

Bolivia - Highlands

Naturetrek Tour Report

21 - 30 November 2005



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How not to slip into hyperbole about such a country as this? Though we covered but a fraction of Bolivia we encountered a dazzling array of landscapes, cultures and birds. Every mind-blasting flock, every duck-strewn lake, every flowering bush vibrant with hummingbirds – they all have left a lasting impression. Perhaps some of my remembrances coincide with yours:

Rush-beds at Alalay loud with the snaps of Wren-like Rushbirds and the shrieks of Plumbeous Rails; Giant Hummingbirds purring past and perched on tall cacti on the Cerro Tunari; the tense excitement of the whole group as the Rufous-faced Antpitta bounced out of the bushes; not knowing where to look as tanagers, euphonias and chlorophonias zipped through the trees in the lower Chapare; the Alice-in-Wonderland absurdity of candyfloss Chilean flamingoes in the unforgiving landscape of Oruro; light-footed vicuñas on the puna – a happy reminder that species in the gravest danger can bounce back to good health; Colin's great call which allowed us all to see the Ornate Tinamou; Silvery Grebes shining in the morning light at La Cumbre; Olivaceous Thornbill and Andean Hillstar standing on the puna to drink from stemless flowers; the hummingbird show on the road to Sorata, starring the incomparably lovely Black-hooded Sunbeam, a species we had made such an effort to see; lunch at Titicaca with Andean Gulls swooping by and Puna Teal in the shallows; and the lofty mountain Condoriri raising his snow-bound head and wings despite the saturnine clouds. Countries don't come much finer than this.

Thanks are owed to our wonderful driver Leo for ensuring our safety, for his excellent braking when exciting birds were seen by the road, and, most of all, for finding the sunbeam. And thank you all for making the tour a success through your boundless enthusiasm and humour, your help with getting everybody onto birds, and your quixotic kindness to dogs.

Itinerary

Day 1

Monday 21 November

A brief flurry of birding around Viru Viru meant that the new arrivals saw some charismatic birds of the Bolivian lowlands including Guira Cuckoo, Fork-tailed Flycatcher, Southern Lapwing and Chopi Blackbird. After lunch at El Trompillo (the other Santa Cruz airport) we flew to Cochabamba and there visited Laguna Alalay. This is always a great site and this time, true to form, was host to many lovely birds including Cinnamon Teal, Yellow-billed and White-cheeked Pintails, Fulvous Whistling-Duck, Rosy-billed Pochard, White-tufted Grebe, Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant and Wren-like Rushbird. Around the shore of the lake we saw White-winged Black-Tyrant, White-tipped Plantcutter and Grey-crested Finch.

Day 2

Tuesday 22 November

As wet weather was threatening from the north east, today we opted to visit the Cerro Tunari rather than heading towards the cloud-forests and towards the rain. Good thing for us that we did as we saw some fantastic birds on the Cerro Tunari and, by waiting for better weather, we ensured two great days in the cloud-forests of

the Chapare. Low on the Cerro Tunari we saw such beauties (and I mean beauties) as Red-tailed Comet, Sparkling Violetear, Giant Hummingbird, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Yellow-browed Tyrant, Brown-backed Mockingbird, Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch and Rusty Flowerpiercer. Nearby we saw some of the real specialties of the mountain including Grey-bellied Flowerpiercer, Bolivian Warbling-Finch, Bolivian Blackbird and the stunning Rufous-bellied Saltator. At mid elevation, Torrent Ducks braved the crashing waters of the river (they invented white-water rafting) while on the dry slopes we saw Brown-capped Tit-Spintail, Rusty-vented Canastero and the very handsome Rock Earthcreeper. Three Andean Condors drifted slowly overhead. Unfortunately rain (and dodgy road conditions) stopped play before we were able to reach the puna at the top of the mountain. Back in Cochabamba we visited a wetland in the Zona Franca which Leo apologetically suggested as somewhere 'he'd seen a lot of birds'. Too right he'd seen a lot of birds. The site was excellent and we had great looks at Puna Ibis, the much-coveted Andean Avocet and a range of ducks and waders. Only here did we see Red-billed Whistling-Ducks and Franklin's Gulls.

Day 3

Wednesday 23 November

Today, in mercifully clement weather, we took on the upper cloud-forests of the Chapare, along the road which descends from the treeline to the town of Corani. Here we saw some fantastic birds and saw them extremely well. The kaleidoscopic hummers seen here were Collared (Gould's) Inca, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Amethyst-throated Sunangel, Speckled Hummingbird, Tyrian and Scaled Metaltails and the incomparable Long-tailed Sylph (their names alone are inspiring). Other huge highlights included four glorious Mountain-Tanagers (Hooded, Scarlet-bellied, Chestnut-bellied and Blue-winged), a fantastically close Hooded Mountain-Toucan, a scattering of Plushcaps and, perhaps most exciting of all, a very obliging Rufous-faced Antpitta. Having exhausted the birds of the Corani road, we headed a little further down the Chapare highway and, before the afternoon rains set in, we saw Blue-banded Toucanet, Slate-throated Whitestart and many spectacular Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers.

Day 4

Thursday 24 November

Back to the Chapare but to lower altitude today. We drove down to the community of Miguelito where we turned onto the track to the Subestación San José. The birding began almost instantly (with our only Blue-grey Tanager of the trip) and simply didn't stop until we headed for home. Some of the supporting cast were the same as yesterday (Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Blue-capped Tanager, Blue-and-black Tanager, Masked Flowerpiercer, Rufous-collared Sparrow, Rufous-naped Brush-Finch) but we also saw an impressive list of new species, including three glittering Tangara tanagers (Saffron-crowned, Blue-necked, Straw-backed). Swallow-tailed Kites looped overhead as we saw such delightful birds as Crested Quetzal, Golden-Olive Woodpecker, Versicoloured Barbet, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Yungas Manakin, Deep-blue Flowerpiercer, Orange-bellied Euphonia and Blue-naped Chlorophonia. Wow! In the evening we once again visited Laguna Alalay where five species of swallow swirled over the lake, and at last we caught up with Plumbeous Rail.

Day 5

Friday 25 November

Today saw us leave Cochabamba for Oruro (slightly later than planned because of brake issues), having first seen Hepatic Tanager in the grounds of our hotel. The dry valleys along the road afforded us Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Green-barred Flicker, Giant Hummingbird, the wonderful near-endemic Citron-headed Yellow-Finch and

Black-hooded Sierra-Finch (a gift to Ian and Janice who had missed them on the Cerro Tunari). A lunch-stop in a little valley in the puna was very birdy. Cinereous and Puna Ground-Tyrants, Aplomado Falcons, Andean Flickers, Bar-winged Cinclodes and Bright-rumped Yellow-Finches were all seen beautifully here while Andean Lapwings shouted in the distance. On reaching Oruro we headed straight for Lago Uru Uru where we quickly and easily saw a trio of flamingos – Chilean, Andean and James' – accompanied by many great birds including Slate-coloured Coot, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed Pintail, Puna Teal and Puna Ibis.

Day 6

Saturday 26 November

Early this morning we again trod the shores of Uru Uru where we saw Thick-billed Siskins, Andean Negritos, Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant and many Andean Swallows. Highlights on the lake included the first Killdeer for Bolivia, a Puna Plover, a young Little Blue Heron, Crested Ducks, and a juvenile Short-winged (Titicaca Flightless) Grebe. The three flamingos and many other waterbirds were also in attendance. Thereafter we drove on to La Paz through the vicuña-studded puna, seeing Common Miners by the roadside. Another productive lunch-stop added Short-billed Pipit and Black-winged Ground-Dove to our lists and in the afternoon as we came into the city we stopped to see Black Siskin (lovely), Band-tailed Sierra-Finch and Spot-winged Pigeon.

