

Argentina Patagonia

Naturetrek Tour Report

22 October - 9 November 2006



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Diego Gallegos (local guide for Costanera Sur - Oct 23rd)
Riccardo Clark (local guide for Pampas extension).

Tour participants: Andrew Rest
John & Linda Tyler
Barry & Ann Jarvis
Stella Rogers
Maureen Palmer
Don & Diane Whittaker
Janine Marchant
Margaret Gorely
Margaret Searle
Dave & Juline Rickwood.

Day 1

Sunday 22nd October

London (Gatwick) - Madrid - Buenos Aires

The group flew from London (Gatwick) to Buenos Aires via a short stop in Madrid. Peter had arrived a day ahead of the rest of the group and met up with Dave and Juline Rickwood who had spent a week with Riccardo around Salta.

Day 2

Monday 23rd October

Buenos Aires - Costanera Sur

Peter and Diego (the local guide for the day at Costanera Sur) met the group as they arrived after the long flight. All had survived the journey but unfortunately Don and Diane's luggage was still somewhere in Madrid, they had reported the loss and promises were made by Aerolineas Argentina for it to be delivered to the hotel.

We then boarded our bus and adjourned to a small cafe next to a filling station on the way to the city centre for breakfast. The journey to the hotel was somewhat slower than anticipated owing to it now being the height of the BA rush-hour, but eventually we made it through and everyone checked in to their rooms. Once everyone was feeling refreshed we joined the bus for a late morning departure for the short journey to Costanera Sur. This small area right on the city sea-front mostly consisting of land reclaimed from the sea (and once earmarked for city development) has now grown into something of an attraction in its own right not only as an area of natural habitat (it is a world-renowned reserve) but also as a recreational area for all the BA urbanites who pour into it at weekends to walk, jog, run, cycle, picnic or play games, all of which the wildlife appears to endure with complete indifference.

Luckily for us, however, the reserve is closed on Mondays so (with special permission) we had the place to ourselves. We began with a short walk to get our bearings and then returned to near the entrance where lunch of various meats, cheeses, bread, salad and fruit had been laid out. Afterwards we began our exploration in earnest.

First stop was the small boggy area that lies next to the large water tank just yards from the main gate. In the depth of this area a Grey-necked Wood-Rail slunk away amongst the green sedge-grass, whilst overhead a Bran-coloured Flycatcher flitted in the branches of a spreading tree. Further on we encountered our first Rufous Horneros, Picazuro Pigeons, Kiskadee Flycatchers, Black & Rufous Warbling Finches, Eared Doves, Rufous-bellied and Creamy-bellied Thrushes (both singing), Chalk-browed Mockingbirds, Bay-winged and Shiny Cowbirds, Guira Cuckoos, Monk Parakeets, Hooded Siskins and the seemingly ever-present Rufous-collared Sparrows.

The main path is bordered with light woodland and here we added Tropical Kingbird, Double-collared Seedeater, Masked Gnatcatcher, Epaulet Oriole and Golden-crowned Warbler to the list, a Striped Cuckoo also called to us persistently from one of the trees but try as we might to locate it, it remained invisible. In an area of red-flowering shrubs a couple of Glittering-bellied Emerald Hummingbirds were defending a small territory, and frequently perched to show their overall shiny green plumage or when in silhouette all that could be seen was the short red bill. On the edge of the first wetland area we met our first Neotropic Cormorants, White-necked Heron, Chimango and Crested Caracaras, White-winged Coots whilst a White-tailed Kite hunted over the reedbeds and a Roadside Hawk perched up in a dead tree. The large lake was full of birds including Coscoroba and Black-necked Swans, White-faced and Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, White-faced and Bare-faced Ibises, Speckled, Cinnamon and Silver Teal, Brown Pintail and Red Shovelers together with a large flock of Black-headed Ducks. Several Wattled Jacanas waded in the shallower areas accompanied by Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, White-rumped, Baird's, Pectoral Sandpipers and a couple of Stilt Sandpipers.

Pleased with the abundance of birdlife and with what we had seen on our first day we left as dusk was falling and returned to the hotel (again through another rush-hour) for an early dinner (by Argentinian standards) and some sleep.

Day 3

Tuesday 24th October

Buenos Aires - Rio Grande - Ushuaia

Today was going to be a long day, starting with the early morning wake-up call at 3.30, a hasty breakfast and then off to the nearby national airport to catch the 5.40 flight to Rio Grande (we were supposed to be flying direct to Ushuaia but for some inexplicable, mostly technical, reason that airport was closed and we had to complete the rest of the journey by road). The road journey to Ushuaia passed through some interesting Patagonian habitat, open grassland dotted with occasional scrubby outcrops, winding river valleys and undulating steppe before the start of the extensive areas of *Nothofagus* (Southern beech) forest.

We arrived at Ushuaia airport around 11.30 and shortly after Esteban our guide for the rest of trip also arrived with the tour bus. We clambered aboard pleased to have made contact and set off for the nearby Tolkeyen Hotel which lies in a truly idyllic setting on the shore of an inlet from the Beagle Channel with views almost from every room of the mountains on the far side of the channel. Around the hotel we quickly noted several Austral Negritos, Kelp and Upland Geese and on a little gravel island were a number of Flying and Flightless Steamer-Ducks. Having checked into our rooms we set off in the bus once again for a short tour of Ushuaia and for lunch in one of the small downtown restaurants run by a local Chilean family. Judging by the number of locals eating in the restaurant it was clearly very popular and so it proved to be.

After lunch we took a short stroll along part of the waterfront (below the airport) and started getting acquainted with a few of the local birds. These included Rock and King Cormorants, Ashy-headed Geese, Crested Ducks, more of both Flying and Flightless Steamer-Ducks, Magellanic Oystercatchers and the rather charming Dolphin Gulls. On one of the jetties was a small dark bird with a bright supercilium bobbing along and just as we were about to get the scopes out, it flew towards and landed much closer to us, confirming initial suspicions that it was a Dark-bellied Cinclodes. Out in the far reaches of the Beagle Channel we picked out a couple of dark, long-winged birds gliding low over the water, our first views of Southern Giant Petrels.

The other well-publicised birding location in Ushuaia is the town's rubbish dump (actually there are now two) right on the edge of town which pulls in birds from a wide area. Here amongst the huge mass of dumped, partly buried and decomposing rubbish were thousands of Kelp Gulls. Accompanying the gulls (or rather competing with them for the tastiest scraps) were both Chimango and Crested Caracaras and also smaller numbers of the shyer and generally more scarce (but more attractive - in caracara terms) White-throated Caracaras (the rubbish dump is one of the most reliable places in the whole of southern Patagonia to see this bird). At least 10 Brown Skuas patrolled the skies above the rubbish dump and frequently swooped down to join the gulls when there was anything to be had; on one occasion a South Polar Skua (much paler than the Brown's) flew round but then headed off out to sea again.

The appearance of a Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle overhead caused a huge general panic amongst the gulls which immediately took to the skies and with several Crested caracaras in pursuit the eagle disappeared back over the hill. Climbing up the road outside the dump to get a better view we looked down into the dump itself and on the hillside itself were several closer White-throated Caracaras amongst its more common relatives. In the bushes immediately below us several small birds were actively foraging and these included an Austral Negrito, House Wrens and a couple of Patagonian Sierra-Finches. On the way back to the bus we noticed another large raptor sitting in a tree almost beside the bus, at first it was not clear what it was, but as it took flight (causing another wave of panic amongst the gulls) the wings and tail shape strongly suggested that it was an immature Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (confirmed later in the trip by others in similar plumage).

Day 4

Wednesday 25th October

Ushuaia - Tierra Del Fuego NP

After a sumptuous breakfast (taken whilst overlooking the Beagle Channel and the distant mountains) we boarded the bus for the short trip to Tierra Del Fuego National Park. The park lies only a few kilometres from Ushuaia and occupies 63,000 hectares of mountains, nothofagus forest, lakes and deep grassy valleys. The first stop was down to a bay on a small inlet of the Channel which at first seemed rather birdless but it wasn't long before we spotted a fairly distant Andean Condor circling up over the distant peaks of the Chilean Andes in the background. Closer to us however, at the end of the short jetty, were a pair of Dark-bellied Cinclodes which actively inspected holes in and around the end of the jetty.

During a short walk in the adjacent forest we came upon a beaver dam but regrettably no sign of the constructor's themselves. The forest was mostly quiet and birds few and far between but we saw several Austral Thrushes, a Tufted Tit-Tyrant flitted in the undergrowth, a pair of White-throated Treerunners appeared briefly at the tops of a tall tree but quickly moved on before all the group was able to get good views. At one point the path descended a long slope, some way down a fallen tree obstructed the path and the underside of the tree

appeared to be the home of a Magellanic Tapaculo which, although usually one of the most elusive families of birds, this one surprisingly showed itself well on a number of occasions.

After lunch (a packed lunch taken indoors in the cafe) we set out in search of one of the park's major ornithological attractions - the Magellanic Woodpecker. This involved a lengthy search of the large trees in the forest surrounding the restaurant and camping area. Although at first we drew a blank we were spurred on by a series of trees with sizeable and clearly recently excavated holes. We knew we were in the right area so it was just a question of where in this extensive forest they would be. Eventually we located three of these magnificent birds, two males and a single female, in trees not far from where we had lunch and began our quest. In this area they showed so well that we spent some time just watching and photographing their every movement as they vigorously picked and hacked at the soft wood and bark. At one stage one of the males flew down to feed on a large fallen tree-trunk now lying on the ground and was so heavily engrossed in pecking one end of the tree it seemed not to notice John only a few feet away at the other end.

We finally tore ourselves away and moved on to the grassy area at the head of another inlet of the channel, scattering Rabbits (introduced from Europe many years ago) in front of the coach as we continued along the road. At the top of the inlet a long boardwalk led out from the car park and down towards the shore but provides an excellent view over the grassland area and surrounding bushes. By now the keen wind that had been blowing all day was beginning to recede and sitting in the late afternoon sun we spent some time pleasantly watching a small flock of Thorn-tailed Rayaditos an Austral Thrush and Patagonian Sierra-Finches in the bushes, at one stage they were joined by an Austral Pygmy-Owl lured into view by Esteban's tape. Slightly further away amongst a group of Kelp and Upland Geese, several Dark-faced Ground-Tyrants fed in chat-like fashion from fence-posts. At one stage a Fox appeared over a slight ridge, its presence being heralded by anguished cries from the geese who instantly fled to the safety of the nearby water.

As the sun slipped behind the distant Andes we retraced our steps back to the bus and then to the hotel prior to a return to the downtown restaurant we had enjoyed the day before.

Day 5

Thursday 26th October

Ushuaia - Beagle Channel - Harberton Ranch

After breakfast we took the bus into Ushuaia and boarded a catamaran and embarked on an enjoyable cruise down the Beagle Channel. Although the day had begun bright and cheerful it was now overcast with a grey sky and showers threatened. Right from the start we had plenty to look at as the boat nosed its way carefully in amongst the rock stacks and outer islands where there were large breeding colonies of King Cormorants packed cheek by jowl together. The majority of nesting pairs were in full breeding frenzy as they carried in beakfuls of seaweed to add to their nests or snatched sections of their neighbours construction resulting in noisy disputes. Dolphin Gulls, Chilean and Brown Skuas and Snowy Sheathbills stood amongst the throng looking for any unguarded eggs while the less numerous Rock Cormorants favoured ledges on the sides of the islands away from the scavenging predators.

