group at Cerro Montezuma

February 23

Breakfast was at 5AM, and then it took almost two hours to drive up to the top of Cerro Montezuma (2500m). We were joined by Leopoldina's youngest daughter, Yesenia, who is interested in biology and is becoming an expert birder. The road was extremely rough and had two treacherous curves over and around prior landslides. When we reached the top, it was still partly cloudy, so we set out to find the higher elevation endemics and Choco specialty birds. Near the very top we found and managed to photograph an elusive Rufous Spinetail. As we started walking down the road, we found several **Chestnut-Bellied Flowerpiercers**, Blueish Flowerpiercer, Grass-green Tanager, **Purplish-mantled Tanager**, Olive Finch and many more. Slightly lower, a pair of mating **Munchique Wood-Wrens** called to one another from their perches allowing Daniel to record their mesmerizing song. Unfortunately, by 11AM the mist and drizzle started which soon became a persistent light rain. We stopped near Los Cajones (5° 14' 50"N, 76° 6' 22"W, 2015m) for a hot lunch which had been brought up to us by horse back from the main lodge. While sitting in the car, a **Gold-ringed Tanager** landed about 8 feet away to feed on a fruited Heliconia. We had been searching in vain all morning for the bird. It was so intent on feeding in the light rain, it hardly noticed when we stepped out to take close-up photos. What amazing luck! We slowly descended the rest of the way back to the lodge. As the rain increased, birding became harder. There were also very few hummingbirds (likely because so few flowering plants). We had better hopes for tomorrow. By 4PM we arrived back at the lodge and the rain had turned to a light mist, so we started photographing the numerous birds coming to the banana feeders – Flame-rumped Tanagers (lemon variety), Crimson-backed Tanagers, Blue-gray Tanagers, Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers and Red-headed Barbets. White-tailed Hillstars and **Empress Brilliants** were the dominant species coming to the hummingbird feeders around the dining area. Rarer visits were made by Collared Incas, **Velvet-purple Coronets**, **Dusky Bush-Tanagers** and **Violet-tailed Sylphs**. While we were photographing, we could hear continual giggling and laughter coming from the kitchen. After a superb dinner of steak and chicken paired with a stellar Argentinian malbec, we found out why. Today was my birthday and tomorrow was Daniel's. Somehow the kitchen had found out, so they sent someone back to Pueblo Rico on a motorbike to bring back a lemon birthday cake (which explained some of the missing corners), and the girls had made a 'balloon bird' in the shape of a tanager for Daniel, then the entire family sang

Happy Birthday in Spanish. The photos are somewhere on Facebook – a birthday Daniel and I will long remember. Our merriment was however soon cut short when Daniel informed us that he had just heard about a nation-wide strike in Colombia by the coffee growers and workers set for February 25-26th. As road blockades were planned throughout Colombia, and there is only one road from Pueblo Rico to Apia to La Virginia through a key coffee-growing region, we decided to leave a day early before the strike. This turned out to be a wise decision as the road did get blocked and the strike lasted over a week.