Day 7

Sunday 27 November

This morning saw us leave La Paz early in search of yungas (cloud-forest) birds to the north east. Quick roadside stops were made for two crisply beautiful high Andean waterbirds - Andean Goose and Silvery Grebe. At Unduavi, just before the turn-off to Chulumani we sipped coffee and were dazzled by a brilliant male Great Sapphirewing. The same spot was quickly filled by our first flock which held a beautiful Moustached Flowerpiercer. Then the birds came thick and fast – Brown-bellied Swallow, Superciliated and Three-striped Hemispingus (Hemispingi? Then again, the two together surely constitute a whole Spingus), Blue-backed Conebill, Light-crowned Spinetail, Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, Great and Glossy-black Thrushes, Spectacled Whitestart and more stunning Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers. Lower down on the road, close to the waterfall called El Velo de la Novia, we came across flocks with a distinctly different feel. The trees dripped with Green-cheeked Parakeets, Montane Woodcreepers, Buff-banded Tyrannulets, Cinnamon Flycatchers, Brown-capped Vireos, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers, Saffron-crowned Tanagers and Capped Conebills while Collared (Gould's) Incas whirred by incessantly. The waterfall had its attendant Torrent Ducks and Black Phoebes and nearby a pair of Andean Guans was seen extremely well (after a long wait for them to emerge from a dense bush). A brief evening stop at high altitude allowed us to admire Taczanowski's Ground-Tyrant and Streak-throated Canastero among jumbled boulders.

Day 8

Monday 28 November

Back to the puna and yungas north east of La Paz today, though only for some of the party as Ian and Janice had opted to explore the city. During our stop at La Cumbre we appreciated the wind-racked landscape and some of its characteristic birds – Common Miner, Andean Goose and distant White-fronted Ground-Tyrants. Away on the hillsides Grey-breasted Seedsnipe and Andean Flickers could be heard. Unfortunately both Colin and Alison were feeling under the weather by this point. When we screeched to a halt to see a roadside Andean Hillstar, it became clear that Colin would have to return to La Paz (though, wonderfully-dedicated birder that he is, he did not allow illness to interfere with seeing the hillstar!). Alison, ever good-natured and stoic, opted to stay. Shortly

thereafter we saw a gloriously obliging Olivaceous Thornbill, in addition to several more Andean Hillstars and our only Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant. Once Leo returned we drove on to Cotapata where a great flock held Ochraceous-breasted Flycatcher, a Crimson-mantled Woodpecker and many old friends from previous cloud-forest flocks. During another quick stop at the top of the Chulumani road we saw a Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet and a Red-crested Cotinga and at the Valle de Choquetanga, above Pongo, we had great looks at Puna Tapaculo, Scribble-tailed Canastero and White-winged Diuca-Finch. Our final stop, at Pongo, allowed us to admire the very two species we sought – Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant and White-browed Conebill.

Day 9

Tuesday 29 November

How could the tour be over so soon? Our last day was spent visiting Titicaca, the sacred lake of the Quechuas and Aymará. Perfect weather meant we had wonderful views over the lake to Perú, in addition to great looks at many waterbirds including numerous Short-winged (Titicaca Flightless) Grebes. Spot-winged Pigeons and delightful Black Siskins graced the lakeshore. We then headed for the hills – towards Sorata. A stop at a high altitude lake allowed us to see (and hear) Giant Coots and Crested Ducks at point blank range. Nearby, carefully placed roadworks meant we saw a Slender-billed Miner. At a small, Eucalyptus-shaded community along the road we had spectacular and sustained looks at one of the most sought-after species of the trip – the stunning endemic Black-hooded Sunbeam. The sunbeams were supported by five other hummingbirds including Green-tailed Trainbearer and White-bellied Woodstar. Also new nearby was a Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant. Back at the lakeside we had a late lunch, as Andean Ruddy Ducks displayed and Ian regaled us with unrepeatable jokes. Janice frowned.

Day 10

Wednesday 30 November

Airport taxes and baggage replaced toucans and tanagers in our minds today as we all flew to our separate homes (all except Leo who drove back to Oruro). Three Red-winged Tinamous awaited me on the airstrip at Viru Viru. I asked them to stay another hour, long enough for the group to see them when their plane stopped in Santa Cruz. Did they?

Systematic list

Species named in bold letters were seen by the leader and at least one tour participant. Species marked [] were either heard only or, in a very few cases, seen by only one person.

Taxonomy and nomenclature are almost exclusively derived from **Hennessey, A. B., Herzog, S. K. & Sagot, F. 2003. *Lista Anotada de las Aves de Bolivia*. Quinta edición. Asociación Armonía/BirdLife International, Santa Cruz de la Sierra, Bolivia.** However, in the case of common names, British spellings are used here where American spellings are used in that publication.

Birds

TINAMIDAE: TINAMOUS

[Hooded Tinamou, *Nothocercus nigrocapillus* heard distantly, giving its quirky, repetitive song, on the road to Chulumani.]

[Brown Tinamou, *Crypturellus obsoletus* heard only, at Miguelito in the lower Chapare.]

Ornate Tinamou, *Nothoprocta ornata*: Colin found one by the side of the road as we drove up to La Cumbre. Thanks to Colin's sharp eyes and Leo's sharp breaking everyone managed to see this beautiful bird.

CRACIDAE: GUANS & CURASSOWS

Andean Guan, *Penelope montagnii*. Brian and Sam cleverly found a distant pair of this species at el Velo de la Novia on the Chulumani road. After much peering through scopes and filling in the blanks on barely visible birds, we were treated to excellent views when they hopped up into the crown of an *ambaibo* tree. We had previously heard this species at Miguelito.

ANATIDAE: WATERFOWL

Fulvous Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna bicolor*: seen well at Laguna Alalay and at Leo's excellent new site in the Zona Franca de Cochabamba.

Red-billed Whistling-Duck, *Dendrocygna autumnalis*: a pair asleep at the back of the Zona Franca wetland in Cochabamba. Aka Black-bellied Whistling-Duck.

Andean Goose, *Chloephaga melanoptera*: this striking bird, known in Quechua and Aymará as *wallata*, was first seen at the huge reservoir above La Paz and then again in *puna* around the lake at La Cumbre. Much appreciated by the whole group.

Brazilian Teal, *Amazonetta brasiliensis*: this lowland species sneakily made it onto the highlands list by being present at Viru Viru when we collected the new arrivals at the start of the tour. Aka Brazilian Duck.

Torrent Duck, *Merganetta armata*: great views of birds on the Cerro Tunari and near El Velo de la Novia on the road to Chulumani. I never tire of seeing these fascinating, beautiful birds.

Crested Duck, *Lophonetta specularoides*: first found distantly by Sam on the afternoon we reached Lake Uru Uru. Seen there much closer the following morning and finally seen extremely well at the Giant Coot lake on the road to Sorata. Aka *Anas specularoides*.

Speckled Teal, *Anas flavirostris*: this charming bird was seen on numerous occasions around Cochabamba, Oruro and La Paz. Aka Yellow-billed Teal, though this is an inadequate name as northern subspecies have bluish bills.

Yellow-billed Pintail, *Anas georgica*: seen on the majority of days of the tour at wetlands around Cochabamba, Oruro and La Paz.

White-cheeked Pintail, *Anas bahamensis*: seen at Alalay and the Zona Franca. This bird's curious scientific name must come from the fact that it was first described from the Bahamas. Later, one presumes, the species was discovered to occur as far south as Argentina and as far west as the Galápagos but by this point the Bahamian moniker had stuck. That's the way the taxonomic cookie crumbles.

Puna Teal, *Anas puna*: this handsome bird was seen many times around Cochabamba and Oruro and, perhaps most numerous, at Titicaca where several pairs had young.

Cinnamon Teal, *Anas cyanoptera*: at Alalay, the Zona Franca, Uru Uru and Titicaca. Very beautiful indeed.

Rosy-billed Pochard, *Netta peposaca*: we had many great looks at this wonderful bird at Alalay and brief flypasts at the Zona Franca. Both males and females are delightful in their own ways.

Ruddy Duck, *Oxyura jamaicensis ferruginea*: at Alalay, the Zona Franca, Uru Uru, La Cumbre and Titicaca. Sometimes split as Andean Ruddy Duck, *Oxyura ferruginea*, though northern and Andean birds seem to intergrade in Colombia.

PODICIPEDIDAE: GREBES

White-tufted Grebe, *Rollandia rolland*: seen very nicely at Alalay, the Zona Franca and Titicaca.

