

Bolivia - Highlands

Naturetrek Tour Report

19 - 27 February 2007



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It may have escaped your notice that I am something of a Bolivia-phile. I trust that by now you have joined me in my love for this glorious country. And in case you haven't, here is a rundown of some of its finer points, which we saw in each other's company on this February's wonderful Bolivia highlands tour:

Streaks of Puna Ibis drifting in to roost over Lake Alalay while Many-coloured Rush-Tyrants and Wren-like Rushbirds played at the edge of the rushes; the treeline of the Chapare cloudforests bright with spinetails, thistletails, and mountain-toucans; the walk *back up* the San José track in the Chapare (not the walk *down* which was dire) when each tree bristled with impossibly brilliant tanagers, trogons and toucanets; also in the Chapare, our fortuitous stop to patch a punctured tyre, where we shared the roadside with four spectacular hummingbirds; our marvellous day on the Cerro Tunari where at each altitude, from warm valleys, through ancient *Polylepis*, to wild puna, we were delighted by a different range of rare and beautiful birds; the stark wetlands and stony punas of Oruro, graced by flamingos, avocets, vicuñas and hordes of northern waders; the dramatic beauty of the Valle de Choquetanga, once in the sun, and once in driving rain, but always awe-inspiring; the shores of Titicaca, bright in the morning sun, scattered with grebes, gulls, coots and ducks, as myriad phalaropes swirled in the middle distance (definitely in Bolivia, not Peru so you can count them on your lists); and finally the stand of *Eucalyptus* at Curupampa, home to two wonderful endemics and a host of other delightful birds.

All this and, in addition, a constant sense of excitement and adventure! I refer, of course, not to the mudslides, the health problems and the vehicle issues, but to the tingling sensation we felt every day when we opened our wildly unpredictable packed meals. Would it be ham and cheese between two slabs of Paleolithic white bread? Or would the culinary gods of Cochabamba bless us with a prodigious lunch? The excitement was almost too much for some.

Add to the mixture a series of clean, well-cared for hotels, a wonderfully attentive and careful driver (thank you once again Leo), a good-humoured and entertaining group of birders, and enough bottled water to irrigate the Sahel, and you have the ingredients of a perfect birding holiday.

And such it was. Thank you all for a superb trip: for your tremendous commitment to the job at hand, even in the wee small hours; your expertise at finding and sharing birds; your goretex constitutions in the face of testing weather; and your great enthusiasm for this majestic country and its unrivalled birds.

Did I mention I like Bolivia?

Day 1

Monday 19th February

Today, once the whole group had made it to Cochabamba, we visited Laguna Alalay on the outskirts of the city. This reliable site once again provided a great list of birds including Spot-flanked Gallinule, Plumbeous Rail, 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 Rusty-vented Canastero, Rufous Hornero, White-tipped Plantcutter (cutting white-tipped plants), Ringed Warbling-Finch and Hooded Siskin.

Day 2

Tuesday 20th February

This morning we headed early for the upper reaches of the Chapare, in the hope of getting in some birding before the rains set in. This proved to be a perfect plan and much was the wonderful birding both on the road to Corani and slightly lower down at Laguna Esperanza. Among the superb birds we saw today were Collared (Gould's) Inca (what a stunner!), Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Scaled and Tyrian Metaltails, Hooded Mountain-Toucan, Bar-bellied Woodpecker, Light-crowned Spinetail, Black-throated Thistletail, Streaked Tuftedcheek, and both Chestnut- and Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanagers.

Day 3

Wednesday 21st February

Today was very much a game of two halves. Our walk down the San José track from Miguelito in the lower Chapare made for one of the most dismally birdless mornings of my life. However, almost as soon as we turned around and began walking back up, the same trees that had before been deathly quiet were dripping with excellent birds. Here we were privileged to see Masked Trogon, Versicoloured Barbet, Blue-banded Toucanet, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Bolivian Tyrannulet, Inca Jay, Deep Blue Flowerpiercer, five psychedelic *Tangara* tanagers (Blue-necked, Saffron-crowned, Beryl-spangled, Blue-and-black, and Golden-naped), brilliant Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers and both male and female of the subtly pretty Slaty Finch.

A stop by a roadside stream allowed us to watch Torrent Tyrannulet, White-capped Dipper, Black Phoebe and a handsome piglet at close quarters; and further on a stop to patch a punctured tyre afforded us superb looks at four wonderful hummers – Long-tailed Sylph, Bronzy Inca, Green-fronted Lancebill and Speckled Hummingbird.