February 24

It had rained on and off over night. Breakfast was at 5:30AM to allow Bob and Daniel to leave for the lower trails on Cerro Montezuma. I stayed behind at the lodge to photograph the hummingbirds at a multi-flash setup, and create a short video on the technique. Between 8AM – 10:30AM several torrential thunderstorms passed over the lodge. But surprisingly, higher up the mountain, Bob and Daniel only had light rains. Notable new species seen and photographed included a stellar Fulvous-dotted Treerunner, Bronze-olive Pygmy-Tyrant, Uniform Antshrike, Tawny-bellied Hermit and Ornate Flycatcher. The endemic **Alto Pisonés Tapaculo** was clearly heard and recorded. Because of the heavy rains and possible landslides, we departed shortly after lunch. The road was even more difficult because of the wet mud, and a couple of uphill sections were almost impassable. Fortunately there had been no landslides and we made it out safely. We changed vehicles again in Pueblo Rico and drove on to Apia. Nearby we stopped for about 30 minutes in a coffee plantation (5° 7' 57"N, 75° 57' 7"W, 1461m) but failed to find any Turquoise Dacnis. We did however see Squirrel Cuckoo, Red-crowned Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, **Bar-crested Antshrike**, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Steely-vented Hummingbird, Red-headed Barbet and Golden-faced Tyrannulet. We then continued on along the west side of the Cauca valley and stopped at two wetland sites near Cartago. Here there were numerous shorebirds – Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Blue-winged Teals, Cinnamon Teals, Neotropical Cormorants, Snowy and Great Egrets, Cocoi Herons, Bare-faced Ibis, Southern Lapwing, Black-necked Stilts, Spotted and Solitary Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, Wattled Jacanas, and many more. We arrived in Cali by 8PM, but decided to continue on and arrived at Km18 by 9PM where we had dinner (mixed BBQ meats) at roadside grill. The area was packed with hundreds of teenagers there for a Sunday night music concert. We eventually found our way to Finca Alejandría and quickly fell asleep after our long drive.

February 25

Km 18 is a well-known birding site along the main highway from Cali to Buenaventura. Finca Alejandría (3°32' 21"N, 76° 36' 21"W, 1984m) is a private small eco-lodge along the side-road at the 18KM cut-off, operated by an elderly couple from Argentina (Raul Nieto and his wife Elsa). Initially they hosted guests in two bedrooms on their upper floor, but are now renovating a 3 bedroom villa just above their main building which is where we stayed. Although still unfinished, the rooms were spacious, complete with a kitchen and living room. When we awoke before breakfast, we were surprised at the birds we saw off the main balcony and along the road. The weather was warm (in the 70's), dry and partly sunny to varying overcast. Highland Tinamou, Andean Solitaire, Bright-rumped Attila and **Nariño Tapaculo** were heard in the forest just above our villa. The trees were busy with feeding flocks which included Metallic-Green Tanagers and various winter migrants (Black-and-White Warbler, Blackburnian Warbler, Canada Warbler, Tropical Parula, Summer Tanager), White-naped Brush-Finch, Slate-throated Redstart and Streaked Saltator. After a very tasty breakfast (eggs, sausages, arepas and coffee) which was served at 8:30AM, we spent most of the day photographing at the banana feeders attended by Golden Tanagers, Saffron-crowned Tanagers, Golden-naped Tanagers, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers, Blue-gray Tanagers, Flame-rumped Tanagers (crimson variety), Black-capped Tanagers, Green Honeycreepers and Red-headed Barbets. Lunch was a tasty mixed grill (sausages and chicken served with pasta and potatoes) and supper was marinated BBQ steak. Although the tanagers at the feeders lived up to our expectations, the biggest surprise was that a Green-fronted Lancebill had built a nest under the roof rafters. Unfortunately it was too dark for photographs and we did not want to disturb the nesting bird. After dinner, we found two Mottled Owls which sang to each other and flew over our heads before perching in nearby trees. Finca Alejandría turned out to be a great surprise and the most under-rated site on our trip.

February 26

We awoke to thick fog and mist which made birding difficult until mid-morning. After breakfast, Bob and

Daniel birded the road towards the towers. I stayed behind at the lodge for more perched photos of the hummingbirds and tanagers. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u1Z031tgb4Y>) With some time and patience, the female Green-fronted Lancebill flew off from the nest and perched on a nearby bush where it could be photographed. A Tawny-bellied Hermit would come every 30-40 minutes to feed briefly on the heliconias in the gardens, where it was eventually video-taped at a torch ginger flower. Other hummingbirds at the feeders and in the gardens included Green Hermits, White-necked Jacobins, Brown Violetears, Long-tailed and **Violet-tailed Sylphs**, Speckled Hummingbirds, Buff-tailed Coronets, Fawn-breasted Brilliants, Booted Racket-tails, Bronzy Incas, **Purple-throated Woodstars**, and Andean Emeralds. A guide for a large birding group from Mapalina Tours which was visiting that morning heard and then called in a Crested Quetzal, which perched on a low branch for amazing photos and a video (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ae8cF2d6yoY>). Bob and Daniel had very good results along the road – they saw several mixed flocks which included a single **Multi-colored Tanager** high up in a tree, Yellow-vented Woodpecker, Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, a group of six Blue-winged Mountain Tanagers which attacked another unidentified bird, and listening to an incredible 5 minute song by a hidden Chestnut-breasted Wood-Wren just three feet away in the underbrush.