Short-winged Grebe, *Rollandia microptera*: Sam found our first bird of this species, a juvenile, at Uru Uru. We then saw many more at Titicaca. **Endemic** to the Titicaca catchment in Perú and Bolivia. Aka Titicaca Flightless Grebe, *Centropelma microptera*.

Silvery Grebe, *Podiceps occipitalis*: this lovely species was seen only at La Cumbre.

PHALACROCORACIDAE: CORMORANTS

Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*: commonly seen at wetland sites around Cochabamba. Aka *Phalacrocorax olivaceus*.

ARDEIDAE: HERONS & EGRETS

Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*: we saw many birds of this species at Alalay, Uru Uru and Titicaca. Called *ajajo* in the lowlands and *huaco* in the highlands – both onomatopoeic renditions of the bird's flight call.

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*: seen many times around Cochabamba, Oruro and Titicaca.

Cocoi Heron, *Ardea cocoi*: we saw this bird very well by the shore of Alalay in Cochabamba. Aka White-necked Heron.

Great Egret, *Ardea alba*: seen several times around Cochabamba and on our last day on the shores of Titicaca while we ate lunch. Aka *Casmerodius albus*.

Whistling Heron, *Syrigma sibilatrix*: another lowlander which crept onto the list by virtue of hanging out at Viru Viru.

Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*: common around Cochabamba and Oruro.

Little Blue Heron, *Egretta caerulea*: this is a scarce species in Bolivia and we were lucky to see a first winter bird (just a hint of grey-blue in the cheeks and shoulders) on the shore of Uru Uru. Aka *Florida caerulea*.

THRESKIORNITHIDAE: IBISES & SPOONBILLS

Puna Ibis, *Plegadis ridgwayi*: this species was common around Cochabamba, Oruro and Titicaca. Known as *ch'awankara* in the form of Quechua spoken in La Paz department.

CATHARTIDAE: NEW WORLD VULTURES

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*: seen in Santa Cruz on the first day, in the lower Chapare and on the road to Sorata on the last day.

Andean Condor, *Vultur gryphus*: seen well above the higher slopes of the Cerro Tunari in Cochabamba. Much appreciated by those who had not seen the condor show at Los Volcanes the previous week. In both Quechua and Aymará this majestic bird is known as *mallku*.

PHOENICOPTERIDAE: FLAMINGOS

Chilean Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus chilensis*: this is the brightest pink of the three Bolivian flamingos. We saw many of them on both days at Uru Uru.

Andean Flamingo, *Phoenicoparrus andinus*: the most angular and impressive of the three species was also seen in numbers on both days at Uru Uru.

James' Flamingo, *Phoenicoparrus jamesi*: this is the smallest and most goose-like of the three species and, like the other two, we saw many of them very well at Uru Uru. Aka Puna Flamingo.

ACCIPITRIDAE: HAWKS & EAGLES

Swallow-tailed Kite, *Elanoides forficatus*: this oh-so-elegant bird was seen on both days in the Chapare.

Bicoloured Hawk, *Accipiter bicolor*: the bird we saw of this species in the upper *yungas* of La Paz was above the normal altitudinal range for Bicoloured Hawk. Nevertheless by structure and size I am convinced that it was this species rather than Sharp-shinned (Plain-breasted) Hawk.

Savannah Hawk, *Buteogallus meridionalis*: another lowland bonus species, seen from the roadside as we left Viru Viru on the first day. Aka *Heterospizias meridionalis*.

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*: this imposing bird was seen circling over a roadside valley on the day we drove from Cochabamba to Oruro.

Roadside Hawk, *Buteo magnirostris*: seen on both days in the Chapare and heard between Cochabamba and Oruro.

Red-backed Hawk, *Buteo polyosoma*: seen on the Cerro Tunari, in the dry valleys between Cochabamba and Oruro and down the Chulumani road. This and the following, extremely similar, species are lumped by many authors as Variable Hawk.

Puna Hawk, *Buteo poecilochrous*: we saw a bird of this species perched on a roadside rock near La Cumbre. On the final day we had a disputed bird (that went through many identities during the course of our conversation) on the road to Sorata; everyone eventually agreed it had certainly been a Puna Hawk, no thanks to the wildly disparate illustrations in the field guides.

FALCONIDAE: FALCONS & CARACARAS

Mountain Caracara, *Phalcoboenus megalopterus*: seen on many days – almost exclusively black and white adults, which are known as *alkamari* in Quechua and Aymará and are considered omens of good luck. Boy did we have good luck with the birds.

American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*: seen commonly throughout the tour.

Applomado Falcon, *Falco femoralis*: we saw a pair of this species in flight and perched as we stopped for lunch between Cochabamba and Oruro. We later saw one over the shore of Titicaca on the last day.

RALLIDAE: RAILS & CRAKES

Plumbeous Rail, *Rallus sanguinolentus*: seen distantly at Alalay on our second visit, having previously been heard shrieking both at Alalay and at the Zona Franca. Brian and Sam, who stayed at the lake after the other participants had gone back to the hotel, had closer views.

Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*: numerous at many wetland sites.

Spot-flanked Gallinule, *Gallinula melanops*: seen extremely distantly on both of our visits to Alalay. Later seen much closer by those who stayed behind on the second visit. This is only the second record for Cochabamba department (the first was one we saw on this year's August Naturetrek Bolivia tour). Aka *Porphyriops melanops*.

Giant Coot, *Fulica gigantea*: isn't this a great bird? Both adults and juveniles were seen superbly at the lake on the road to Sorata. We had almost certainly seen this species at great distance on our first evening at Uru Uru.

Slate-coloured Coot, *Fulica ardesiaca*: numerous at Alalay, Uru Uru and Titicaca. Aka Andean Coot.

JACANIDAE: JACANAS

Wattled Jacana, *Jacana jacana*: seen in the far distance at Alalay.

RECURVIROSTRIDAE: AVOCETS & STILTS

Black-necked Stilt, *Himantopus mexicanus*: seen at many sites and at all altitudes up to Titicaca and Uru Uru. Sometimes split as White-backed Stilt, *Himantopus melanurus*. Then again, some people still regard all pied stilts worldwide as Black-winged Stilt, *Himantopus himantopus*.

Andean Avocet, *Recurvirostra andina*: great views of this beautiful bird at the Zona Franca in Cochabamba, and later at Uru Uru.

CHARADRIIDAE: PLOVERS

Southern Lapwing, *Vanellus chilensis*: yet another lowland species we picked up on the first day at Viru Viru.

Andean Lapwing, *Vanellus resplendens*: around Uru Uru and Titicaca we saw many of these striking, vociferous birds.

American Golden Plover, *Pluvialis dominica*: we saw several goldies, recently arrived from the tundra, at Alalay and at Uru Uru.

Collared Plover, *Charadrius collaris*: seen on both of our visits to Alalay.

Puna Plover, *Charadrius alticola*: one seen distantly at Uru Uru.

Killdeer, *Charadrius vociferus*: the Killdeer found by Sam and admired by all on the shore of Uru Uru represents the **first record for Bolivia**. Congratulations! Steve was reminded of his own find of a Killdeer in Cornwall.

SCOLOPACIDAE: SANDPIPERS

Greater Yellowlegs, *Tringa melanoleuca*: slightly less common than Lesserlegs but still seen frequently at wetlands around Cochabamba and Oruro. In the dry season I find this species to be commoner than Lesserlegs.

Lesser Yellowlegs, *Tringa flavipes*: common at wetland sites around Cochabamba and Oruro.

Solitary Sandpiper, *Tringa solitaria*: several seen hugging the rushes at Alalay. Very popular with Brian for whom this was a new species.

Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*: seen on all four days around Cochabamba.

Baird's Sandpiper, *Calidris bairdii*: seen well at the Zona Franca, Alalay and Uru Uru. This is a massively numerous bird in the highlands of Bolivia at this time of year.

Pectoral Sandpiper, *Calidris melanotos*: many seen at wetlands around Cochabamba and Oruro. What a great selection of boreal waders we saw.