As we progressed south along the channel we had time to appreciate the superb scenery on either shore, a landscape of rugged mountains separated from the channel by a narrow strip of beech forest. Here and there isolated settlements appeared on the shoreline causing us to wonder at the lifestyle of these modern day

pioneers. The journey was filled with birds as we passed fishing South American Terns, Giant Petrels glided past, Flightless Steamer Ducks floated in the water and tiny Magellanic Diving Petrels scampered over the water in front of the boat and scores of Black-browed Albatrosses sat on the water or sheared over the waves.

The albatrosses, Diving-Petrels and gulls were augmented by the first of several Southern Fulmars, an Antarctic breeder which occurs as a winter visitor to the channel but clearly quite a few also choose to spend the summer months here. At one stage we picked up an Andean Condor soaring out over the Channel whilst later on two more appeared slightly more distantly. Flightless Steamer Ducks congregated around offshore islands and as we neared Harberton Ranch, which marks the turning point of the voyage, we came across increasing numbers of Magellanic Penguins in the sea. Just before we reached Harberton the boat gently nosed close to one particular beach where numbers of Magellanic Penguins were standing while others occupied burrows on the cliffs and land behind them. To our delight there was also an incipient Gentoo Penguin colony nearby just above the beach. This large sub-Antarctic penguin has been a regular visitor to this spot for many years but breeding did not commence until a few years ago and the hope is that a large colony may eventually become established. A lunchtime stop at Harberton Ranch enabled a short tour of the work sheds where we treated to a talk by the present owner on the life of the ranch and the history of the site and how sheep shearing had been, until recently, carried on. In the front garden of the main house a female Kelp Goose had taken up residence and was now firmly sitting on a nest in one of the flower beds.

The return journey was accomplished at a somewhat faster rate but we were still able to enjoy the regular seabird appearances although nothing new was recorded. We arrived back in Ushuaia at 1800 to be greeted by a fly past of half-a-dozen Blackish Oystercatchers.

Day 6

Friday 27th October

Ushuaia - Martial Glacier - Calafate

After the early morning walk around the delightfully situated hotel, we boarded the bus for the short ride through Ushuaia and up to the ski lift. However, this being late spring the ski lift wasn't in operation so we set off on foot up the now snow-free skiing track which climbs up to the centre of a large and fairly steep-sided valley. Here on a small, rickety bridge over a stream we took stock and collected the group together before the next part of the assault. By now we had reached the snowline which involved either digging in with toes and heels to get across to the next open area or merely following on in the footsteps of those in front. For some the latter course was not always advisable as it often meant disappearing up to or beyond knee-level in soft but deep snow.

The first birds came to meet us close to where the path levels out, these were Dark-faced Ground-Tyrants and a number of Bar-winged Cinclodes a pair of which seemed to be displaying or selecting a nesting site. We climbed slowly higher in search of the elusive White-bellied Seedsnipe but no matter how hard we tried (including Barry putting in a marathon effort of rock-climbing) sadly and regrettably they lived up to their reputation. We were rewarded for our efforts by several Yellow-bridled Finches and a fleeting pair of Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrants, on the way back down a Fire-eyed Diucon showed fairly well in bushes at the side of the track. Once back at the bus we tucked into a three-course packed lunch which we all agreed was the best of the trip.

In the afternoon we checked out the new rubbish dump, where we found an immature Striated Caracara amongst the more usual Cresteds and Chimangos and several White-throateds and the usual hordes of Kelp Gulls. En route to the airport, we also made a brief stop at the site of the previous rubbish dump which as it stands on a small cliff on the shore still manages to attract a large number of gulls, steamer ducks and kelp and upland geese.

As the mysterious technical difficulty which had prevented Ushuaia airport from opening had now been fixed, flights were now back on schedule - and on the first of these Don and Diane's luggage had now managed to catch up with them. Well, perhaps not quite back on schedule, our evening flight to Calafate was delayed by about an hour and a half which meant that it didn't leave until around 20.30. Arriving one hour later we were met by our driver for the next few days who took us the short drive to the Hosteria Los Barrancos on the outskirts of the town. This proved to be a comfortable guest house with a splendid view from the lounge over most of the town and despite the lateness of the hour most of the group took a late dinner that had been saved for us and then went off to bed.

Day 7

Saturday 28th October

Calafate - Moreno Glacier

We woke to a bright and sunny morning with the sun climbing high into a cloudless sky and picking out the fine details of the landscape and distant Lake Argentina from the scenic lounge windows. Barry had been up and out early but reported very little in the area around the garden apart from the ubiquitous Rufous-collared Sparrows.

After breakfast our bus arrived and we boarded for the drive to Moreno Glacier. This involved taking in a long detour through expansive grasslands interrupted only by occasional rivers, scrubby areas and poplar groves. Near one particular farm we came upon several Cinerous Harriers hunting near the road and not far away an Aplomado Falcon sat on a roadside fencepost whilst in the surrounding scrub were a pair of Fire-eyed Diucons.

Further on we stopped near a lake some way from the road to admire some distant Chilean Flamingos, several closer Common Miners and a couple of singing Hellmayr's Pipits. The weather was now a little changeable and we passed through at least one heavy shower along the way, but now seemed fine so we set off for the short walk to the lake. Unfortunately we hadn't realised just how quickly conditions can change here and we had not gone far before the next downpour (luckily only a short one) was upon us, but most of the group were well prepared. The lake proved to be full of birds with White-tufted Grebes, Black-necked Swans, Chiloe Wigeons, Crested, Andean Ruddy and Lake Ducks together with a selection of coots, and in the reeds a couple of Grass Wrens, several Spectacled Tyrants and a Plumbeous Rail which didn't like the look of us and promptly vanished back into cover.

On the way back to the bus (and again whilst we ate our packed lunches at the roadside) a fly-past of several Andean Condors entertained us with their majestic circling flight as they crossed the valley to soar over the more distant peaks that marked the start of Los Glaciers National Park. Although we had seen it coming lunch was somewhat curtailed by the arrival of a heavy downpour which like the others before it soon passed over and the sun resumed its dominance.

We headed on to the start of the park and huge glacier it contains. The start of the park is marked by a return to more tree-clad cover of the hillsides, home of the Chilean Flicker, and we made several stops at likely spots to try and fine one. This proved to be largely fruitless but not long after we had set off from one of these attempts we spotted one from the bus sitting atop a large dead branch (and some of the group had good views of its underparts as we passed below) right over the road. Screeching to a halt we clambered out of the bus only to find it had gone.

Further on along the road we made another stop for a couple of Rufous-tailed Plantcutters which the local guide had spotted and a little further along this time to look down on a small lake where a pair of Spectacled Ducks were happily feeding, blissfully aware of our attention. This is a rather splendid and enigmatic duck as well as being one of the most elusive since it appears to have habitat requirements unlike any of the other South American ducks. Back on the road we rounded a bend and came upon the Moreno Glacier a gigantic area of solid ice, put only into size perspective when you realise the small creatures moving about on the water at the foot of the glacier are people in fairly sizeable boats. Later on we were able to marvel at the sheer expanse and subtle blue tones of the ice from a matter of metres where the glacier almost touches the near shore of the lake. This great body of ice stretches for over 30 kilometres filling a deep valley which is bordered on each side by picturesque snow capped mountains. Standing at the view point in front of the glacier we marvelled at the variations of colour which occurred in the ice as the light conditions changed and from time to time small sections of ice broke away from the 60 metre high cliff face to fall into the lake below with a huge splash.

As the weather was closing in again we boarded the bus for the trip back to Calafate, taking in another couple of stops en route for the elusive flicker, however all we managed in this particular case was another fleeting view as one flew across the road in front of the bus. Near the park entrance we stopped for one last look before we left all the trees behind but all we could muster was a flock of 12 Austral Parakeets preparing to go to roost, which bearing in mind the declining temperature we didn't especially envy.

Day 8

Sunday 29th October

Calafate - Lake Escarchardos

Another fine day dawned with a brisk breeze blowing. After breakfast we set off along the road to the north, passing through areas of extensive grasslands and occasional patches of thin trees and low scrub. Amongst the latter we stumbled on our first party of Lesser Rheas, large and fairly scruffy, emu-like birds which live out on these rolling steppes in scattered family groups. On one occasion we were admiring a group of rheas when a plover-like call on the other side of the road alerted us to a small group of Tawny-throated Dotterels, an elegant and scarce but wide-ranging plover that inhabits these windswept grasslands but is infrequently encountered owing to its elusive nature, and these birds were already looking a little nervous even though they were some way in from the road.

Climbing a long diagonal ramp the road finally reached a large, open plateau where the only vegetation is a stunted grass that can withstand the temperature ranges and the wind several degrees colder and frequently extremely fierce. The edge of this plateau is a fairly steep drop and not far away several condors were riding the updraft with effortless ease. We parked the bus, climbed into several additional layers of clothing and set off along the old gravel road (now padlocked against use by traffic) in the direction of Lake Escarchardos - the location for the rare and enigmatic Hooded Grebe and the location where it was first discovered in the 1980s.

Although occasionally leaning into the force of the wind we were glad that it was only blustery and not as fierce it might be in such a vast open space. It was also at first a seemingly barren and birdless place but after about a mile we came upon (or rather they found us) pairs of Common Miners and several Least Seedsnipe feeding in the road, and not long after a pair of Two-banded Plovers joined them. We walked on and shortly the lake came into view but it quickly became apparent that the water level was extremely low, sufficiently low to seriously affect our chances of the grebe being present since it has very precise habitat requirements and quickly forsakes the lake if they are not met. The low water level does not encourage the growth of the aquatic vegetation which supplies the grebe with both nesting material and a small species of snail which the bird feeds on, so not surprisingly until 2005 none had been seen on the lake for a number of years. Trudging on towards the shore we disturbed flocks of White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers.

Stopping to take stock of the birds on the lake, the first grebe we came across raised pulses for a few moments until it was realised that it was a Great Grebe in non-breeding plumage, a little further on we discovered a sizeable flock of much smaller grebes and again we approached excitedly since from a distance the wind caused too much movement on the telescopes to allow certain identification. Could there really be as many as 60 of these rare grebes as there now appeared to be gathered together out on the lake? The answer of course was no, these too were another false alarm and were a large flock of Silvery Grebes, but amongst them there were in fact two really fine Hooded Grebes showing just how similar they could be amongst their closest relatives.

We spent some time just watching the grebes, the sleeping flamingo flock and the rapidly moving flock of Wilson's Phalaropes also sharing the lake before we headed off to look for the other enigmatic resident of these isolated Patagonian lakes. The flat and gradual sloping shoreline appears to offer little in the way of sustenance but a small number of Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers fed in the muddier parts of the shallows and in one of these we found a single Magellanic Plover a dumpy, little (and generally little known) wader mostly dove-grey in plumage with bright pink legs. The cold wind was growing in strength and with both of the main birds seen we headed off back to the shelter and warmth of the bus. On the way we came across a pair of the thrush-size, splendidly-coloured (and even better-named) Chocolate-vented Ground-Tyrants, which although aware of our presence, allowed reasonable views in the windy conditions.