Finca Alejandria



Balcony Feeders at La Cabaña

After lunch, we packed and departed in search of one more hummingbird – the locally scarce **Blue-headed Sapphire**. Raul has only seen it a few times at FincaAlejandría. Some previous reports had suggested it sometimes visited feeders at the nearby restaurant La Embajada de Ginebra, but when we arrived there, no hummingbirds were at the feeders which appeared to have been poorly maintained. The owners of a second restaurant suggested visiting Asadero La Cabaña (3°30' 15"N, 76° 37' 10"W, 1930m) a few hundred meters further down the road. On the narrow upper floor balcony, there were flowers and four feeders attracting a variety of hummingbirds. Within minutes, we spotted a dazzling male **Blue-headed Sapphire** perched on a twig in a nearby tree, which then also periodically came in to the feeders. The hummingbirds were very active – we saw a total of 12 species including one more new species for the trip – a male Long-billed Starthroat. We ended up spending a couple of hours taking photographs, enjoyed some ice-cold beers and delicious appetizers, and then it was time to depart. We said good-bye to Daniel, thanked him for another amazing trip, and headed to Cali airport in two separate taxis - - due to license plate restrictions Daniel was prohibited from driving in Cali that day, and no single taxi was large enough to accommodate all of our luggage. Our 9:15PM Avianca flight was on time, and we arrived in Barranquilla by 11PM where we were met by Wally Naranjo, who would be our guide for the next 3 days. Overnight at the Estellar Hotel in downtown area of Baranquilla.

February 27

We awoke early (5AM) and drove to Salamanca NP. The entry fee was 75,000COP for the three of us. We arrived just after dawn, and soon found a male endemic **Sapphire-bellied Hummingbird**. There is considerable

debate whether the bird is a separate species or a hybrid/phase of the Sapphire-throated Hummingbird which is also found in the mangrove swamps (we saw a female). Wally is convinced it is a separate species based on a decade of observations and voice recordings he has obtained. Recently, specimens have been sent for DNA testing. From what we saw and our photographs, there is definite sapphire coloration on the belly which we did not see on the Sapphire-throated Hummingbirds in Panama. The weather was warm and sunny, and the park has well-laid out trails thru the dry forest and mangrove sections. A Russet-throated Puffbird was seen perched near the Visitors Centre, four Bicolored Conebills and three Yellow-chinned Spinetails were found near the main overlook. Other birds included Wattled Jacana, Spotted Sandpiper, Cocoi Heron, Whimbrel, Ringed and Pygmy Kingfishers, several species of flycatchers, and migrating Prothonotary and northern Yellow Warblers. We missed seeing the **Chestnut Piculet**. After a couple of hours of birding, we drove about 30 minutes to La Cienaga where we stopped at a road-side grill for arepas (stuffed with scrambled eggs) and coffee. The swamps/mud flats along the highway had numerous Snowy and Great Egrets, Bare-faced Ibises, Osprey, Herons, Pelicans, ducks (Blue-winged Teal) and other smaller shore birds for which we did not stop. We made a quick stop in Santa Marta to exchange \$US into COP and for Wally to pick up some equipment he'd forgotten, before heading up to Minca. En-route we saw Blue-capped and White-lined Tanagers and a Long-tailed Antbird (which may be split off as **Santa Marta Antbird**). We stopped near a private garden hoping to attract some hummingbirds with tape playback of an owl, but were surprised to hear and then see a real Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl in a nearby tree.