THINOCORIDAE: SEEDSNIPES

[Grey-breasted Seedsnipe, *Thinocorus orbignyianus*: alas we only heard this target species singing in the far hills above La Cumbre.]

LARIDAE: GULLS & TERNS

Andean Gull, *Larus serranus*: seen every day, and common at every wetland site in the highlands. Handsome all the same.

Franklin's Gull, *Larus pipixcan*: three of these charming boreal migrants were seen flying over the Zona Franca in Cochabamba.

COLUMBIDAE: PIGEONS & DOVES

Spot-winged Pigeon, *Columba maculosa*: we saw this bulky pigeon as we approached La Paz from Oruro and again near Titicaca.

Band-tailed Pigeon, *Columba fasciata*: seen many times in flight over cloud-forest sites in Cochabamba and La Paz.

Plumbeous Pigeon, *Columba plumbea*: seen perched in a distant tree in Miguelito in the lower Chapare. Also heard many times there ('wuk wuwOOh').

Eared Dove, *Zenaida auriculata*: abundant almost throughout the tour. We only missed this species on the two days we spent in the *jungas* of La Paz.

Picui Ground-Dove, *Columbina picui*: seen on all days around Cochabamba and again on the road to Sorata on the last day.

Bare-faced Ground-Dove, *Metriopelia ceciliae*: we saw this attractive, cinnamon-spotted bird on many days and at many sites including the Cerro Tunari.

Black-winged Ground-Dove, *Metriopelia melanoptera*: this handsome bird was seen where we stopped for lunch between Oruro and La Paz.

White-throated Quail-Dove, *Geotrygon frenata*: a few of us saw a flypast of this species in the lower Chapare.

PSITTACIDAE: PARROTS

Green-cheeked Parakeet, *Pyrhura molinae*: we saw this delightful forest bird in the lower Chapare and near El Velo de la Novia on the road to Chulumani.

Grey-hooded Parakeet, *Psilopsiagon aymara*: I *do* love this bird. We saw them many times during the day we spent on the Cerro Tunari. Aka *Bolborhynchus aymara*.

Blue-winged Parrotlet, *Forpus xanthopterygius*: over lunch at the Trompillo airport in Santa Cruz this lovely parrot crept onto the highlands tour list. Aka *Forpus crassirostris*.

Red-billed Parrot, *Pionus sordidus*: in the lower Chapare we saw many flyovers of this species. I refer you to my note about flying skills in the lowlands tour report. *Pionus* species are also readily identifiable by their high 'chwik' calls. *Amazona* parrots have more variable voices but many have rolling, throaty calls.

Scaly-naped Parrot, *Amazona mercenaria*: we saw this species on both days we spent in the Chapare.

CUCULIDAE: CUCKOOS

Squirrel Cuckoo, *Piaya cayana*: it took us a while to see this bird well in the lower Chapare. We had previously heard it several times, always giving the 'kik' call which the Chiquitano indigenous people associate with good luck. They know a thing or two those Chiquitanos – we had excellent birding all day at this site.

Smooth-billed Ani, *Crotophaga ani*: another common lowland species seen around Viru Viru.

Guira Cuckoo, *Guira guira*: and yet another. I am glad the highlanders were able to see this bird as it is very charming and very characteristic of the eastern lowlands.

STRIGIDAE: TYPICAL OWLS

Burrowing Owl, *Athene cunicularia*: seen beautifully at Viru Viru.

APODIDAE: SWIFTS

Chestnut-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne rutila*: seen over the upper and lower Chapare. Aka *Cypseloides rutilus*.

White-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne zonaris*: also seen on the day we spent in the upper Chapare. A magnificent bird.

White-tipped Swift, *Aeronautes montivagus*: a group of these birds swirled in a mixed flock with Blue-and-White Swallows (unfortunately no Pale-footed) on the road down to Chulumani.

Andean Swift, *Aeronautes andecolus*: we saw this fine, elegant bird on the Cerro Tunari.

TROCHILIDAE: HUMMINGBIRDS

Sparkling Violetear, *Colibri coruscans*: this ever-beautiful hummer was seen around *Eucalyptus* on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari and on the road to Sorata. One wonders what these birds did *before* there were *Eucalyptus* plantations.

Glittering-bellied Emerald, *Chlorostilbon aureoventris*: this lovely hummingbird was seen beautifully around Cochabamba.

White-bellied Hummingbird, *Amazilia chionogaster*: we saw this common dry-valley hummingbird between Cochabamba and Oruro and again on the road to Sorata.

Speckled Hummingbird, *Adelomyia melanogenys*: this subtly pretty bird was seen on both days we spent in the Chapare.

Black-hooded Sunbeam, *Aglaeactis pamela*: there are no words for this stunning **Bolivian endemic**. It is, quite simply, breathtaking. The usual site near Unduavi, which works wonders during the dry season, was

gloomily sunbeam-free on two visits (as it was on my only previous wet season visit). Lower down on the Chulumani road we searched a site which Leo suggested to us. Again, this site proved fruitless though when we got back to the bus Leo asked, 'you were looking for the black hummingbird with the sky blue rump weren't you? I saw it from the bus.' My heart sank and I hardly dared tell the group. But good things come to those who wait and on our final day we were rewarded with prolonged and fantastic views of this incredible creature on the road to Sorata. It was supported in the same clump of *Eucalyptus* by no fewer than five other beautiful species of hummingbird.

Where were the Berlepsch's Canasteros? But frankly, who cares?

Andean Hillstar, *Oreotrochilus estella*: seen briefly by some on the road between Cochabamba and Oruro, near a clump of the orange *itipillu* flowers it almost always frequents. We then saw wonderful males of this lovely species, the *lulindu* of Quechua myth, in the *puna* near La Cumbre while we waited for Leo to ferry poorly Colin back to Unduavi.

Collared Inca, *Coeligena torquata*: this wonderfully orange, emerald and white species was difficult to see (and missed by some) in the upper Chapare but thoroughly obliging and common on the lower part of the road to Chulumani. Though the list I am using still calls this bird Collared Inca, the orange-collared form in Bolivia is now generally regarded as a separate species: Gould's Inca, *Coeligena inca*. Whatever its name it is a glorious bird.

Violet-throated Starfrontlet, *Coeligena violifer*: a stunner. We saw this charming bird at the top of the Chapare and again at the top of the Chulumani road, near Unduavi.

Great Sapphirewing, *Pterophanes cyanopterus*: another in a long list of wonderfully beautiful hummingbirds. We first saw a resplendent male over coffee at Unduavi. We saw the species again at the same site the next day.

Giant Hummingbird, *Patagona gigas*: a real crowd-pleaser. This magnificent bird was seen well on the Cerro Tunari (apologies to Ian and Janice who were absent). Some saw it again on the road between Cochabamba and Oruro. Janice, you'll just have to come back.

Amethyst-throated Sunangel, *Heliangelus amethysticollis*: a few people saw this, another attractive species, at the top of the Chapare.

Green-tailed Trainbearer, *Lesbia nuna*: we saw this impossibly long-tailed hummingbird extremely well at the hummer-laden *Eucalyptus* stand on the road to Sorata.

Red-tailed Comet, *Sappho sparganura*: seen in glorious technicolour on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari. Wow!

Tyrian Metaltail, *Metallura tyrianthina*: seen many times in the upper Chapare, and the *jungas* of La Paz. Another of the six hummingbird species seen at the sunbeam site.

Scaled Metaltail, *Metallura aeneocauda*: seen only in the upper Chapare.

Olivaceous Thornbill, *Chalcostigma olivaceum*: um, wow! In *puna* beyond La Cumbre Sam found us this bird. We had repeated, close and excellent looks allowing us to appreciate every feature of this very scarce species. We especially liked the many-coloured metallic gorget which glowed in the morning sun.

Long-tailed Sylph, *Agelaiocercus kingi*: we had great encounters with this dazzling bird on both days we spent in the Chapare.

White-bellied Woodstar, *Chaetocercus mulsant*: two tiny males of this species were seen quite briefly feeding from a flowering shrub in the same stand of *Eucalyptus* as the sunbeams. Aka *Acastrura mulsant*.