We ate our packed lunch in the bus whilst the wind howled around outside. In view of the conditions we decided on a retreat to Calafate where we ventured down to the edge of Lake Argentina and some small lakes that lie within a nature reserve between the town and the main lake. The reserve held a variety of ducks including several Lake Ducks, 2 Argentine Ruddy Ducks and up to five Cinereous Harriers which appeared to be nesting in the small reedbeds at the edge of the lakes. On the shore of the larger Lake Argentina was a loose collection of mostly Baird's Sandpipers but also much to our surprise (and against all previous expectations) also included three Magellanic Plovers.

Day 9

Monday 30th October

Calafate - Trelew

As we had only half a day's birding available we took the bus again towards the Los Glaciers National Park entrance in a final attempt to find a Chileran Flicker. Most of the time we were birding from the bus except for short walks along the roadside where we again failed to find the elusive flicker but we did manage further good

views of Andean Condors, Black-faced Buzzard-Eagles and a couple of Austral Parakeets. On a couple of small lakes were a pair of Great Grebes, several Brown Pintail and a nervous Plumbeous Rail which headed for cover as soon as it saw us. On the way back at the 'Elephants' Rock (so-called because of the shape of the front of the rock which does indeed resemble a tightly packed herd of elephants with prominent trunks and legs) we stopped a short while to see if there were any Condors on the ledges but as on both our previous visits the birds were elsewhere. Lunch was eaten in the departure lounge of Calafate airport as we waited for our flight to arrive, outside in the heat of the early afternoon we waved farewell to the final condors of the trip which were sailing along the far ridge at the back of the town.

The flight to Trelew took just over an hour and we arrived just after 5pm to be met by Ruben and Luis our local guide and driver for the duration of the next three days. As it was evening time we took a short diversion from the airport to a series of lagoons (adjacent to a massive rubbish-dump) which held masses of birds, these were mostly Red Shoveler (thousands), Brown Pintail and Chiloe Wigeon together with several Cinnamon Teal, Rosy-billed Pochards, White-tufted and Silvery Grebes, all three coots as well as Chilean Flamingos, Coscoroba and Black-necked Swans. However, our main focus of attention was in one of the reed-filled ditches where we had our first encounter with a South American gem, the aptly-named Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant. A more soberly plumaged Wren-like Rushbird shared the same patch of reeds and not far away a pair of Mourning Sierra-Finches sat on top of some bushes and several Lesser Canasteros trilled at us from deep cover. As evening drew on we boarded the bus for the short final leg of the journey to the hotel in the centre of town.

Day 10

Tuesday 31st October

Trelew - Punta Tombo - Gaiman

The penguin rookery at Punta Tombo was our destination today but there were plenty of diversions along the way as we stopped for roadside birding in the scrub which stretched endlessly on either side of the dusty highway. Lesser Canasteros were numerous in this habitat, although not the easiest bird to see, and our random stops also produced views of Burrowing Owls, Common Diuca-Finches and Patagonian Mockingbirds. At one of the early stops along the road we came across a small party of Maras. This entertaining mammal is endemic to the south of Argentina and peculiar is perhaps the best word to use in describing it as there are certainly aspects of the creatures appearance that seem incongruous. About the size of a large dog, the head shape recalls a Wallaby, an appearance enhanced by a pair of large, very pointed ears. The plump body distinctly broadens in the beam, all of which is emphasised by a wide, horizontal stripe of white fur. It is the rear legs that contribute most to the comic aspect, a pair of thin bowed limbs which were clearly intended for a much slimmer creature but were somehow attached to support the Mara's bulky body. The design is amusing enough but when a Mara decides to run it does so by a series of stiff-legged hops, a similar means of locomotion to the Klipspringer in Africa but with none of the grace or agility of the latter.

A flock of Chilean Swallows circling around an isolated farm necessitated another stop and whilst watching the hirundines we noticed an Elegant crested Tinamou watching us from the low cover of a row of bushes. Later on we stopped to look at a pair of Red-backed Hawks and their nest (containing four chicks) in the only prominent tree for miles around. The lunch stop was at an abandoned house and afterwards we spent a little while in what was the large garden and found both Patagonian and Lesser Canasteros in the scrub (though only the former showed anything like reasonably well) together with a couple of White-winged Black-Tyrants and a slightly out of

range White-browed Ground-Tyrant. A Rusty-backed Monjita was another attractive inhabitant of the open areas. As we neared the sandy dunes of Punta Tombo, we came across several large herds of Guanaco near the road. At length we reached the headland and as a succession of coaches followed us into the car park, we set out to spend an enjoyable hour or two in the second of the region's big tourist attractions.

The Magellanic Penguin colony at Punta Tombo reputedly attracts more visitors each year than the Galapagos Islands and it is easy to understand why. Everyone loves penguins and at Punta Tombo the birds are everywhere, occupying burrows at the side of the boardwalk paths, standing watching the visitors walk by and sometimes even sitting on the footpath ignoring the attentions of the human hordes. Hundreds of thousands of burrows honeycomb the dunes, the prime sites beginning just above the high water whilst some birds have to trek considerable distances inland to reach their nests. The beach was also festooned with resting and sleeping penguins and others bobbed out in the bay chasing their lunch. At this stage of the nesting season most of the nests contained eggs but in a few weeks the colony would be full of small chicks attracting the unwelcome predation of skuas and gulls. A few Brown Skuas were already in attendance on the look out for unguarded nests.

After enjoying the penguins we turned our attention to some of the other inhabitants of this pleasant reserve, amongst the nesting colony we saw several hamster-like Pampas Cavies foraging near some of the nesting burrows, a Burrowing Parrot sat up on a short bush but vanished before most of the group could get a reasonable view and several Southern Martins cruised overhead.

Returning to Trelew, with a number of stops en route, we then followed the course of the Chubut River into the lush green valley which was first settled by Welsh immigrants in the 19th Century. This oasis of water meadows, cultivation and trees attracts numbers of wildfowl such as Brown Pintail and Speckled Teal but one of the most conspicuous residents are the Southern Lapwing which seem to occupy every patch of ground. Tiny Picui Ground Doves were also very common but this was to be the only place we saw them in any numbers. A couple of White-tailed Kites also cruised the fields on the outskirts of the town. After a brief visit to (actually a drive-through) the town of Gaiman, which appears to be the heartland of the Welsh community, we drove back to Trelew.

Day 11

Wednesday 1st November

Trelew - Puerto Madryn - Puerto Piramedes

After an early breakfast we started on the long drive to Puerto Piramedes, but called in at the lagoons on the edge of Trelew on the way. As before it was full of birds including White-tufted and Silvery Grebes, Coscoroba and Black-necked Swans, all three coots as well as several hundred Chilean Flamingos and a few waders including a lone Hudsonian Godwit. In the field to the right of the track a Fork-tailed Flycatcher sallied forth from fenceposts after insects, several Spectacled tyrants fed in chat-like fashion from the tops of the reeds and once again a Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant, put in an appearance. Tempting as it was to linger we boarded the bus and headed off to the north-east.

Not far outside the town of Puerto Madryn we stopped to look for some of the specialities that occur in this area, the first of these were several (more spectacular-looking than its name implied) Carbonated Sierra-Finches all of which were engaged in downwardly-spiralling display flights, also nearby were several of the closely related

Mourning Sierra-Finches, useful for direct comparison. A little further along the road we stopped where an area of soft sandy cliffs cuts through towards the road, although this area had been a noted locality for Burrowing Parrots in the past they had not been seen here for some time, so it was a pleasant surprise to find 14 of these birds gathered by a stream at the top of the gorge. However, they must have been as surprised as we were as they quickly flew up to the overhead power lines from where they noisily berated us for disturbing them.

Further along the road we made another stop for the, by-now near mythical, White-throated Cachalote (for which we had also searched in vain en route to Punta Tombo yesterday) and although we came across plenty of evidence that they do occur here (in the shape of the large clusters of sticks that is the nest) none were good enough to put in a personal appearance, much to Ruben's annoyance as he put in considerable effort to find one. We did, however, manage to find a Grey-bellied Shrike-Tyrant and several more Common Diuca-Finches.

As evening approached we drew into Puerto Piramedes, a small town of just two or three streets (but the only town of any size on the whole peninsula) which nestles in a small depression at the edge of some enormous sand-dunes and at the head of a large bay. We checked into our rooms in the almost deserted hotel (the tourist season is only just beginning) and then several of the group gathered on the front terrace which looks out into the bay. By following the activities of the whale-watching boats as they criss-crossed the bay we were able to see about six various-sized Southern Right Whales as they spouted or just lolled on the surface, some appeared to be within yards of the boats. Shortly after we set off on our own whale-watching trip and after collecting life-jackets from the office, boarded the vessel which had been pulled up the beach on ramp and once we were all aboard we were propelled slowly into the sea by a tractor until the boat was afloat. Minutes later we were beside a cow and calf Southern Right Whale not too far from the shore. Whale numbers around the peninsula are apparently stable and with plenty of calves in evidence, the breeding success seems reasonable. We saw about six individuals sometimes within a few metres either close to the boat or one occasion beneath it; we also saw about three Dusky Dolphins which dashed past the boat. Two of the whales swam with their huge tails held high out of the water for some minutes before slowly sliding down into the water. Further out to sea, there was more activity and on one occasion a calf breached, leaping clear of the water then dropping back with a terrific splash. Unfortunately it didn't to repeat this activity despite all of the group being ready with cameras poised.

Day 12

Thursday 2nd November

Puerto Piramedes - Valdes Peninsula

Without much doubt there can be few places in the world where it is possible, as at this hotel in Puerto Piramedes, to have breakfast whilst overlooking a large bay and see several Right Whales at any one time. Although the whale-watching was particularly enticing there were other attractions that we had come to see.

After breakfast we took a short diversion to look for Darwin's Tinamou in the scrub above the town but all we managed to achieve was a brief view of two in flight. Having abandoned the attempt for better views of the tinamous we boarded the bus for an exploration of the peninsula which is mostly a flat and rather featureless moorland habitat relieved only by an occasional ranch; trees are infrequent and mostly found as wind breaks around the farms. Typical birds of this scrubby moorland include Mourning Sierra-Finches, Elegant Crested Tinamous, Patagonian Mockingbirds and the inevitable Rufous-collared Sparrows. We soon discovered a party of Lesser Rheas and a more open patch of ground near a pool produced a mixture of species which included Short-billed Pipits, Common Diuca-Finches, Common Miner and several Burrowing Owls. A Red-backed Hawk

on a roadside pole was an early find, Turkey Vultures sailed over the moorland at several places but the most conspicuous raptor here, and seemingly throughout Argentina, was the ubiquitous Chimango Caracara. We also encountered a Patagonian Hog-nosed Skunk searching a short grassland area seeming unconcerned by (or unaware of) our presence and not far away several Guanaco were grazing close to the road. These sandy coloured, long necked creatures are one of the most attractive of the camel family and the youngsters with their mothers were particularly appealing.

The size of the Peninsular and paucity of easily accessible viewpoints overlooking the coastline, inevitably meant that a fair amount of time was spent travelling in the coach but most of the stops made up for the periods spent in the bus. By the time we reached Punta Delgado it was low tide and we peered down from the lookout onto a shore littered with Elephant Seals in various states of repose doing what they do best, basically nothing at all. Some sizeable young bulls were present but most of the animals were this year's endearing looking pups. Kelp Gulls lurked around on the look out for scraps and offshore we saw Giant Petrels gliding over the waves. A large Southern Right Whale was cruising through the inshore water just beyond the rocks and a flock of South American Terns settled on the beach as did a smaller flock of five Royal Terns whilst a dozen or more American Oystercatchers probed in the rock pools.