We reached Minca by noon where we stopped for lunch at the La Casona restaurant (11° 8' 37"N, 74° 7' 8"W, 644m). Because of the full sun and very hot temperatures (in mid-90's), birding had slowed. Over iced cold beers and excellent grilled sandwiches, we watched six species of hummingbirds coming to the feeders around the balcony – White-vented Plumeteers, Pale-breasted Hermits, Rufous-breasted Hermits, Rufous-tailed Hummingbirds, Steely-vented Hummingbirds and White-necked Jacobins. After a one hour drive, we reached the small tienda (11° 5' 10"N, 74° 5' 21"W, 1630m) by 3PM. Amongst the orange-marmalade flowers we saw mostly Green Violetears and Violet-crowned Woodnymphs, and a single female **Coppery Emerald**. A Long-billed Hermit visited some heliconias in the garden. After an hour we still hadn't seen the Blossomcrown or Woodstar, so decided to move on. We stopped briefly at a private coffee finca - Alfredo's house (11° 5' 56"N, 74° 4' 44"W, 1640m), where we again saw male and female **Coppery Emeralds**, but no Blossomcrowns. There were about a dozen noisy Crested Oropendolas flying in and out of eight nests hanging from a tall tree on the hillside. After an excellent cup of Alfredo's organic coffee, we drove on and arrived at El Dorado lodge (11° 6' 3"N, 74° 4' 21"W, 1950m) by 5:30PM. As we were checking in, someone reported that four **Black-fronted Wood-quails** were feeding at the compost heap. As this has been a bird that has eluded Bob for many years, he rushed off for his camera and was very pleased when he finally got some pictures. Once in our rooms and after having enjoyed an outstanding dinner – it was clear why the lodge is considered by many the flagship for ProAvesin Colombia.



Entrance Sign



El Dorado Lodge

February 28

After a quick 15 minute breakfast, we departed the lodge at 4:30AM for the drive up Cerro Kennedy (11° 6' 39"N, 74° 2' 32"W, 2640m). Driving in the dark over the extremely rough road, it took almost two hours to reach the upper-most accessible sections. We walked the last several hundred meters to just beneath the antenna station. The weather was overcast with temperatures in the 60's, and the intermittent fog/mist made photography difficult. However birding was good with numerous new species: **Rusty-headed Spinetail**, **Streak-capped Spinetail**, **Santa Marta Parakeets**, **Santa Marta** or **Black-cheeked Mountain Tanager**, **Santa Marta Brush-finch**, **Santa Marta Warbler** and **Santa Marta Antpitta** (heard). Several large flocks of Scaly-napped Parrots and Scarlet-fronted Parakeets flew overhead. Other notable birds included **Yellow-fronted Redstart** and **Brown-rumped Tapaculo** (heard). By 10-10:30AM the weather cleared, but still birding became quite quiet. So by 11AM we started back down towards the lodge with several stops enroute, but again few birds. After a 1PM lunch, it remained overcast with temperatures in the mid-70's. We birded and photographed at the feeders around the lodge. The dominant species were Green Violetears and Tyrian Metaltails (the Santa Marta subspecies with a distinctive bluish tail). Less frequent visitors were a single Brown Violetear, a male Lazuline Sabrewing, an immature male **Black-backed Thornbill**, and a male **White-tailed Starfrontlet**. Around mid-afternoon, Wally and Bob decided to drive back up the road and bird the trails around the San Lorenzo research station about 1.5 miles above the lodge. Notable birds seen included three Emerald Toucanets (Santa Marta subspecies with blue throat and small yellow mark on upper mandible), several **White-lored Warblers**, a Gartered Trogon, a small flock (6) of Golden-breasted Fruiteaters, a Mountain Elaenia, two Golden-bellied Grosbeaks, a Mountain Velvetbreast feeding at some flowers, and a Lined Quail-Dove briefly along the road before it quickly darted into the forest. Once again, the **Santa Marta Antpitta** came-in close, but was only heard. By 5-5:30PM they encountered rain and returned to the lodge.