TROGONIDAE: TROGONS AND QUETZALS

Crested Quetzal, *Pharomachrus antisianus*: in the lower Chapare a male of this gorgeous species responded to a whistled imitation of its song by flying onto an exposed perch. Unfortunately, because of the terrain, not everyone got onto the bird before it flew.

CAPITONIDAE: BARBETS

Versicoloured Barbet, *Eubucco versicolor*: we had great views of males and females of this psychedelically lovely bird in the lower Chapare.

RAMPHASTIDAE: TOUCANS

Blue-banded Toucanet, *Aulacorhynchus derbianus*: we heard one singing in the upper Chapare and all stared agonised at the hillside for what seemed like minutes, not seeing a thing. Finally Mark caught the bird's movement and one by one we all got onto this attractive species. Another one flew over the road the next day in the lower Chapare.

Hooded Mountain-Toucan, *Andigena cucullata*: as we walked back to the bus at the top of the Chapare Sam crossed the road and found our only individual of this striking, much-sought species. The toucan sat still for a few seconds for all to admire before flying away.

Channel-billed Toucan, *Ramphastos vitellinus*: we heard a distant bird singing in the lower Chapare.

PICIDAE: WOODPECKERS

Golden-olive Woodpecker, *Piculus rubiginosus*: we saw two or three individuals of this handsome species in the lower Chapare.

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, *Piculus rivolii*: this wonderfully beautiful bird was unfortunately only seen briefly, on both days we spent in the *yungas* around La Paz.

Green-barred Flicker, *Colaptes melanochloros*: another very attractive bird and one which we saw on the Cerro Tunari and between Cochabamba and Oruro.

Andean Flicker, *Colaptes rupicola*: one of the most charismatic species of the *puna*. We saw them between Cochabamba and Oruro, between Oruro and La Paz, and near Titicaca. We also heard one calling at La Cumbre. The one we saw perched in a dead tree on the road to Sorata had clearly not read the books – Andean Flickers are not supposed to have anything to do with wood.

DENDROCOLAPTIDAE: WOODCREEPERS

Montane Woodcreeper, *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*: A couple of us saw this delicate, easily-identifiable woodcreeper in the upper Chapare. We later all saw a pair very nicely in the busy flock low on the road to Chulumani. Aka *Lepidocolaptes affinis*.

FURNARIIDAE: OVENBIRDS

Common Miner, *Geositta cunicularia*: first seen by the road at the vicuña-stop near Oruro. We later saw this bird again at La Cumbre and on the upper reaches of the road to Sorata.

Slender-billed Miner, *Geositta tenuirostris*: serendipitous roadworks on the road to Sorata held us up long enough to see this lovely bird on the hillside above the bus.

Rock Earthcreeper, *Upucerthia andaecola*: this is one of the prettiest members of the genus and we saw it several times on the mid-elevation slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

Bar-winged Cinclodes, *Cinclodes fuscus*: very common everywhere where there was open ground or water in the extreme highlands. Nonetheless very cute, especially when performing its wing-lifting display.

Rufous Hornero, *Furnarius rufus*: common, but charismatic, around Cochabamba.

Wren-like Rushbird, *Phleocryptes melanops*: seen, and heard snapping, at Alalay, the Zona Franca, Uru Uru and Titicaca.

Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail, *Leptasthenura fuliginiceps*: seen twice on the Cerro Tunari. Definitely tit-like.

Tawny Tit-Spinetail, *Leptasthenura yanacensis*: Mark found us our only bird of this rare and beautiful species in the Valle de Choquetanga above La Paz.

[Black-throated Thistletail, *Schizoeca harterti*: we heard this **Bolivian endemic** at Cotapata but only Sam saw one in the flock he came across by himself. Birds from La Paz belong to the subspecies *S. h. harterti*.]

Azara's Spinetail, *Synallaxis azarae*: heard many times in cloud-forest sites. Seen satisfactorily by most people in the upper Chapare where we whistled one out of the vegetation. Heard again in a little valley on the road to Sorata.

Light-crowned Spinetail, *Cranioleuca albiceps*: though elusive on this trip, most people got onto orange-crowned birds in Cochabamba and/or white-crowned birds in La Paz. This species, while not endemic, is largely restricted to Bolivia.

Streak-throated Canastero, *Asthenes humilis*: we had tremendous looks at this rock-and-tussock loving species by a patch of boulders high up near La Cumbre.

Rusty-vented Canastero, *Asthenes dorbignyi*: seen at several sites in upper dry valleys and *puna*. At Uru Uru we tried stringing it into Dark-winged Canastero, *Asthenes arequipae* and on the road to Sorata we tried stringing it into Berlepsch's Canastero, *Asthenes berlepschi* but in both cases it was this species we saw.

Scribble-tailed Canastero, *Asthenes maculicauda*: we were treated to good looks at this lovely bird, and near constant renditions of its song, as we walked up the Valle de Choquetanga in La Paz.

Pearled Treerunner, *Margarornis squamiger*: this beautiful beast was seen in the upper Chapare and again on the road down towards Chulumani.

Montane Foliage-gleaner, *Anabacerthia striaticollis*: we several times had brief looks at this attractive, spectacled species in the lower Chapare.

FORMICARIIDAE: GROUND-ANTBIRDS

[Short-tailed Antthrush, *Chamaeza campanisona*: heard distantly, giving its exuberant song, in the lower Chapare.]

[Rufous Antpitta, *Grallaria rufula*: heard at some distance both in the upper Chapare and at Cotapata.]

Rufous-faced Antpitta, *Grallaria erythrotis*: this huge and beautiful **Bolivian endemic** responded extremely well to a whistled imitation of its song in the upper Chapare, bouncing out of the brush and onto the grass for all to see.

RHINOCRYPTIDAE: TAPACULOS

[Trilling Tapaculo, *Scytalopus parvirostris*: heard in the upper Chapare. Formerly part of Unicoloured Tapaculo, *Scytalopus unicolor*.]

[Bolivian Tapaculo, *Scytalopus bolivianus*: heard in the lower Chapare. Aka Southern White-crowned Tapaculo.]

Puna Tapaculo, *Scytalopus simonsi*: seen very well by everyone, scurrying among the rocks, at the Valle de Choquetanga above La Paz. Formerly part of Andean Tapaculo, *Scytalopus magellanicus*.

[Diademed Tapaculo, *Scytalopus schulenbergi*. heard only, at the top of the Chulumani road and at Cotapata. A recently discovered species.]

[Olive-crowned Crescent-chest, *Melanopareia maximiliani*. heard briefly on the Cerro Tunari where it was seen for a moment by Sam.]

TYRANNIDAE: TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet, *Phyllomyias uropygialis*: just one of these readily identifiable tyrannulets was seen on our second visit to the top of the Chulumani road.

White-crested Elaenia, *Elaenia albiceps*: typically numerous in the upper Chapare and in the *yungas* sites in La Paz department. Also seen on the last day on the road to Sorata.

Highland Elaenia, *Elaenia obscura*: seen in the upper Chapare. A surprise as I had not seen them here before.

[Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, *Camptostoma obsoletum* heard only, on the Cerro Tunari.]

Buff-banded Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus hellmayri*: heard and seen repeatedly in the big flock on the road to Chulumani, not long before reaching El Velo de la Novia.

White-banded Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus stictopterus*: seen once on the road to Chulumani. We were struck by the Pallas' Warbler-like face pattern.

White-throated Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus leucophrys*: also seen on the road to Chulumani. As tyrannulets go this is a very distinctive and attractive one.

Tufted Tit-Tyrant, *Anairetes parulus*: this charming creature was first seen on the hillside above Alalay. Subsequently it was seen again on the Cerro Tunari and in several sites around La Paz.

[Torrent Tyrannulet, *Serpophaga cinerea*: when we stopped by a river in the upper Chapare for Leo's brakes to cool down we all went off in search of Torrent Tyrannulets as it was a site where they are often seen. Only Sam saw one.]

Bolivian Tyrannulet, *Zimmerius bolivianus*: we saw this very plain-green flycatcher in the upper and lower Chapare.

Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet, *Phylloscartes ventralis*: seen repeatedly and very well in the lower Chapare.