After a superb lunch which consisted of nothing but plate after plate of crisp roast lamb accompanied by a sparse scattering of one or two veg (which proved very popular with the coachloads of Argentinians which appeared from nowhere just for the feast then promptly disappeared), we took a stroll around the lighthouse garden. Apart from a Burrowing Owl which played hide and seek with us from a series of burrows we saw very little until we surprised a White-banded Mockingbird near one of the sheep pens from which it promptly flew back towards the garden and in flight appeared more like an outsized snow bunting.

After lunch we moved further north along the peninsula to Caletta Valdes. As we climbed out of the bus we were greeted by a patrolling pair of Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles and large numbers of Giant Petrels cruising around over our heads. Numbers of Giant Petrels increased dramatically as we walked towards the edge of the cliffs and once there we looked down onto even greater numbers either on the beach, the sea or cruising along the beach some of which sheared past in front of us at head height giving a challenge to photographers. Also on the sea about 10 Great Grebes bobbed on the water and Magellanic Penguins stood around on the shoreline with that slightly bemused air typical of the penguin tribe. In the field just inland of the track to the beach an Elegant Crested Tinamou stood boldly out in the open affording excellent views through the telescopes which also revealed two or three young chicks scampering around at her feet.

Day 13

Friday 3rd November

Puerto Piramedes - Trelew - Buenos Aires

An early start followed a hasty breakfast overlooking the bay as we bade farewell to the whales before boarding the bus for the journey back to Trelew and the early flight to Buenos Aires. The flight was on time and we arrived back at the domestic airport around midday and in no time we had manouvered our way through the traffic and were back in the Howard Johnson hotel in downtown BA.

After lunch we ventured out for a pleasant afternoon walk around Costanera Sur. On our first visit this had been the group's introduction to Argentinian birds but now much of what we saw had become more familiar although

there were still some surprises. Also instead of having the place to ourselves it was now busy with people almost everywhere but surprisingly most of the birds seemed unperturbed. A nesting Southern Lapwing had laid (and was fiercely and vociferously trying to defend) two eggs on a scrape that appeared to be being warded by a man sitting on a nearby bench. Given the ability of the place to attract hundreds if not thousands of people having picnics, playing football and sun-worshipping at the weekend the lapwing's chances of total success seemed slim.

Shortly before we reached the areas of open water a Long-winged Harrier was seen sitting in a tall dead tree. Once we reached the lakes we found several Roseate Spoonbills, Fulvous Tree-Ducks, Silver Teal, a pair of Brazilian teal, several Rosy-billed Pochards and a small flock of Bare-faced Ibises. The Rufescent Tiger-Heron present on our first visit was also again seen briefly on the mud before taking flight. A scan of the waders along the muddy edges at the base of the reeds revealed the usual Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs and some Pectoral Sandpipers, amongst them however were an eventual total of about 10 South American Painted Snipes, normally an unpredictable, very shy and elusive species which is usually only seen briefly as it flushes at close range and rapidly disappearing into cover. Another surprise called to us from a tree behind us whilst we were watching the painted snipes, a Narrow-billed Woodcreeper spent some time clambering around a fairly large tree at close range and before it disappeared a pair of Freckle-breasted Thornbirds revealed their presence by their piercing calls from close by in the undergrowth.

Day 14

Saturday 4th November

Buenos Aires - Otamendi Reserve

After breakfast in the hotel we took to the bus and threaded our way through the early morning traffic and out onto the motorway that leads north of the city. After about an hour we arrived at Otamendi Reserve, a small fragment of grassland and woodland habitat on the edge of a large reed-fringed wetland. As we pulled into the entrance drive a Snail Kite flew over a small group of Grassland Yellow-finches sitting on overhead wires.

Once inside the reserve we set off down the trail where we saw several White-tipped Doves, Small-billed Elaenias, Masked Gnatcatcher, Masked Yellowthroat and some Saffron Finches whilst in the undergrowth by the side of the path one or two Sooty-fronted Spinetails lurked and showed themselves only in part, whilst twittering away all the time. Further on a Maguari Stork flew over and not far away a Roadside Hawk was in circling display flight, a Chicli Spinetail showed itself fairly well in an open bush to most of the group but the star of the morning's birds was undoubtedly the pair of Amazon Kingfishers that sat in deep undergrowth just below the lookout point over the marshy area, although very difficult to locate all the group eventually saw them well through the telescopes.

From the lookout over the marsh we could see several Long-winged Harriers and a couple of Snail Kites quartering the reedbeds and areas of open water. A short walk in woodland alongside the railway line found a pair of Streaked Flycatchers, several Glittering-bellied Emeralds and a very elusive Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant in deep undergrowth. After a picnic lunch we boarded the bus and drove the road that crosses the marshy area. Here birds were plentiful, starting with an abundance of Brown & Yellow Marshbirds, several Yellow-winged Blackbirds and at least 6 of the brightly coloured Scarlet-headed Blackbirds. A Giant Wood-Rail shyly scuttled away into deep cover, a Rufescent Tiger-Heron flew over the reeds which held a number of Great Pampa Finches and in an open area a pair of Southern Screamers stood watching us watching them. In the

roadside ditches a Sooty Tyrannulet flitted around on the surface vegetation whilst at least one Curve-billed Reedhaunter called repeatedly but refused to show itself, even when Riccardo produced a tape it remained less than impressed and remained firmly in deep cover.

Back at the hotel we said farewell to Diane and Don who left for the airport at about 5pm for the night flight home. The rest of the group either elected to do some shopping or for a brief trip to Costanera Sur where there were 7 Roseate Spoonbills, a Plumbeous Rail, Collared Plover, a winter plumage Knot as well as several South American Painted Snipes. The snipes showed extremely well as did a rather distant Pied Water-Tyrant and a couple of Wren-like Rushbirds which flitted along the edge of the reeds behind the roosting flock of birds.

Day 15

Sunday 5th November

Buenos Aires - El Destino reserve - San Clemente

Today's itinerary, the long drive to San Clemente (with birding stops), meant an early departure from the hotel. After breakfast we said our goodbyes to John and Linda who were leaving on the overnight plane to Madrid and we set off in the bus. In addition to the 12 remaining members of the group, plus Esteban and Riccardo the driver Hector seemed to be particularly sharp at spotting birds close to the edge of the road. On at least three occasions we came to a sudden braking halt as he had spotted something in the grassy verges, which on every occasion turned out to be a Spotted Tinamou - normally a shy and fairly secretive bird. On another occasion we stopped at a location for some White-browed Blackbirds and on one of the tinamou stops we came across the first of the Firewood Gatherers and the huge bundles of sticks in the tree-tops which they collect, another stop near some cattle fields produced about ten Spot-winged Pigeons. As we neared the open fields of the pampas Fork-tailed Flycatchers became much more numerous, a regular feature of almost every roadside wire or fence and the first Whistling Herons appeared.

By late morning we had made it to the El Destino Reserve which is owned and run by the Elsa Shaw Foundation in honour of the previous owner. It is a large coastal woodland and open fields of which we saw only some of the woodland and the well-tended garden of the estancia. The garden could have easily been in any one of the stately homes in UK except for the rich variety of flowering tropicals which provided sustenance for numerous Glittering-bellied Emeralds and the scarce White-throated Hummingbird which is a speciality of the reserve. Also in the large garden were a Golden-crowned Warbler, several Sayaca Tanagers, Streaked Flycatcher and a couple of Tropical Parula Warblers. In the woodland next to the gate (where we took our picnic lunch) a fine male Hepatic Tanager showed itself briefly.

After lunch we set off along the road from the reserve which passes through some light woodland and open fields and roadside birds here were several delightful Blue & Yellow Tanagers, a Roadside Hawk and about four Harris's Hawks a small flock of American Golden Plovers and numerous Grassland Yellow-Finches. On a weedy pond in a small village a Limpkin probed for snails and appeared almost unconcerned by our presence as we manoeuvred to get close. Further along this country road we passed the infamous Magdalena Prison which is now home to several of the surviving generals who master-minded the Falklands invasion.

We re-joined the main road south and by now the weather was deteriorating into a more or less continual downpour, we appeared to be the only ones heading in our direction as traffic heading in the opposite direction back to BA appeared to be virtually nose to tail (and with at least three hours more motoring ahead of them).

Peering out of the window from time to time into the gloom we could make out the odd Maguari Stork and several rheas. We arrived in San Clemente shortly after dusk and as it had just survived a tropical downpour the town appeared almost deserted. We checked into our rooms in the Morales Hotel and then trooped off to a local restaurant that Riccardo heavily recommended for a sumptuous meal - and very good it was too.

Day 16

Monday 6th November

San Clemente - Punta Rasa - Pampas

On the last lap of yesterday's marathon journey it transpired that one of the wheels of the bus had got a puncture, so whilst Hector took the bus off to get it fixed we took the opportunity to have a short walk along the nearby sea-front. A brisk breeze was blowing on this very sunny morning as we walked out on a short boardwalk to scan the almost empty sandy beach but apart from a couple of White-rumped Swallows and a Fork-tailed Flycatcher it appeared to be almost birdless. Undaunted we walked on but came across nothing more so we decided to return to the hotel in search of the bus, en route a Bearded Tachuri briefly perched on a roadside wire before dashing on.

With the bus repaired we boarded and set off to Punta Rasa a flat sandy headland to the north of San Clemente. The tide was out but clearly on the way in, a huge flock of terns and gulls had gathered on the sands giving us a perfect opportunity to compare the subtle differences between Snowy-crowned, South American, Common and Cayenne Terns, also present was a small flock of mostly immature and sub-adult Olrog's Gulls. On a more distant sandbar were more Olrog's Gulls alongside the more numerous Kelp Gulls, a huge flock of Chilean Flamingoes, several Royal Terns and a single Sanderling. A flock of about 10 American Oystercatchers flew around in a swooping display and chasing flight accompanied by much noisy piping typical of oystercatchers the world over.

We moved on to the village of Punta Rasa itself for lunch at one of the specialist fish restaurants which overlooks the main river channel. On the mudflats at the edge of the river was a single Grey Plover and several American Golden Plovers and Greater Yellowlegs together with more distant Flamingos. Lunch was a rather prolonged three-course affair with each course consisting of fish (mainly the local delicacy called Lisa) prepared in different ways. Later, feeling full and sated we boarded the bus again but by now the wind had increased so much it was thought that there was little to be gained by returning to the headland so we set off in search of pampas birds.

This involved a return along the main coastal highway back towards General Lavelle from where we took a side road into the large open spaces interspersed by grazing fields. Slowly driving the back roads we came across several flocks of Greater Rheas, Maguari Storks, White-tailed Kites, 2 Snail Kites, several Long-winged Harriers, about 15 Buff-breasted Sandpipers, American Golden Plovers, Pectoral Sandpipers, at least 4 Vermilion Flycatchers, a Yellow-browed Tyrant, several Great Pampa finches alongside the more numerous Grassland Yellow-Finches. On a small pond were several Chiloe Wigeon, Speckled Teal and Brown Pintail along with Red-gartered and White-winged coots and in the vegetation at the edge of the pond a Hellmayr's Pipit foraged.