March 1

The plan for this morning had been to bird the area down from the lodge to the tienda. We made several stops enroute. A large flock of over 40 Red-billed Parrots flew over several times. A Crimson-crested Woodpecker was heard high up a tree, but could never be clearly seen. Two more Golden-breasted Fruiteaters were seen in a small flock, and a Bright-rumped Attila was seen nearby. An Emerald Toucanet was seen with a yellow line down the full length of the crest on its upper mandible, characteristic of a lower altitude subspecies compared to the birds seen yesterday. By 8AM we had arrived at Palo Alto (11° 5' 48"N, 74° 4' 33"W, 1690m). The extensive gardens with numerous Green Violetears are located just above Alfredo's finca. We watched for over an hour, but never saw our target birds – Blossomcrown and Santa Marta Woodstar. A pair of Keel-billed Toucans called to each other in a distant tree. We moved on to Alfredo's finca where a female **Coppery Emerald** showed well for close-up photographs. A **Santa Marta Foliage-Gleaner** appeared along the entry trail in response to tape playback. After another excellent cup of coffee and having purchased some roasted beans to bring home, we moved on to the tienda. We set-up to take multi-flash photos of the Long-billed Hermit, Green Violetears and Violet-crowned Woodnymphs. But again – no luck with the Blossomcrown. After a couple of hours we returned to the lodge for 1PM lunch. By early afternoon it had become very cloudy and soon drizzle started which quickly turned to steady showers. Our bad luck – this was the first real rain at the lodge in the 3 months since December. So we decided to use the afternoon to catch up on emails and our photo-editing. After dinner, we went out looking for frogs, anoles and tarantulas. We heard a **Santa Marta Screech-Owl** very near the lodge, but it refused to show itself.

March 2

Breakfast was at 6:30AM, after which it was time to leave. In overcast, foggy conditions we slowly birded our way down to Palo Alto again. The large flock (60+) of Red-billed Parrots flew overhead several times, as did a Collared Forest Falcon. A mixed flock contained Bay-headed Tanagers, Crimson-backed Tanagers, Blue-gray Tanagers, Swallow Tanagers, and several flycatchers flew by. Nearby we saw two Scaled Piculets. At a large bend in the road we heard Barred Antshrike and **Santa Marta Tapaculo**. At another bend we heard and finally got clear views of a Golden-winged Sparrow. We stopped for 45 minutes at Palo Alto – again no luck with our target hummingbirds, but we did see Pale-breasted Thrush, Black-hooded Thrush, **Santa Marta Brush-Finch**, and White-lined Tanager. The battery on Wally's Toyota Landcruiser had been failing, so we switched vehicles at Alfredo's house for the remainder of the ride down the mountain. At the tienda we finally found the male

Blossomcrown amongst a patch of orange marmalade flowers. Unfortunately the patch was being guarded by an aggressive Green Violetear which would almost instantly chase away the **Blossomcrown**. At a curve further down the road a Rufous-and-White Wren was singing loudly. We also briefly saw a mystery hummingbird which Wally has seen here several times – very dark, almost black, and quite large, with a long straight bill. Perhaps it is a hybrid or male melanistic **Santa Marta Sabrewing**. We stopped for lunch at La Casona where a Whooping Motmot showed well along with the same six species of hummingbirds seen three days earlier. As we were leaving, it started to rain. We would drive 15-20 minutes, thought it was clearing, and then the rain would catch up to us yet again forcing us to move onward. By 3PM we had reached Santa Marta, and Wally suggested driving westward into the dry forests. The rains stopped and we birded a private reserve called Mamankana which is being developed into an eco-resort (but no houses have yet been built). The almost desert like conditions were unlike anywhere we'd visited. Along two trails we saw two White-fringed Antwrens, a Scrub Greenlet, two Pileated Finches, several Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrants, and a Mouse-coloured Tyrannulet. Some dry scrub with a few yellow flowers attracted a **Red-billed Emerald** and another mysterious hummingbird which based on photos was subsequently identified as a male **Coppery Emerald** (unusual because of a prominent post-ocular white spot and being almost at sea level in desert-like scrub). By 6PM we departed for our nearby hotel – Santa Marta Estellar beach resort. The rooms were very spacious and we had a tasty buffet style dinner.