Streak-necked Flycatcher, *Mionectes striaticollis*: this very attractive slate-, moss- and lemon-colored flycatcher was seen on both days we spent in the Chapare.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher, *Leptopogon superciliaris*: also in the lower Chapare, we saw this species just once.

Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant, *Tachuris rubrigastra*: a glorious eye-full of a bird. We had great luck with this species, seeing it twice at Alalay and on the shore of Titicaca.

[Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, *Poecilotricus plumbeiceps*: unfortunately we only heard this pretty bird several times in the upper and lower Chapare. Aka *Todirostrum plumbeiceps*.]

Ochraceous-breasted Flycatcher, *Myiophobus ochraceiventris*: one of these very striking birds perched in the open for a while as we watched an exciting flock at Cotapata.

Cinnamon Flycatcher, *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea*: we saw this beautiful little creature in the lower Chapare and on the road to Chulumani.

[Cliff Flycatcher, *Hirundinea ferruginea*: only one or two of us had a very distant glimpse of this attractive bird on the road to Chulumani.]

Black Phoebe, *Sayornis nigricans*: phoebes were seen on riverside rocks in the lower Chapare and at El Velo de la Novia on the road to Chulumani.

Andean Negrito, *Lessonia oreas*: at first we strained to see distant individuals of this delightful bird at Uru Uru. Finally a male landed almost at our feet.

White-winged Black-Tyrant, *Knipolegus aterrimus*: seen on five days in dry valley sites. Both males and females of this species are very pretty.

Yellow-browed Tyrant, *Satrapa icterophrys*: seen very nicely at lower altitudes on the Cerro Tunari.

Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola maculirostris*: we saw only one individual of this species, high up on a bluff by a scree slope near La Cumbre.

Taczanowski's Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola grisea*: seen very well near La Cumbre and in the Valle de Choquetanga. A recent split from Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola alpina*.

Puna Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola juninensis*: seen very nicely, with Cinereous nearby for comparison, at our lunch-stop between Cochabamba and Oruro. Identification of this species is much easier at this time of year (you can't go wrong) when the extremely similar White-browed Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola albilora* has vacated the country in favour of southern climes.

Cinereous Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola cinerea*: this, the plainest of all ground-tyrants, was the first one we saw, at our lunch-stop between Cochabamba and Oruro.

White-fronted Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola albifrons*: this largest species was also the last we saw. We caught up with it in rocky valleys near La Cumbre, La Paz.

Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola rufivertex*: we had very good looks at this distinctive, clean-plumaged species on the shore of Uru Uru in Oruro.

Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, *Agriornis montana*: seen flying over the road on our way back from the sunbeam site on the last day.

Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant, *Myiotheretes striaticollis*: seen quite distantly on the Cerro Tunari.

Black-backed Water-Tyrant, *Fluvicola albiventer*: unusually, we saw one of these delightful birds in Cochabamba, at the Zona Franca wetland.

Chestnut-belted Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca thoracica*: heard first ('psiiiiiiiiii') and then seen in the upper Chapare. Seen again on the road to Chulumani. Formerly considered conspecific with Slaty-backed Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca cinnamomeiventris*. Aka Maroon-belted Chat-Tyrant.

Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca rufipectoralis*: seen many times – in the upper Chapare, on the Chulumani road and on the road to Sorata. Very pretty and easy to see as it habitually perches on top of vegetation. Even when not in view it advertises its presence with its snarling call.

Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca fumicolor*: just as we said how appropriate the stream at Pongo looked for this species, Sam found us one.

D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca oenanthoides*: seen at mid elevation on the Cerro Tunari, and in the Valle de Choquetanga.

White-browed Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca leucophrys*: seen in *Polyepis* forest on the Cerro Tunari, and again between Cochabamba and Oruro.

Great Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*: seen often around Alalay.

Golden-crowned Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*: we saw three of these lovely birds, apparently visiting a nest, under an overhang by the river on the road to Chulumani.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher, *Tyrannus savana*: seen at Viru Viru on the first day, just after the highlands-only people arrived. A wonderful creature.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher, *Myiarchus tuberculifer*: seen briefly but well in tall scrubby vegetation on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari (this species usually likes taller forest).

COTINGIDAE: COTINGAS

Masked Tityra, *Tityra semifasciata*: seen on our visit to the lower Chapare.

Barred Becard, *Pachyramphus versicolor*: we saw this bright and beautiful bird in the upper Chapare and on both days in the *yungas* of La Paz.

Red-crested Cotinga, *Ampelion rubrocristatus*: we saw our first of this species on the far side of the river at mid altitude on the Cerro Tunari. Sam later found us a closer bird at Unduavi at the top of the Chulumani road.

White-tipped Plantcutter, *Phytotoma rutila*: very common around Cochabamba. Formerly placed in the now defunct Plantcutter family, Phytotomidae.

PIPRIDAE: MANAKINS

Yungas Manakin, *Chiroxiphia boliviana*: in the lower Chapare we came across a lek of these treasures and, despite the mobility of the birds and the dark shadows in which they were dancing, most of us managed to see them reasonably well.

VIREONIDAE: VIREOS

Brown-capped Vireo, *Vireo leucophrys*: we saw this delicately-coloured species in a big mixed flock on the road to Chulumani.

HIRUNDINIDAE: SWALLOWS & MARTINS

Andean Swallow, *Hirundo andecola*: many seen on all four of the last days of the tour: at Uru Uru, nesting in *puna* at La Cumbre, at the Valle de Choquetanga and over Titicaca. Aka *Haplochelidon andecola*.

Blue-and-White Swallow, *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*: seen on every day of the tour except the day spent exclusively in *puna* and treeline *yungas* in La Paz (where it is replaced by Brown-bellied). Really a very common bird. Aka *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*.

Brown-bellied Swallow, *Notiochelidon murina*: common at high altitude sites above La Paz.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow, *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*: one individual of this species was seen in a multi-species swallow flock over Alalay on our second visit.

Bank Swallow, *Riparia riparia*: several birds in the same flock at Alalay. Aka Sand Martin.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*: many birds in the same flock at Alalay. These were only seen by Brian and Sam, who stayed after the other participants had gone back to the hotel. David had seen the first Barn Swallow of the trip, at Alalay on our first evening.

Cliff Swallow, *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota*: there were also a few individuals of this species in the flock at Alalay. Again, they were only seen by those who stayed behind. Aka *Hirundo pyrrhonota*. Not a very appropriate scientific name for a bird which is never really 'flame-backed' but you have to allow taxonomists a little poetry in their museum-bound lives.

TROGLODYTIDAE: WRENS

House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*: seen or heard virtually every day of the tour. Split by some as Southern House Wren, *Troglodytes musculus*.

Mountain Wren, *Troglodytes solstitialis*: heard in the upper Chapare and seen by a few in the lower Chapare.

[Grey-breasted Wood-Wren, *Henicorhina leucophrys*: we only heard the lovely song of this retiring bird on both days in the Chapare.]

CINCLIDAE: DIPPERS

White-capped Dipper, *Cinclus leucocephalus*: everyone had wonderful views of this charismatic species near El Velo de la Novia on the Chulumani road. A prized bird by the whole group, this species is known in Quechua as *mayupisq'u* meaning river-bird.

TURDIDAE: THRUSHES & SOLITAIRES

Andean Solitaire, *Myadestes ralloides*: in addition to hearing its hauntingly beautiful song we were treated to superb views of an adult and a begging juvenile on a cliff-face above the river near El Velo de la Novia.

White-eared Solitaire, *Entomodestes leucotis*: heard singing its bizarre song many times in the upper and lower Chapare but only seen, separately, by David and Sam.

Great Thrush, *Turdus fuscater*: common at higher elevations in the Chapare and in the upper *yungas* of La Paz. Very distinct from Chiguanco Thrush once you have seen a few of each.

Chiguanco Thrush, *Turdus chiguanco*: very common at all dry sites in the upper valleys.

Glossy Black Thrush, *Turdus serranus*: seen well in the upper Chapare and on both days in the *yungas* of La Paz. Both males and females of this species are distinctive and attractive. The short, aimless song of the male is one of the most frequently-heard sounds of the *yungas*.