Day 17

Tuesday 7th November

San Clemente - Punta Rasa - El Palenque

Today's birding started with almost a repeat of yesterdays except that we concentrated on some of the drier scrubby areas of Punta Rasa in an attempt to find some of the more elusive 'little brown jobs' of the area. However, they do not have the reputation as being some of the most difficult birds to see for nothing and mostly they remained entirely invisible and totally inaudible, not even a little impressed or inspired to respond to Riccardo's tapes despite all his efforts to find one. Although very little in the small bird line showed itself (apart from a pair of startled Freckle-breasted Thornbirds who couldn't quite work out where the interloper was) there were compensations in the larger ones, we had excellent views of several Roseate Spoonbills, a Swainson's Hawk flew overhead (much to delight of the photographers) and several Long-winged Harriers and a White-tailed Kite also came within range of the lenses.

We ended up back in Punta Rasa village but not for lunch, this time we were there just to check out the water level and see if the mudflats were exposed. However, although the water was still high a fishing boat had just arrived and was unloading the day's catch of huge reddish-coloured fish with enormous fins, mostly these were the lisa that we had tucked into the previous day and were now being divided up into the various carriers from local and more distant restaurants (including several from BA).

After lunch (mostly of empanadas (or pasties) taken in a sea-front restaurant in San Clemente) we set off once again into the pampas. This time our destination was the renowned El Palenque estancia, a huge ranch some way back up the main road, which contains a large expanse of semi-pristine habitat interspersed with pools and large flooded areas. The ranch also had the added appeal of seeing gauchos, high on the list of attractions of several in the group! Whilst waiting for Riccardo to arrange permission we looked around the trees and garden near the main gate to the ranch, here we found two pairs of Screaming Cowbirds (a local rarity), a White-crested Tyrannulet, a Sooty Tyrannulet (feeding along a fence and strangely out of its normal ditch habitat) and a couple of Vermilion Flycatchers.

Once out on the estancia itself we came across Greater Rheas, Maguari storks, Southern Screamers, Roseate Spoonbills, Long-winged Harriers, flocks of American Golden Plovers accompanied by Buff-breasted and Pectoral Sandpipers and one or two Yellowish Pipits joined in the throng of Grassland Yellow-finches on the ground. The wealth of waterbirds included several Pied-billed Grebes, White-faced Ibises, Fulvous Whistling-Ducks, Rosy-billed Pochards, 3 Black-headed Ducks and 3 Snowy-crowned Terns and a couple of Snail Kites patrolled the reedbeds in search of their principal prey - large snails. In the reeds themselves we were re-acquainted with an old friend, a Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant which showed itself well as clambered nimbly through a small forest of green sedges.

On the way back to San Clemente we had a couple of forced stops, the first to look for a Unicoloured Blackbird (which promptly vanished before we could get onto it) but gave another opportunity to admire some nearby Blue & Yellow Tanagers and secondly as a Wood Stork flew past us and landed in a nearby field.

Day 18-19**Wednesday 8th – Thursday 9th November****San Clemente - Dolores - Buenos Aires - Madrid - London (Gatwick)**

Our last day in Argentina began with farewells to the pleasant Morales Hotel in San Clemente before we moved off for a last look at Punta Rasa. We started at the village where luckily the tide was now out and amongst the waders feeding on the mud were over 50 Hudsonian Godwits, several Chilean Flamingos, at least 10 Roseate Spoonbills, flocks of White-rumped and Baird's Sandpipers as well as a couple of American Golden Plovers and a single Grey Plover. We also managed a quick look at the headland and little had changed from our previous visit except that now there were at least 40 Black Skimmers sitting out on the sandbar amongst the Olrog's Gulls, whilst on the beach in front of us were three Grey-hooded Gulls, several Sanderling and three Turnstones.

It was now time to leave this very pleasant spot and with only a short detour to give one last try for one of the most elusive of all South American 'little brown jobs' we tried the tape one last time, to everyone's amazement within seconds a Bay-capped Wren-Spinetail answered from the depths of a nearby pampas grass clump and continued to do so for several minutes and almost sounded as if it was close and was about to show itself before losing interest. We took some consolation that it was better to have tried and heard it instead of nothing at all we gave up the almost impossible task of trying to see one we boarded the bus for the last time.

On the way back the weather was fine and sunny and we could see plenty of those species that we had come to know well over the last few days, including three Wood Storks at one spot. We made a couple of stops en route, the first for a falcon in flight which turned out to be an Aplomado and whilst we were watching the Aplomado a Peregrine also appeared over the same wood, a Short-eared Owl (a much darker race than occurs in the UK) sat on a fencepost and then when we stopped flew towards and right past us, and finally at a lake on the outskirts of Dolores. On the lake was an abundance of Black-necked Swans (a couple of hundred at least) together with a Pied-billed and White-tufted Grebe, Lake Ducks and a single Black-headed Duck amongst the more usual Red Shovelers, Brown Pintails and Rosy-billed Pochards.

Lunch was taken in one of the motorway service stations, and despite our worst fears (based mostly on experiences in UK motorway services) it was a very pleasant, satisfying and enjoyable lunch. The final stop of the trip was at Laguna Chascomus a huge lake (more of an inland sea) with some small reed-fringed streams that flow into it. It was at one of these areas that we spent some time looking for the elusive Unicoloured Blackbird, only to find a rather dull-looking immature but partly made up for by the three Chestnut-capped and single Scarlet-headed Blackbirds. In the reeds below the bridge a couple of Many-coloured Rush-Tyrants put in occasional appearances as did a Warbling Doradito. Further along we made another short stop (made even shorter by the presence of biting mosquitoes) where a White-winged Becard showed well in a row of poplars and a European Greenfinch looked slightly out of place feeding on some weeds in a small field.

We reached the outskirts of Buenos Aires just as the evening rush hour was beginning. As there was now no time for a return to the Howard Johnson hotel Riccardo made hasty arrangements for us to have a quick wash and brush-up and change in a hotel near the airport before it was time for us to check-in. Sadly it was time for us to say farewells to both Esteban, Riccardo and our driver Hector before the long wait in the departure lounge began. The flight left almost on time and after an unexceptional in-flight dinner we settled down to a reasonable night's sleep. Dawn came up as we were over the Canaries and shortly after we were on the tarmac at Madrid.

Less than an hour and a half later we were aboard the flight to London (hoping that the luggage was too) and as dusk was descending we too descended into Gatwick, with only our memories of a successful trip reflecting the glow of the setting sun.

Species lists

Birds

Figures in parenthesis indicate number of days species seen

- GENTOO PENGUIN** (*Pygoscelis papua*) (1) Small breeding colony of 21 with Magellanic Penguins, at start of Beagle Channel on 23rd Oct.
- MAGELLANIC PENGUIN** (*Spheniscus magellanicus*) (3) At least 200 in Beagle Channel on Oct 26th and similar numbers at Punta Tombo on 31st and Valdes Peninsula on Nov. 3rd.
- GREATER RHEA**(*Rhea americana*) (4) Up to 25 daily in pampas between Nov 5th - 8th.
- LESSER RHEA (PATAGONIAN RHEA)** (*Pterocnemia pennata*) (3) Total of c25 birds around Calafate on 29th and up to 10 on Valdes Peninsula Nov 2nd - 3rd.
- SPOTTED TINAMOU (NOTHURA)** (*Nothura maculosa*) (1) Five between Buenos Aires and San Clemente on Nov. 5th.
- DARWIN'S TINAMOU (NOTHURA)** (*Nothura darwini*) (1) Two near Puerto Pyramides, Peninsular Valdes on Nov 2nd.
- ELEGANT CRESTED TINAMOU** (*Eudromia elegans*) (4) Seven between Trelew and Punta Tombo on Oct 31st and fairly numerous Peninsular Valdes.
- WHITE-TUFTED GREBE** (*Podiceps rolland*) (6) Maximum of 20 on Trelew Lagoons on Nov 1st.
- SILVERY GREBE** (*Podiceps occipitalis*) (4) Maximum of c60 Laguna Escarchados on Oct 29th.
- HOODED GREBE** (*Podiceps gallardoi*) (1) Two on Laguna Eschardos on Oct 29th.
- PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) (4) Two at Costanera Sur and two in pampas.
- GREAT GREBE** (*Podiceps major*) (6) Maximum of 8 on Valdes Peninsula on Nov 2nd.
- BLACK-BROWED ALBATROSS** (*Diomedea melanophrys*) (3) Generally small numbers in Beagle Channel, max. of 20 on Oct 26th.
- SOUTHERN GIANT PETREL** (*Macronectes giganteus*) (7) Fairly common in Beagle Channel and several hundred on beach and offshore at Caletta Valdes on Nov 2nd.
- NORTHERN GIANT PETREL** (*Macronectes halli*) At least three (in company with Southern Giant Petrels) at Caletta Valdes on Nov. 2nd.
- SOUTHERN FULMAR** (*Fulmarus glacialisoides*) (2) Up to 8 in Beagle Channel on Oct 26th.
- MAGELLANIC DIVING-PETREL** (*Pelecanoides magellani*) (1) 5 in Beagle Channel on Oct 26th.
- OLIVACEOUS (NEOTROPIC) CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax olivaceus*) (11) Small numbers, most in Pampas with max of 30 on Nov 8th.
- ROCK CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax magellanicus*) (6) Fairly common Beagle Channel, max 30 on Oct 25th.
- IMPERIAL SHAG** (*Phalacrocorax atriceps*) (2) Up to six Beagle Channel on Oct 26th.
- KING CORMORANT** (*Phalacrocorax albiventer*) Abundant at breeding colonies in Beagle Channel.
- WHITE-NECKED HERON** (*Ardea cocoi*) (7) Up to 3 at Costanera Sur and daily in the Pampas.
- RUFESCENT TIGER-HERON** (*Tigrisoma lineatum*) (3) Single at Costanera Sur on each visit.
- WHISTLING HERON** (*Syrigma sibilatrix*) (4) Up to 10 daily in Pampas.
- GREAT EGRET** (*Egretta alba*) (5) Up to 10 Costanera Sur and 25+ daily in the Pampas.
- SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) (7) Small numbers at Costanera Sur and in the Pampas.
- CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) (6) Single at Costanera Sur and common in the Pampas.
- STRIATED HERON** (*Butorides striatus*) (5) Up to 2 at Costanera Sur and small numbers in the Pampas.
- BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) (3) Up to 3 Costanera Sur on each visit.
- MAGUARI STORK** (*Ciconia maguari*) (5) Common in the Pampas.
- WOOD STORK** (*Mycteria americana*) (2) Single near San Clemente on 7th and 3 on 8th.
- BLACK-FACED IBIS** (*Theristicus melanopis*) (8) Very common Ushuaia and around Calafate.
- BARE-FACED IBIS** (*Phimosus infuscatus*) (2) Up to 12 at Costanera Sur on two visits.