March 3

We had arranged to meet Wally at 6AM for a couple more hours of birding. To our surprise, Alfredo's car had failed overnight, and Wally had asked another friend to help out – our third car in 24 hours. Our first stop was along Bales Road where we arrived just in time to see about ten **Chestnut-winged Chachalacas** leaving their roosting area and fly out into the scrub. Some Rufous-tailed and Steely-vented Hummingbirds were feeding in some nearby flowering guava trees. Several Yellow-headed Caracaras flew by overhead. As drove along the highway back towards Salamanca NP, we again saw numerous Snowy and Great Egrets, Striated and Cocoli Herons, Neotropical Comorants, and a Roseate Spoonbill. In a farmer's field we thought we saw two wild Flamingos, but then noticed they were captive birds (which is illegal in Colombia). At Salamanca, we spent an hour on the trails in search of the piculet, only to find three **Chestnut Piculets** in the nearby trees when we returned to the Visitor Centre. We also saw a Pied Puffbird and a Straight-billed Woodcreeper. Further along the road at a dairy farm we saw two Greater Anis, numerous Great-tailed Grackles, and a single smaller Carib Grackle, but failed to find any Bronzed (Red-eyed) Cowbirds. Nearby there were two Vermillion Flycatchers and a pair of Lesser Kiskadees building a nest. We secured our luggage for the drive thru Barranquilla and arrived at the airport by 9AM. We thanked Wally for a great four days of birding, said good-bye and then proceeded thru about eight security check-points (~ one hour) to board our 11AM Avianca flight to Miami. Yet again, the flight was on time with an uneventful arrival and clearance thru Customs.

CONCLUDING COMMENTS: Another amazing trip – we saw about 435 species of which 55 were lifers for Bob. The 59 species of hummingbirds which we saw included all our “must-see” target species except for the Mountain Avocetbill. Our hosts couldn't have been friendlier, especially at Finca Montezuma and Finca Alejandría. The only safety concerns we ever had were driving thru some sections of Cali and Barranquilla late at night. Accommodations at all the lodges were more than adequate, and the rooms and facilities at the three Estellar Hotels we visited were exceptional and we wish we could have stayed there longer. Once again the food was excellent, and no one got sick. Lastly, a vwey special thanks yet again to Daniel for helping organize this custom tour. As more areas of Colombia open up to birding, chances are we'll return for a third trip.

Location shots from the trip and sites visited can be seen at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/pahyyz/sets/72157633219155661/>

A You-Tube link to video-clips of 16 species of hummingbirds from the trip can be seen at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lyeNI4hAH6A>

BIRD PHOTOGRAPHS: Here are some photos of just a few of the species seen on the trip:



Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant



Fluvous-dotted Treerunner



Chestnut-bellied Flowerpiercer



Red-headed Barbet



Violet-crowned Woodnymph



Bearded Helmetcrest



Blue-headed Sapphire



Glowing Puffleg



Red-ruffed Fruitcrow



Crested Quetzal



Crimson-backed Tanager



Golden-ringed Tanager

More extensive galleries of bird photos from the trip can be seen at:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/boblewis/sets/72157631494733382/>

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/pahyyz/sets/72157633223873962/>

<http://www.pahphoto.com/nature> under the Colombia 2013 folder