Creamy-bellied Thrush, *Turdus amaurochalinus*: seen commonly around Cochabamba.

MIMIDAE: MOCKINGBIRDS

Brown-backed Mockingbird, *Mimus dorsalis*: this lovely bird was seen by everyone on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari. Sam later saw another as we drove back to Cochabamba one afternoon.

MOTACILLIDAE: PIPITS

Short-billed Pipit, *Anthus furcatus*: two of these birds were found in the *puna* during our lunch-stop between Oruro and La Paz. Nearby another sang in parachuting display ('tzik triiiii tzik tzik tzik').

THRAUPIDAE: TANAGERS

Superciliaried Hemispingus, *Hemispingus superciliaris*: seen very well at the top of the Chulumani road.

Three-striped Hemispingus, *Hemispingus trifasciatus*: I've never seen so many of this species before. We saw these very pretty birds again and again at the top of the Chulumani road and at Cotapata.

Rust-and-Yellow Tanager, *Thlypopsis ruficeps*: also a very pretty bird, it was typically common at all cloud-forest sites.

Silver-beaked Tanager, *Ramphocelus carbo*: much more a bird of the lowlands, we only glimpsed this stunning species in the lower Chapare.

Blue-grey Tanager, *Thraupis episcopus*: we saw just one of these attractive birds, which in Bolivia are much more contrasting in plumage than Sayaca Tanagers, perched on top of a pylon in the lower Chapare.

Sayaca Tanager, *Thraupis sayaca*: very common around Cochabamba.

Palm Tanager, *Thraupis palmarum*: also only seen in the lower Chapare.

Blue-capped Tanager, *Thraupis cyanocephala*: this handsome tanager was seen many times, and on every day we spent in cloud-forest. Its repetitive song accompanied us throughout our visits to the Chapare sites.

Blue-and-Yellow Tanager, *Thraupis bonariensis*: what a beauty. We saw this glorious species near Alalay and low down on the Cerro Tunari.

Hooded Mountain-Tanager, *Buthraupis montana*: this wonderfully beautiful and *big* tanager was seen well at the top of the Chapare and on both days we spent in the *yungas* of La Paz.

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, *Anisognathus igniventris*: another entirely amazing bird and one we saw at the same three sites as the last species.

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, *Anisognathus somptuosus*: this fantastic bird is generally found lower than the last two species. True to form we saw it lower in the upper Chapare (if that makes sense), in the lower Chapare, and in the lower reaches of the road to Chulumani. We also many times heard its delightful, explosive song.

Chestnut-bellied Mountain-Tanager, *Delothraupis castaneiventris*: slightly more subtle in plumage than the three last species but nonetheless gorgeous. We saw this bird in the upper Chapare and in a riotous mixed flock at Cotapampa. Aka *Dubusia castaneiventris*.

Golden-collared Tanager, *Iridosornis jelskii*: after much craning of necks we managed to see this stunning bird high above us in the tail end of the flock Sam saw by himself.

Saffron-crowned Tanager, *Tangara xanthocephala*: just wonderful. We saw many of these delightful creatures in the lower Chapare and in mixed flocks in the lower reaches of the road to Chulumani. This bird displays an impossible range of colours.

Blue-necked Tanager, *Tangara cyanicollis*: this jewel of a bird was seen by everyone in the lower Chapare.

Blue-and-black Tanager, *Tangara vassorii*: also very pretty. Seen on both days in the Chapare and in a mixed flock on the day we went down the road to Chulumani.

Straw-backed Tanager, *Tangara argyrofenges*: this little-known and highly attractive species was first seen by David and identified from his careful description. Sam then saw a female, also identified from his description. Luckily we then saw a couple more which others were able to appreciate.

Cinereous Conebill, *Conirostrum cinereum*: we saw this subtly attractive little bird on the Cerro Tunari and again at Pongo.

Blue-backed Conebill, *Conirostrum sitticolor*: seen very well in the upper Chapare and on both days in the *yungas* of La Paz. Our best views were of an inquisitive flock, right by us, at Pongo.

Capped Conebill, *Conirostrum albifrons*: in a mixed flock low on the Chulumani road we saw three individuals of this striking species – an adult male, an adult female and a young male.

White-browed Conebill, *Conirostrum ferrugineiventre*: this delightful treeline species was seen well at Pongo.

Giant Conebill, *Oreomanes fraseri*: unfortunately only a couple of people were able to see this fabled bird in *Polylepis* forest at mid elevation on the Cerro Tunari. Aka *Conirostrum fraseri*.

Rusty Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa sittoides*: we saw a male of this subtly-toned species high in a *Eucalyptus* on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari (right at the turnoff to Liriuni).

Moustached Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa mystacalis*: seen briefly, at the top of the road to Chulumani. Simply a stunner.

Black-throated Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa brunneiventris*: this striking bird is my favourite flowerpiercer (you have to worry about a person who has a favourite flowerpiercer). We had great views at the top of the road to Chulumani, at Pongo, and on the road to Sorata. Doesn't anyone else think they look like Stonechats?

Grey-bellied Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa carbonaria*: We saw this **Bolivian near endemic** (just creeps into northern Argentina) repeatedly on the Cerro Tunari. Formerly known as Carbonated Flowerpiercer (the name-change was prompted by a nomenclature-dispute with the Coca-Cola company).

Deep-blue Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa glauca*: the bright golden eye of this pretty bird stands out very obviously. We saw a couple in the lower Chapare.

Masked Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa cyanea*: seen beautifully many times, and on every day we spent in cloud-forests (Chapare and *yungas* of La Paz). Its piercing vocalisations are constantly to be heard in the *yungas*.

Plushcap, *Catamblyrhynchus diadema*: this bright-plumaged bird was exceptionally obliging in a flock at the top of the Chapare – several of them sat in the open on bamboo fronds, preening and generally showing off, for minutes on end. I've never before seen a group grow *bored* of watching plushcaps and move on to something else. Sam later saw this species again in the flock he saw alone at Cotapata. The taxonomy of this bird is unclear. It has been a finch, it has been placed in its own family - Catamblyrhynchidae - and now it's a tanager. Search me.

Common Bush-Tanager, *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus*: does exactly what it says on the tin. Oh-so-common in all cloud forest sites. But I, for one, am very fond of these pretty birds.

Hepatic Tanager, *Piranga flava*: we saw a handsome male of this species in a *Eucalyptus* at our hotel on the last morning in Cochabamba. Both Ridgely & Tudor (Birds of South America Volume 1) and Isler & Isler (The Tanagers), treat all forms of Hepatic Tanager as one species but recognise the possible existence of three species. By behaviour and habitat, the form we saw on the lowlands tour would most likely be the Highland Hepatic Tanager *Piranga lutea* (as opposed to the Northern Hepatic Tanager *Piranga hepatica* of North and Central America and the Lowland Hepatic Tanager *Piranga flava* principally of the south eastern lowlands of South America). Note, however, that the area in which we saw Hepatic Tanagers on both tours is precisely the area of contact between the putative Lowland and Highland species and the two forms are very similar.

Orange-bellied Euphonia, *Euphonia xanthogastra*: this, our only euphonia on the highlands tour, was seen very well – both males and females – in the lower Chapare.

Blue-naped Chlorophonia, *Chlorophonia cyanea*: Some birds are such instant crowd-pleasers. A pair of these delightful creatures proved a great highlight of the day we spent in the lower Chapare.

EMBERIZIDAE: FINCHES & NEW WORLD SPARROWS

Rufous-collared Sparrow, *Zonotrichia capensis*: ultra-abundant everywhere, as is its wont.

Black-hooded Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus atriceps*: we saw this very handsome bird on the Cerro Tunari and on the day we drove from Cochabamba to Oruro.

Peruvian Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus punensis*: also a lovely species, and one we saw near La Cumbre and on the *altiplano* near Titicaca.

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus unicolor*: this attractively understated little bird was seen beautifully at several sites near La Cumbre.

Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus plebejus*: groups and flocks of this species were seen on six days, around Cochabamba, Oruro, and La Paz.