Day 4

Thursday 22nd February

Up the Cerro Tunari we headed this morning; and we were rewarded with stupendous weather and encounters with many of the most sought-after endemic and speciality birds of the tour. Things began well in the early morning on the lower slopes of the mountain where in dry scrub we saw Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, Grey-hooded Parakeet, Andean Swift, Blue-tailed Emerald, Red-tailed Comet, Giant Hummingbird, Green-barred Flicker, White-browed Chat-Tyrant, Brown-backed Mockingbird, Bolivian Blackbird, and a triple whammy of Bolivian, Rufous-sided and Ringed Warbling-Finches,

We continued our run of luck on the upper slopes and in the *Polylepis* forest, seeing Andean Hillstar, Red-crested Cotinga, Tufted Tit-Tyrant, Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, Grey-bellied Flowerpiercer, Rufous-bellied Saltator, Black-hooded Sierra-Finch, Greenish Yellow-Finch, and the incomparably beautiful Cochabamba Mountain-Finch (never poo poo a four-*Poospiza* day).

And finally we cleaned up on the mountain high in the beautiful puna with great looks at Torrent Duck, Andean Flicker, Plain-breasted Earthcreeper, Maquis Canastero, White- and Bar-winged Cinclodes, Puna Tapaculo, Short-tailed Finch and the wonderfully chirpy Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch. All in all not such a bad day.

Day 5

Friday 23rd February

We left Quechua Cochabamba this morning for the Aymará city of Oruro, passing first through groves of Eucalyptus laden with endemic Bolivian Blackbirds. Roadside stops provided several birds not otherwise seen on the tour including White-bellied Hummingbird, Masked Gnatcatcher, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, Double-collared Seedeater, Mourning Sierra-Finch and the deliciously beautiful, near-endemic Citron-headed Yellow-Finch. As a bonus we saw another surprise Cochabamba Mountain-Finch.

Over our stop for lunch at Arque we watched Puna Hawk, Andean Flicker, American Golden Plover, more delightful Maquis Canasteros, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, Rufous-webbed Bush-Tyrant and the strikingly handsome Band-tailed Sierra-Finch. Finally, on reaching Oruro we birded around Lago Uru Uru and smaller wetlands, seeing Chilean Flamingo, Andean Avocet, Crested Duck, Yellow-billed Pintail, Puna Teal, Wilson's Phalarope, Baird's, Pectoral and Stilt Sandpipers, Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs, and Puna Plover.

Day 6

Saturday 24th February

Early this morning most of the group revisited Uru Uru, seeing similar birds to the previous evening, while Nick helped the rest to sort out some health problems. We then drove on to La Paz stopping to admire delightful Vicuñas not far from Oruro. At our usual stop for Short-billed Pipit and Black-winged Ground-Dove we saw ... Short-billed Pipit and Black-winged Ground-Dove. And in the evening we safely arrived in the great city of La Paz.

Day 7

Sunday 25th February

This morning saw us leave La Paz early in search of *yungas* (cloudforest) birds to the north east. Quick roadside stops were made at La Cumbre for two crisply beautiful high Andean waterbirds - Andean Goose and Silvery Grebe. We then made our first assault on the La Paz *yungas* avifauna at the top of the road to Chulumani, seeing a brief flypast Plain-breasted Hawk, Violet-throated Starfrontlet, Black-throated Flowerpiercer, White-browed Conebill, Rust-and-Yellow Tanager, Three-striped Hemispingus, and perfect Plushcaps. We then moved on to Cotapata and Chuspipata which, though quiet, did provide some wonderful birds including Scaled Metaltail and Hooded Mountain Toucan. On our return we made an attempt to visit the imposing Valle de Choquetanga but were driven back by heavy rain and miserably cold conditions. Nonetheless we succeeded, through the pouring rain, in seeing Taczanowski's Ground-Tyrant and D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant. (Having re-read this paragraph, I fancy the bird names could be straight from a Monty Python sketch.)

Day 8

Monday 26th February

Back to the *puna* and *yungas* north east of La Paz today. We made several early morning stops at high altitude near La Cumbre and for our pains saw such beauties as Andean Hillstar, Streak-throated Canastero, Puna Ground-Tyrant, White-winged Diuca-Finch and Peruvian Sierra-Finch. Our next port of call was the Valle de Choquetanga where, in contrast to the day before, the sun and the birds were brilliant. Here (definitely sticking with the Monty Python theme) we saw Tawny Tit-Spinetail, Scribble-tailed Canastero, Puna Tapaculo and Páramo Pipit. Our stops in the *yungas* forests were largely hampered by the strong sun (an injustice, frankly, after almost three weeks of rain and rain-related road issues) but we did see some wonderful birds including an aristocratically perched Hooded Mountain-Toucan, a sunbathing Black-throated Thistletail, a gloriously obliging Gould's Inca and the most brilliantly acrobatic flock of Hooded Mountain-Tanagers one could ever dream of seeing. On our way back to La Paz we again stopped at La Cumbre and were delighted to wade through a veritable herd of Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrants, recently arrived from their southern breeding grounds ('give me a home, where the ground-tyrants roam, and the coots and the cinclodes play').