- WHITE-FACED IBIS** (*Plegadis chihii*) (6) Common at Costanera Sur and in Pampas.
- ROSEATE SPOONBILL** (*Platalea ajaja*) (6) Up to 7 at Costanera Sur on Nov 4th and common in Pampas.
- CHILEAN FLAMINGO** (*Phoenicopterus chilensis*) (7) Common Calafate and smaller numbers Punta Rasa.
- SOUTHERN SCREAMER** (*Chauna torquata*) (5) 2 at Otamendi Reserve and up to 30 in the Pampas.
- FULVOUS TREE-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna bicolor*) (4) Up to 40 at Costanera Sur and 30 in Pampas.
- WHITE-FACED TREE-DUCK** (*Dendrocygna viduata*) (5) 6 Costanera Sur and 15 in Pampas.
- COSCOROBA SWAN** (*Coscoroba coscoroba*) (8) Max. 20+ around I Calafate.
- BLACK-NECKEDSWAN** (*Cygnus melancoryphus*) (7) Abundant on lake near Dolores on Nov. 8th.
- KELP GOOSE** (*Chloephaga hybrida*) (4) Pairs widely distributed Ushuaia area/Beagle Channel
- UPLAND GOOSE** (*Chloephaga picta*) (8) Locally common
- ASHY-HEADED GOOSE** (*Chloephaga poliocephala*) (7) Common Ushuaia area, smaller numbers Calafate.
- CRESTED DUCK** (*Lophonetta specularioides*) (9) Locally common
- SPECTACLED DUCK** (*Anas specularis*) (1) Two, a pair, in Glaciers National Park on Oct 28th.
- SOUTHERN (CHILOE) WIGEON** (*Anas sibilatrix*) (11) Widely distributed in small numbers, common around Calafate.
- BROWN (YELLOW-BILLED) PINTAIL** (*Anas georgica*) (14) Locally common, the most widely distributed duck.
- SPECKLED TEAL** (*Anas flavirostris*) (12) Common and widespread in small numbers.
- SILVER TEAL** (*Anas versicolor*) (6) Small numbers at Costanera Sur and up to 15 in Pampas.
- CINNAMON TEAL** (*Anas cyanoptera*) (3) At least 20 Trelew Lagoons on Oct 30th.
- RED SHOVELER** (*Anas platalea*) (8) Fairly common with most Calafate area.
- BRAZILIAN DUCK** (*Amazonetta brasiliensis*) (2) Pair Costanera Sur on Nov 3rd and 4th.
- ROSY-BILLED POCHARD** (*Netta peposaca*) (9) Good numbers at Costanera Sur, Trelew lagoons and in the Pampas.
- BLACK-HEADED DUCK** (*Heteronetta atricapilla*) (5) Up to 35 Costanera Sur, 3 near Calafate 3 El Palenque estancia and single near Dolores.
- ANDEAN RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura ferruginea*) (4) Fairly common around Calafate, smaller numbers Trelew lagoons.
- LAKE DUCK** (*Oxyura vittata*) (4) Up to six around Calafate, 3 Trelew lagoons and six near Dolores.
- FLIGHTLESS STEAMER DUCK** (*Tachyeres pteneres*) (4) Numerous around Ushuaia/Beagle Channel
- FLYING STEAMER-DUCK** (*Tachyeres patachonicus*) (5) Fairly numerous Ushuaia, Beagle Channel and Tierra Del Fuego NP.
- WHITE-HEADED STEAMER-DUCK** (*Tachyeres leucocephalus*) (1) Three Punta Tombo on Oct 31st.
- ANDEAN CONDOR** (*Vultur gryphus*) (7) Fairly numerous Ushuaia and around Calafate.
- TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) (7) Most numerous around Trelew and Valdes Peninsula, max of 25 on Nov 1st.
- BLACK-CHESTED BUZZARD-EAGLE** (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*) (7) Max of 4 daily at Valdes Peninsula.
- WHITE-TAILED KITE** (*Elanus leucurus*) (8) Max. 9 between Buenos Aires and San Clemente on Nov 5th.
- SNAIL KITE** (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*) (5) Up to 20 daily in the Pampas.
- LONG-WINGED HARRIER** (*Circus buffoni*) (6) First seen at Costanera Sur and numerous in the Pampas.
- CINEREOUS HARRIER** (*Circus cinereus*) (4) Common around Calafate, max. Of 10+ on Oct 28th.
- ROADSIDE HAWK** (*Buteo magnirostris*) (5) 2 - 3 Costanera Sur and up to 10 daily in the Pampas.
- SWAINSON'S HAWK** (*Buteo swainsoni*) (2) Singles Punta Rasa on Nov 5th and 7th.
- RED-BACKED HAWK** (*Buteo polysoma*) (4) Up to 4 daily Trelew - Punta Tombo - Valdes Peninsula.
- WHITE-THROATED CARACARA** (*Polyborus albogularis*) (3) Up to 12 Ushuaia Rubbish Tip and 2 Harberton Ranch.
- CRESTED CARACARA** (*Polyborus plancus*) (13) Widespread and locally numerous.
- CHIMANGO CARACARA** (*Milvago chimango*) (16) One of the commonest birds in Argentina.
- STRIATED CARACARA** (*Phalcooboenus australis*) (1) Single immature Ushuaia rubbish dump Oct. 27th.

- HARRIS'S HAWK** (*Parabuteo unicinctus*) (1) About 4 near El Destino reserve en route to San Clemente.
- PEREGRINE FALCON** (*Falco peregrinus*) (2) Singles near Trelew (Oct 31st) and San Clemente (Nov 8th).
- APLOMADO FALCON** (*Falco femoralis*) (2) Single near Calafate on Oct 28th and another near San Clemente on Nov 8th.
- AMERICAN KESTREL** (*Falco sparverius*) (7) Widespread, mostly singles but total of 6 Trelew - Punta Tombo on Oct 31st.
- LIMPKIN** (*Aramus guarauna*) (1) Single near El Destino reserve and 8 between there and San Clemente Nov 5th.
- GREY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides cajanea*) (1) Single at Costanera Sur on Oct 23rd.
- GIANT WOOD-RAIL** (*Aramides ypecaha*) (3) Single at Otamendi Reserve on Nov 4th and up to 2 in the Pampas.
- PLUMBEOUS RAIL** (*Rallus sanguinolentus*) (5) Singles Costanera Sur, Calafate, Trelew and in the Pampas.
- RED-GARTERED COOT** (*Fulica armillata*) (5) Small numbers Costanera Sur and around Calafate, fairly common on Trelew Lagoons.
- WHITE-WINGED COOT** (*Fulica leucoptera*) (9) Common and widespread, the most widespread coot.
- RED-FRONTED COOT** (*Fulica rufifrons*) (7) Widespread in small numbers, most numerous Trelew Lagoons.
- COMMON MOORHEN** (*Gallinula chloropus*) (4) Several Costanera Sur.
- WATTLED JACANA** (*Jacana jacana*) (4) Up to four at Costanera Sur.
- SOUTH AMERICAN PAINTED SNIPE** (*Nycticryphes semicollaris*) (2) At least 10 around the reed-fringed lake at Costanera Sur on Nov 3rd and 4th.
- AMERICAN OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus ostralegus*) (4) Up to 10 Valdes Peninsula and Punta Rasa.
- MAGELLANIC OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus leucopodus*) (7) Locally numerous around Ushuaia and Calafate.
- BLACKISH OYSTERCATCHER** (*Haematopus ater*) (5) Up to 5 daily in Ushuaia area, single Valdes Peninsula.
- SOUTH AMERICAN STILT** (*Himantopus melanurus*) (10) Small numbers Costanera Sur, Trelew Lagoons and in Pampas.
- SOUTHERN LAPWING** (*Vanellus chilensis*) (17) Seen daily, locally common and frequently seen by roads.
- GREY PLOVER** (*Pluvialis squatarola*) Single Punta Rasa on Nov 6th and w there on the 8th.
- AMERICAN GOLDEN PLOVER** (*Pluvialis dominica*) (5) Two Costanera Sur, small flocks in Pampas, and fairly numerous on mudflats at Punta Rasa.
- TAWNY-THROATED DOTTEREL** (*Orepholus ruficollis*) (1) Four in roadside grassland near Laguna Escarchados on Oct 29th.
- TWO-BANDED PLOVER** (*Charadrius falklandicus*) (1) About 10 near Laguna Escarchados on Oct 29th.
- COLLARED PLOVER** (*Charadrius collaris*) (2) Two Costanera Sur on Oct 23rd and single there Nov 4th.
- MAGELLANIC PLOVER** (*Pluvianellus socialis*) (1) Single at Laguna Escarchados and 3 on shore of lake Argentina, Calafate on Oct 29th.
- GREATER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa melanoleuca*) (6) Fairly common at Costanera Sur and in the Pampas.
- LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) (10) Common Costanera Sur, Trelew Lagoons and in the Pampas.
- BUFF-BREASTED SANDPIPER** (*Tryngites subruficollis*) (2) Up to 15 in the Pampas.
- TURNSTONE** (*Arenaria interpres*) (1) Three on beach at Punta Rasa.
- SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) (2) Single Punta Rasa on Nov 6th and three there on the 8th.
- KNOT** (*Calidris canutus*) (1) Single at Costanera sur on Nov 4th.
- PECTORAL SANDPIPER** (*Calidris melanotos*) (5) Up to six at Costanera Sur and in the Pampas.
- STILT SANDPIPER** (*Calidris himantopus*) (3) Up to 4 at Costanera Sur on each visit.
- BAIRD'S SANDPIPER** (*Calidris bairdii*) (11) Fairly common, Costanera Sur, Calafate and in the Pampas.
- WHITE-RUMPED SANDPIPER** (*Calidris fuscicollis*) (5) Fairly common Costanera Sur, Calafate, Punta rasa and in the Pampas.
- HUDSONIAN GODWIT** (*Limosa haemastica*) (2) Single Trelew Lagoons on Nov 1st and at least 50 Punta Rasa on 8th.
- SOUTH AMERICAN SNIPE**(*Gallinago paraguaiiae*) (2) Single Trelew Lagoons on Oct 30th and two en route to San

Clemente on Nov 5th.

WILSON'S PHALAROPE (*Phalaropus tricolor*) (4) About 20 Costanera Sur Oct 23rd, several hundred on Laguna Escarchardos on 29th and single trelew Lagoons on Nov 1st.

LEAST SEEDSNIPE (*Thinocorus rumicivorus*) (1) At least 10 around Lake Escarchardos - Calafate on Oct 29th.

SNOWY SHEATHBILL (*Chionis alba*) (1) At least 15 on sea lion islands in the Beagle Channel on Oct 26th.

BROWN SKUA (*Catharacta antarcticus*) (5) At least 10 daily in the Ushuaia area and along Beagle Channel, four at the penguin colony at Punta Tombo and single off Puerto Pyramides.

CHILEAN SKUA (*Catharacta chilensis*) Numerous at Ushuaia rubbish dump and in Beagle Channel on Oct 26th and 27th.

SOUTH POLAR SKUA (*Stercorarius maccormicki*) (1) Single at the rubbish dump at Ushuaia on Oct 24th.

DOLPHIN GULL (*Leucophaeus scoresbii*) (4) Numerous Ushuaia and Beagle Channel area.

KELP GULL (*Larus dominicanus*) (14) Widespread and locally common.

OLROG'S/BAND-TAILED GULL (*Larus belcheri*) (2) 100+ immatures and sub-adults at Punta Rasa on Nov. 6th and 8th.