Band-tailed Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus alaudinus*: this large, striking sierra-finch was seen by the roadside on the day we drove from Oruro to La Paz.

Grey-crested Finch, *Lophospingus griseocristatus*: a very charming bird; we saw it by Alalay on the first afternoon and outside Cochabamba *en route* to Oruro.

White-winged Diuca-Finch, *Diuca speculifera*: we saw these boldy handsome creatures by the roadside on both days near La Cumbre. We also saw them well in the Valle de Choquetanga.

Bolivian Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza boliviana*: seen very satisfactorily on the Cerro Tunari. A **Bolivian virtual endemic** (just creeps into Argentina).

Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza hypochondria*: common on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

Ringed Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza torquata*: we saw this lovely bird by Alalay and low on the Cerro Tunari.

Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis uropygialis*: this very charismatic inhabitant of the *puna* was first seen over lunch between Cochabamba and Oruro. We then saw it again, in high altitude sites, over the following three days.

Citron-headed Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis luteocephala*: between Cochabamba and Oruro we stopped by the road to admire some Bright-rumped Yellow-Finches and on closer inspection they turned out to be this stunning **Bolivian virtual endemic**. They were extremely obliging and allowed Steve to take many photos. No plate comes close to showing how beautiful this bird is.

Greenish Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis olivascens*: subtle but also lovely. This bird was seen well by all on the Cerro Tunari and subsequently glimpsed by the roadside on both days as we returned from the Chapare.

Saffron Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis flaveola*: common around Cochabamba.

Grassland Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis luteola*: seen nicely in roadside rushbeds near Achacachi, shortly after the turn-off to Sorata. This species brought us to a very respectable total of attractive yellow-finches for the trip.

Great Pampa-Finch, *Embernagra platensis*: this handsome, charismatic creature was seen in its usual haunt low on the Cerro Tunari.

Band-tailed Seedeater, *Catamenia analis*: very pretty and, lucky for us, seen on four days of the trip, always in upper dry valleys.

Plain-coloured Seedeater, *Catamenia inornata*: we saw this unassuming bird at the top of the Cerro Tunari and on our last three days around La Paz.

Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, *Atlapetes rufinucha*: though the taxonomy is not universally accepted, many argue that the form we saw is a distinct species and therefore a **Bolivian endemic**. We had many encounters with this jazzy-plumaged bird on all four days we spent in cloud-forests.

CARDINALIDAE: GROSBEAKS & SALTATORS

Black-backed Grosbeak, *Pheucticus aureoventris*: this very striking bird is generally commoner in the lowlands and foothills. Nevertheless we saw it low on the Cerro Tunari.

Golden-billed Saltator, *Saltator aurantirostris*: near-ubiquitous at dry valley sites. No less beautiful for its abundance.

Rufous-bellied Saltator, *Saltator rufiventris*: now *this* is a very beautiful bird. On the Cerro Tunari we saw several individuals of this **Bolivian near-endemic** (just crosses the border into extreme northern Argentina – seems to be quite a trend for doing this among Bolivia's near endemics. The grass is always greener on the other side of the border...).

PARULIDAE: NEW WORLD WARBLERS

Slate-throated Whitestart, *Myioborus miniatus*: these lovely birds were seen on both days in the Chapare and heard many many times on the road to Chulumani (where it was only glimpsed briefly by David). Aka Slate-throated Redstart.

Brown-capped Whitestart, *Myioborus bruniceps*: seen on the Cerro Tunari. A pretty bird in a wonderful genus. Aka Brown-capped Redstart.

Spectacled Whitestart, *Myioborus melanocephalus*: very common in upper-level cloud-forest flocks where its long, twittering song was heard almost constantly. Aka Spectacled Redstart.

Citrine Warbler, *Basileuterus luteoviridis*: we saw this bold-browed warbler at the top of the Chapare and in the upper *yungas* of La Paz.

Pale-legged Warbler, *Basileuterus signatus*: less contrasty than the last species, we saw this bird on the road to Chulumani.

[Three-striped Warbler, *Basileuterus tristriatus*: we heard the fine, ascending song of this species in the distance in the upper and lower Chapare.]

ICTERIDAE: NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS

Dusky-Green Oropendola, *Psarocolius atrovirens*: numerous in the lower Chapare, especially at the big tree where they nest. Also seen in the upper Chapare and on the road to Chulumani.

Chopi Blackbird, *Gnorimopsar chopi*: another lowland airport-lurker that made it onto the highlands list by the skin of its little icterid teeth.

Yellow-winged Blackbird, *Chrysosomus thilius*: we had many great looks at this beautiful bird, the females just as attractive as the males, in wetlands around Cochabamba and in rushes at the edge of Uru Uru.

Bolivian Blackbird, *Oreopsar bolivianus*: we saw this **Bolivian endemic genus** in numbers on the Cerro Tunari and again in a grove of *Eucalyptus* as we drove on to Oruro.

Baywing, *Agelaioides badius*: seen on the first five days of the tour, around Cochabamba. Formerly Bay-winged Cowbird, *Molothrus badius*. This species is not a brood parasite so it hardly seems fair to imply it's a cowbird.

Shiny Cowbird, *Molothrus bonariensis*: seen on four days around Cochabamba. This one is a *bona fide* brood parasite (if that's not an oxymoron) and a true cowbird.

White-browed Blackbird, *Sturnella superciliaris*: our final Santa Cruz bonus bird. This beauty was also seen as the highlands-only group came in to Viru Viru. Aka *Leistes superciliaris*.

FRINGILLIDAE: OLD WORLD FINCHES & SISKINS

Thick-billed Siskin, *Carduelis crassirostris*: we saw a group of these lovely birds by the shore of Uru Uru. We identified them by their larger size than Hooded and their yellow neck sides contrasting with a greyer, more streaked mantle.

Hooded Siskin, *Carduelis magellanica*: seen frequently, especially around Cochabamba.

Black Siskin, *Carduelis atrata*: this wonderful bird of the *altiplano* was first seen as we drove into La Paz from Oruro. We later saw them several times. By Titicaca a pair landed on a fallen wall right in front of us. The male sang his tiny high-altitude heart out but the female didn't seem too impressed. The course of siskin love never did run smooth.

Mammals

PROCYONIDAE: RACOONS AND COATIS

[South American Coati, *Nasua nasua*: Steve's glimpse of a reddish carnivore at Cotapata was almost certainly this widespread species.]

CAMELIDAE: CAMELS

Vicuña, *Vicugna vicugna*: we saw several herds of this impossibly slight camel on the *altiplano* not far from Oruro. In recent years the Bolivian population, once on the very brink of extinction, has risen sharply. The animals we saw bear resemblance to the reddish, fringe-chested vicuñas of the northern *altiplano*, as opposed to the ghostly pale animals which are to be found further south.

CHINCHILLIDAE: CHINCHILLAS & VISCACHAS

Mountain Viscacha, *Lagidium viscacia*: on our first day up at La Cumbre Con called out 'rabbit' and we screeched to a halt to admire a viscacha roosting on a rocky ledge. The following day the same individual, presumably, was seen at the same place.

CAVIIDAE: CAVIES

Wild Cavy, *Cavia* sp. or *Galea* sp.: seen well in all dry, scrubby habitats around Cochabamba. Possibly more than one species involved but identification is nightmarishly tricky.

Oddly, perhaps the most memorable mammals of the trip were the dogs. Once the participants of the tour heard that the roadside pooches in the *puna* were waiting for handouts of bread, they took it upon themselves to feed every fido in the *altiplano*. Bread was begged and borrowed (indeed stolen) to this end. Big-hearted dog-lovers, Mark and Con were especially active in their efforts to fatten the *olla* curs – dogs to the right of them, dogs to the left of them. *Marraketas* were big hit but Mark's power bars were a dismal failure. The highest recipient of our *largesse* was a collie-like number well over 4000m. A few Aymará pigs also thanked their lucky stars for our passing. Concerned that some of the harder breads flung from the bus could cause quite an injury, we pictured unborn archaeologists puzzling over the remains of dent-skulled *altiplano*-lassies and dreaming up far-fetched canine cults.

It takes all sorts...