BROWN-HODED GULL (*Larus maculipennis*) (12) Common and locally numerous.

GREY-HODED GULL (*Larus cirrhocephalus*) (1) Three at Punta Rasa on Nov. 8th.

SNOWY-CROWNED TERN (*Sterna trudeau*) (4) Two Costanera Sur on Nov 4th and very common at Punta Rasa.

COMMON TERN (*Sterna hirundo*) (2) About 100 at Punta Rasa on Nov 6th and 8th.

SOUTH AMERICAN TERN (*Sterna hirundinacea*) (6) Fairly numerous in Beagle Channel, smaller numbers Calafate and Valdes Peninsula.

CAYENNE TERN (*Sterna eurygnatha*) (2) Two offshore Puerto Pyramides on Nov 1st and 4 Punta Rasa 6th.

ROYAL TERN (*Sterna maxima*) (4) Up to 6 on Valdes Peninsula and 4 Punta Rasa.

BLACK SKIMMER (*Rhynchops nigra*) (2) About 30 seen from hotel in San Clemente on Nov 7th and 40+ on sandbar Punta Rasa on 8th.

PICAZURU PIGEON (*Columba picazuro*) (7) Small numbers Costanera Sur otherwise common/abundant in Pampas.

SPOT-WINGED PIGEON (*Columba maculosa*) (3) Up to 10 daily in Pampas near San Clemente.

ROCK DOVE (*Columba livia*) Small numbers around estancias, towns and villages.

EARED DOVE (*Zenaidura macroura*) (13) Locally common especially in Pampas.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*) (3) Small numbers at Costanera Sur and Otamendi Reserve.

PICUI GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina picui*) (4) Numerous in Chubut Valley especially Trelew - Gaiman.

BURROWING PARROT (*Cyanoliseus patagonus*) (2) Single Punta Tombo on Oct 31st and 14 in cliffs near Puerto Madryn the following day.

BLACK-HEADED PARAKEET (*Nandayus nenday*) (2) Five Costanera Sur on Oct 23rd and Nov 5th.

AUSTRAL PARAKEET (*Enicognathus ferrugineus*) (3) Four around the hotel at Ushuaia on Oct 26th, 12 Glaciers NP on 28th and 2 Calafate on 30th.

MONK PARAKEET (*Myiopsitta monacha*) (4) Small numbers in Costanera Sur and common in Pampas.

GUIRA CUCKOO (*Guira guira*) (7) Fairly common at Costanera Sur and in the Pampas.

STRIPED CUCKOO (*Tapera naevia*) (1) Single heard calling Costanera Sur on Oct 23rd.

BURROWING OWL (*Athene cunicularia*) (4) Up to four Punta Tombo and Peninsular Valdes and two in the Pampas.

AUSTRAL PYGMY-OWL (*Glaucidium nanum*) (2) Singles Tierra Del Fuego NP on Oct 25th and near entrance to Glaciers NP on 30th.

SHORT-EARED OWL (*Asio flammeus*) Single by roadside near Dolores on Nov 8th.

GLITTERING-BELLIED EMERALD (*Chlorostilbon aureoventris*) (4) Up to 4 in Costanera Sur Two and very common in Pampas, especially at El Destino reserve.

WHITE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Leucochloris albicollis*) (1) Three in El Destino reserve on way to San Clemente on Nov 5th.

AMAZON KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle amazona*) (1) Pair in forest at Otamendi Reserve on Nov 4th.

- FIELD FLICKER** (*Colaptes campestris*) (5) Up to 10 daily in Pampas.
- CHILEAN FLICKER** (*Colaptes pitius*) (1) Two seen briefly in Glaciers NP on Oct 28th.
- GOLDEN-BREASTED WOODPECKER** (*Colaptes melanolaimus*) (4) Singles Costanera Sur and Otamendi Reserve, up to 6 in Pampas.
- CHEQUERED WOODPECKER** (*Picoides mixtus*) (2) Two Costanera Sur Oct 23rd and single there on Nov 3rd.
- MAGELLANIC WOODPECKER** (*Campephilus magellanicus*) (1) Two males one female Tierra Del Fuego NP Oct 25th.
- NARROW-BILLED WOODCREEPER** (*Lepidocolaptes angustirostris*) (2) Single Costanera Sur Nov 3rd and several Otamendi reserve the following day.
- COMMON MINER** (*Geositta cunicularia*) (3) Up to 6 around Calafate on Oct 28th and 29th and 10+ Valdes Peninsula.
- SCALE-THROATED EARTHCREEPER** (*Upucerthia dumetaria*) (1) Single near Calafate on Oct 29th.
- DARK-BELLIED CINCLODES** (*Cinclodes patagonicus*) (4) Up to 5 in Ushuaia area.
- BAR-WINGED CINCLODES** (*Cinclodes fuscus*) (5) Up to 6 in Ushuaia and Tierra Del Fuego NP area.
- RUFOUS HORNERO** (*Furnarius rufus*) (9) Common Costanera Sur, San Clemente and in the Pampas.
- WREN-LIKE RUSHBIRD** (*Phleocryptes melanops*) (5) At least one Trelew Lagoons Oct 29th and Nov 1st, single Otamendi reserve and up to 2 in Pampas.
- THORN-TAILED RAYADITO** (*Aphrastura spinicauda*) (4) Small flocks in nothofagus forests at Ushuaia and Tierra Del Fuego NP.
- FIREWOOD GATHERER** (*Anumbius annumbi*) (2) Six plus around nests in Pampas.
- LESSER CANASTERO** (*Asthenes pyrrholeuca*) (3) 10+ en route Punta Tombo and single near Puerto Pyramides.
- PATAGONIAN CANASTERO** (*Asthenes patagonica*) (1) Two seen very briefly en route to Punta Tombo on Oct 31st.
- SOOTY-FRONTED SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis frontalis*) (1) A pair in thick undergrowth (more heard than seen) at Otamendi Reserve on Nov 4th.
- CHICLI SPINETAIL** (*Synallaxis spixi*) (1) Two, possibly a pair, Otamendi Reserve on Nov 4th.
- BAY-CAPPED WREN-SPINETAIL** (*Spartanoica maluroides*) (2) One heard singing (in response to tape) Punta Rasa on Nov 6th and 7th.
- PLAIN-BREASTED TIT-SPINETAIL** (*Leptasthenura aegithaloides*) (2) Singles near Punta Tombo on Oct 31st and on Valdes Peninsula on Nov 2nd.
- FRECKLE-BREASTED THORNBIRD** (*Phacellodomus striaticollis*) (3) Two, a pair, Costanera Sur on Nov 3rd and up to four seen or heard daily in the Pampas.
- WHITE-THROATED TREERUNNER** (*Pygarrhichas albogularis*) (1) Two singles in Tierra Del Fuego NP on Oct 25th.
- ANDEAN TAPACULO** (*Scytalopus magellanicus*) (2) Single seen and another heard Tierra Del Fuego NP on Oct 25th and another heard Glaciers NP on 28th.
- LESSER SHRIKE-TYRANT** (*Agriornis murina*) (1) Two near Puerto Piramedes on Nov 2nd.
- GREY-BELLIED SHRIKE-TYRANT** (*Agriornis microptera*) (2) Single near Puerto Madryn on Nov 1st and two the following day on Valdes Peninsula.
- CHOCOLATE-VENTED TYRANT** (*Neoxolmis rufiventris*) (1) Two, a pair, in steppe around Laguna Escarchardos on Oct 29th.
- RUSTY-BACKED MONJITA** (*Neoxolmis rubetra*) (1) Single en route to Punta Tombo on Oct 31st.
- FIRE-EYED DIUCON** (*Xolmis pyrope*) (2) First seen near Martial Glacier, Ushuaia on Oct 27th and two the following day near Calafate.
- DARK-FACED GROUND-TYRANT** (*Muscisaxicola macloviana*) (3) At least 4 in Tierra Del Fuego NP on Oct 25th and 10+ below the Martial Glacier, Ushuaia on 27th.
- WHITE-BROWED GROUND-TYRANT** (*Muscisaxicola albilora*) (1) Single en route to Punta Tombo Oct 30th.
- OCHRE-NAPED GROUND-TYRANT** (*Muscisaxicola flavinucha*) (2) Two, possibly a pair, Moreno Glacier, Ushuaia on Oct 27th
- CINNAMON-BELLIED GROUND-TYRANT** (*Muscisaxicola capistrata*) (2) Single near Calafate on Oct 28th and two the following day.

- AUSTRAL NEGRITO** (*Lessonia rufa*) (9) Numerous between Ushuaia and Valdes Peninsula.
- SPECTACLED TYRANT** (*Hymenops perspicillata*) (11) Singles in Costanera Sur, otherwise numerous Trelew Lagoons, Punta Tombo and in the Pampas.
- PIED WATER-TYRANT** (*Fluvicola pica*) (1) Single at Costanera Sur on Nov 4th.
- WHITE-WINGED BLACK-TYRANT** (*Knipolegus aterrimus*) (1) Two females en route to Punta Tombo on Oct 31st.
- SOOTY TYRANNULET** (*Serpophaga nigricans*) (2) Two Otamendi Reserve on Nov 4th and one El Palenque estancia on 7th.
- MANY-COLOURED RUSH-TYRANT** (*Tachuris rubrigastra*) (5) Up to two Trelew Lagoons, single Costanera Sur and up to two in the Pampas.
- CATTLE TYRANT** (*Machetornis rixosus*) (3) Up to eight daily in the Pampas.
- YELLOW-BROWED TYRANT** (*Satrapa icterophrys*) (2) up to three in the Pampas.
- GREAT KISKADEE** (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) (9) Fairly common Costanera Sur, Trelew area, Otamendi Reserve and the Pampas.
- TROPICAL KINGBIRD** (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) (7) Singles Costanera Sur, Otamendi Reserve and fairly numerous in the Pampas.
- FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Tyrannus savana*) (7) Singles Costanera Sur, Trelew Lagoons and fairly numerous in the Pampas.
- WHITE-WINGED BECARD** (*Pachyramphus marginatus*) (1) Single at Laguna Chascomus on Nov 8th.
- STREAKED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiodynastes maculatus*) (3) Two at Costanera Sur and Otamendi Reserve and three in the Pampas.
- BEARDED TACHURI** (*Polystictus pectoralis*) (1) Single along sea-front at San Clemente on Nov 6th.
- BRAN-COLOURED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiophobus fasciatus*) (2) Singles Costanera Sur Oct 23rd and Nov 4th.
- VERMILION FLYCATCHER** (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) (3) Up to six daily in the Pampas.
- WARBLING DORADITO** (*Pseudocolaptes flaviventris*) (2) 3 Punta Rasa on Nov 7th and single Laguna Chascomus on the 8th.
- TAWNY-CROWNED PYGMY-TYRANT** (*Euscarthmus meloryphus*) (1) Single Otamendi Reserve Nov 4th.
- WHITE-CRESTED TYRANNULET** (*Serpophaga subcristata*) (6) Up to 3 Costanera Sur, and singles in the Pampas except for 2 on Nov 7th.
- TUFTED TIT-TYRANT** (*Anairetes parulus*) (3) Two Tierra Del Fuego NP, 3 near Calafate and single en route to Punta Tombo.
- WHITE-CRESTED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia albiceps*) (5) Several Ushuaia, Tierra Del Fuego and Glaciers Nps.
- SMALL-BILLED ELAENIA** (*Elaenia parvirostris*) (2) 5 Otamendi Reserve Nov 4th and one Punta Rasa 7th.
- RUFIOUS-TAILED PLANTCUTTER** (*Phytotoma rara*) (2) At least 3 along roadside in Glaciers NP on Oct 28th and single near Calafate 30th.
- SOUTHERN MARTIN** (*Progne modestus*) (4) Up to 10 daily Trelew area and Valdes Peninsula.
- GREY-BREASTED MARTIN** (*Progne chalybea*) (5) Small numbers Costanera Sur and in the Pampas.
- BROWN-CHESTED MARTIN** (*Phaeoprogne tapera*) (6) Small numbers Trelew, Otamendi Reserve and in Pampas
- WHITE-RUMPED SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta leucorrhoa*) (6) Numerous at Costanera Sur (where breeding) and in Pampas.
- CHILEAN SWALLOW** (*Tachycineta leucopyga*) (9) Numerous between Ushuaia and Trelew.
- BLUE&WHITE SWALLOW** (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*) (7) Locally numerous between Calafate and Valdes Peninsula.
- BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) Single Trelew lagoons Nov 1st and up to 3 daily in the Pampas.
- GRASS WREN** (*Cistothorus platensis*) (2) Two near Calafate on Oct 28th and 2 in Pampas on Nov 6th.
- HOUSE WREN** (*Troglodytes aedon*) (12) Common and widespread, more often heard than seen.
- CHALK-BROWED MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus saturninus*) (7) Frequent in Pampas/Buenos Aires
- PATAGONIAN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus patagonicus*) (5) Locally numerous in Trelew and Valdes Peninsula.
- WHITE-BANDED MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus triurus*) (1) Single Punta Delgado, Valdes Peninsula.

- CREAMY-BELLIED THRUSH** (*Turdus amaurochalinus*) (3) Up to five on all visits to Costanera Sur.
- RUFOUS-BELLIED THRUSH** (*Turdus rufiventris*) (6) Numerous Costanera Sur, Otamendi Reserve and in Pampas.
- AUSTRAL THRUSH** (*Turdus falklandii*) (9) Locally numerous Ushuaia, Tierra Del Fuego NP, Calafate and Trelew.
- SHORT-BILLED PIPIT** (*Anthus furcatus*) (2) Single Valdes Peninsula Nov 2nd and 3 in the pampas on 7th.
- CORRENDERA PIPIT** (*Anthus correndera*) (5) Single Costanera Sur, several around Calafate and up to four in Pampas.
- HELLMAYR'S PIPIT** (*Anthus hellmayri*) (2) Up to 3 near Calafate on Oct 28th and singles El Palenque estancia on Nov 6th.
- YELLOWISH PIPIT** (*Anthus chii*) (1) Two El Palenque estancia on Nov 6th.
- MASKED GNATCATCHER** (*Polioptila dumicola*) (3) Up to 10 Costanera Sur and 3 Otamendi Reserve.
- HOUSE SPARROW** (*Passer domesticus*) (14) Common and widespread.
- TROPICAL PARULA** (*Parula pitiayumi*) (1) Two at El Destino reserve on Nov 5th.
- MASKED YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis*) (2) Up to 5 Costanera Sur and 2 Otamendi Reserve.
- GOLDEN-CROWNED WARBLER** (*Basileuterus cullicivorus*) (3) 2 Costanera, single El Destino reserve and 2 in the Pampas.
- HEPATIC Tanager** (*Piranga flava*) (1) Single male El Destino reserve on Nov 5th.
- SAYACA Tanager** (*Thraupis sayaca*) (1) Three El Destino reserve on Nov 5th.
- BLUE & YELLOW Tanager** (*Thraupis bonariensis*) (2) At least 9 around El Destino reserve and 2 in the Pampas.
- RED-CRESTED CARDINAL** (*Paroaria coronata*) (4) About 3 Costanera Sur, singles Otamendi Reserve and in the Pampas.
- RED-CRESTED FINCH** (*Coryphospingus cucullatus*) (2) Two males at Costanera Sur on Oct 23rd.
- YELLOW-BRIDLED FINCH** (*Melanodera xanthogramma*) At least 5 Moreno Glacier, Ushuaia on Oct 27th.
- DOUBLE-COLLARED SEEDEATER** (*Sporophila caerulescens*) (4) Two Costanera Sur and singles in the Pampas.
- COMMON DIUCA-FINCH** (*Diuca diuca*) (4) Up to 15 daily between Trelew area and Valdes Peninsula.
- GRASSLAND YELLOW-FINCH** (*Sicalis luteola*) (8) Numerous in Trelew area, Valdes Peninsula and Pampas
- SAFFRON FINCH** (*Sicalis flaveola*) (4) Small numbers Costanera Sur, Otamendi Reserve and in the Pampas.
- PATAGONIAN YELLOW-FINCH** (*Sicalis lebruni*) (1) Single Puerto Madryn - Puerto Pyramides on Nov 1st.
- GREY-HOODED SIERRA-FINCH** (*Phrygilus gayi*) (2) Single female near Calafate on Oct 29th and 2 between Punta Tombo and Gaiman on 31st.
- PATAGONIAN SIERRA-FINCH** (*Phrygilus patagonicus*) (5) Up to 11 Ushuaia and Calafate.
- MOURNING SIERRA-FINCH** (*Phrygilus fruticeti*) (4) Fairly common Trelew - Valdes Peninsula.
- CARBONATED SIERRA-FINCH** (*Phrygilus carbonarius*) (2) Up to 10 near Puerto Madryn and single near Puerto Pyramides.
- RUFOUS-COLLARED SPARROW** (*Zonotrichia capensis*) (17) Seen everyday, widespread and common in all habitats.
- LONG-TAILED REED-FINCH** (*Donacospiza albifrons*) (2) Single Otamendi Reserve on Nov 4th and two Punta Rasa 7th.
- BLACK & RUFOUS WARBLING-FINCH** (*Poospiza nigrorufa*) (5) Small numbers Costanera Sur and Otamendi reserve, more numerous in Pampas.
- BLACK-CAPPED WARBLING-FINCH** (*Poospiza cinerea*) (1) Single at Costanera Sur on Oct 23rd.
- GREAT PAMPA FINCH** (*Embernagra platensis*) (6) Single Costanera Sur Nov 4th and up to 10 daily in the Pampas.
- HOODED SISKIN** (*Carduelis magellanica*) (6) Small numbers Costanera Sur, Otamendi reserve and in Pampas
- BLACK-CHINNED SISKIN** (*Carduelis barbata*) (4) Several small flocks Ushuaia and Tierra Del Fuego NP.
- EUROPEAN GREENFINCH** (*Carduelis chloris*) Single in field near Laguna Chascomus on Nov 8th.
- AUSTRAL BLACKBIRD** (*Curaeus curaeus*) (4) Up to 4 in Ushuaia area and 8 Calafate.
- EPAULET ORIOLE** (*Icterus cayanensis*) (2) Singles Costanera Sur and Otamendi Reserve.
- SCREAMING COWBIRD** (*Molothrus rufoaxillaris*) (1) Four at El Panque estancia on Nov 7th.

- SHINY COWBIRD** (*Molothrus bonariensis*) (10) Locally common from Trelew to the Pampas
- BAY-WINGED COWBIRD** (*Molothrus badius*) (3) Up to 4 Costanera Sur and 8 in El Destino area of Pampas.
- SOLITARY CACIQUE** (*Cacicus solitarius*) (1) Single Costanera Sur Nov. 3rd.
- STARLING** (*Sturnus vulgaris*) (3) Common around Costanera Sur and Buenos Aires.
- CRESTED MYNAH** (*Acridotheres cristatellus*) (1) At least one seen along roadside en route to Pampas on Nov 4th.
- UNICOLOURED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius cyanopus*) (1) Single immature Lake Chascomus Nov 8th.
- CHESTNUT-CAPPED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius ruficapillus*) At least 5 Laguna Chascomus on Nov. 7th.
- YELLOW-WINGED BLACKBIRD** (*Agelaius thilius*) (10) Fairly common, Costanera Sur, Trelew Lagoons, en route Punta Tombo and in Pampas.
- BROWN&YELLOW MARSHBIRD** (*Pseudoleistes virescens*) (5) Common Otamendi Reserve and in Pampas
- SCARLET-HEADED BLACKBIRD** (*Ambirampus holosericeus*) (3) Six Otamendi Reserve and three in Pampas.
- LONG-TAILED MEADOWLARK** (*Sturnella loyca*) (9) Widespread and locally common
- WHITE-BROWED BLACKBIRD** (*Sturnella superciliaris*) (2) Single Costanera Sur and up to 20 en route to San Clemente.

Mammals

- SOUTHERN RIGHT WHALE** (*Eubalaena australis*) About 12 from Puerto Piramedes, Valdes Peninsula on Nov 1st and single from Punta Delgado the following day.
- SOUTH AMERICAN (SOUTHERN) SEA-LION** (*Otaria byronia*) At least 10 islands in Beagle Channel on Oct 26th and several in sea from Puerto Piramedes, Valdes Peninsula on Nov 1st.
- SOUTHERN FUR SEAL** (*Arctocephalus australis*) About 30 on islands in Beagle Channel Oct 26th.
- SOUTHERN ELEPHANT SEAL** (*Mirounga leonina*) Common around coast of Valdes Peninsula.
- GUANACO**(*Lama guanicoe*) Small numbers between Rio Grande and Ushuaia, also around Calafate, more numerous, including herds of over 50, on Valdes Peninsula.
- MARA** (*Dolichotis patagonum*) 15+ between Trelew and Punta Tombo and similar numbers on Valdes Peninsula.
- EUROPEAN HARE** (*Lepus c. europaeus*) INTRODUCED Fairly common and widespread.
- RABBIT** (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) INTRODUCED Common Tierra Del Fuego NP.
- COYPU** (*Myocaster coypus*) Two Costanera Sur on Nov 3rd and up to 2 on two days in the Pampas.
- LEAST CAVY** (*Microcavia australis*) Several Punta Tombo
- PAMPAS CAVY** (*Cavia porcellus*) At least two each day in the Pampas.
- PAMPAS DEER** (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*) A male and two females near San Clemente on Nov 6th.
- RED FOX** (*Dusicyon culpaeus*) Single Tierra Del Fuego NP on Oct 25th.
- HAIRY ARMADILLO** (*Chaetophractus villosus*) One crossing the near Punta Tombo Oct 31st.
- SEVEN-BANDED ARMADILLO** (*Chaetophractus vellerosus*) One by the road near San Clemente on Nov 6th (caught and photographed).
- PATAGONIAN HOG-NOSED SKUNK**(*Conepatus humboldtii*) Single foraging by side of the road on Valdes Peninsula near Punta delgado on Nov 2nd.

Reptiles

- MOUSEHOLE SNAKE** (*Phylodryas trilineatus*) One crossing the road near Punta Delgado, Valdes Peninsula on Nov 2nd.
- MONITOR LIZARD** (*Tupinambis tejuixin*) Fairly common at Costanera Sur and several places in Pampas.
- LIZARD Sp.** (*Liolaemus* sp) Single on Valdes Peninsula on Nov 2nd and several (possibly other species) at Punta Rasa.