Day 9

Tuesday 27th February

Our last day was spent visiting Titicaca, the sacred lake of the Quechuas and Aymarás, where we saw many attractive Short-winged (Titicaca Flightless) Grebes among more widespread waterbirds. On a hillside above us sat a single Slender-billed Miner. In the *Eucalyptus* groves of Curupampa we had many close looks at the range-restricted, endemic Berlepsch's Canastero and some excellent views of the subtly wonderful Black-hooded Sunbeam. Also delightful here were two microscopic male White-bellied Woodstars. A stop at a high altitude lake on the way back brought us Giant Coots; and we ended the excitement of the tour with lunch on the shores of Titicaca at Huatajata.

Day 10

Wednesday 28th February

All good things must come to an end, even Naturetrek holidays. Today we hung up our binoculars and said our sad farewells at El Alto airport.

I wish you much joy from your birding and hope that our ornithological paths will be crossing again soon, here in Bolivia, or in some other beautiful reach of the globe.

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 few cases, seen but not by a combination of the leader and one tour participant.

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

Ornate Tinamou, *Nothoprocta ornata*: much like King Lear, this tinamou has a penchant for frequenting blasted heaths. We saw ours on a roadside blasted heath near La Cumbre.

Andean Tinamou, *Nothoprocta pentlandii*: less of a lover of barren, harsh conditions; we saw this fine species both by the roadside between Cochabamba and Corani, and low on the Cerro Tunari.

Did we really not hear a Brown Tinamou anywhere? Amazing.

Cracidae: Guans & Curassows

Andean Guan, *Penelope montagnii*: a family of Andean Guans put on a superb show for us by the roadside as we returned from our second day in the Chapare.

Anatidae: Waterfowl

Fulvous Whistling Duck, *Dendrocygna bicolor*: seen well at Laguna Alalay.

Andean Goose, *Chloephaga melanoptera*: this striking bird, known in Quechua and Aymará as *wallata*, was seen on two days around the lake at La Cumbre.

Torrent Duck, *Merganetta armata*: great views of two young male birds of this extraordinary species, right up in the puna on the Cerro Tunari.

Crested Duck, *Lophonetta specularoides*: this socking great lump of duck was seen very well on our two visits to Uru Uru and at the Giant Coot lake on the road to Sorata. Aka *Anas specularoides* and Andean Crested Duck.

Speckled Teal, *Anas flavirostris*: this charming bird was seen on every high altitude roadside puddle around Cochabamba, Oruro and La Paz. Aka Yellow-billed Teal, though this is an inadequate name as northern subspecies (split by some as a separate species – Andean Teal) have bluish bills.

Yellow-billed Pintail, *Anas georgica*: seen on several days at wetlands around Cochabamba, Oruro and La Paz. Very pretty, if you ask me.

White-cheeked Pintail, *Anas bahamensis*: this delightful creature was seen only at Alalay. 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 dramatically handsome bird was seen many times around Cochabamba and Oruro and at Titicaca.

Cinnamon Teal, *Anas cyanoptera*: at Alalay, Uru Uru and Titicaca. Also very beautiful indeed (you have probably by now spotted the fact that I am a paid-up member of Anatoholics Anonymous).

Rosy-billed Pochard, *Netta peposaca*: we had many great looks at several of these wonderful birds at Alalay. Both males and females are delightful in their own ways. My impression is that they are now much more common at this site than they were a few years ago when to find one was a rare treat.

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

Gotta love ducks.

Podicipedidae: Grebes

White-tufted Grebe, *Rollandia rolland*: seen very nicely at Alalay, Uru Uru, and Titicaca. A cracking bird at this time of the year.

Short-winged Grebe, *Rollandia microptera*: This was a much-sought scalp for many of the group and one we saw very well at Titicaca (albeit having first peered disappointedly at a couple of birds far enough away to be in Perú). A handsome creature indeed. **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, where three were present each time we visited. ('By the light, of the Silvery Grebe...').

Phalacrocoracidae: Cormorants

Neotropic Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*: seen well at Alalay. Aka Olivaceous Cormorant, *Phalacrocorax olivaceus*. Try as I might, I can't find anything too flattering to say about its appearance. You win some...

Ardeidae: Herons & Egrets

Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*: we saw many birds of this broodingly handsome species (the Robert De Niro of the Ardeidae) at Alalay, Uru Uru and Titicaca. Called *cuaajo* in the lowlands and *huaco* in the highlands – both onomatopoeic renditions of the bird's flight call.

Cattle Egret, *Bubulcus ibis*: seen only around Cochabamba and at Titicaca. Given their complete absence from the lowlands tour I am beginning to wonder what has happened to them in Bolivia.

Great Egret, *Ardea alba*: seen at Alalay. Aka *Casmerodius albus*. Some authors now split Old World and New World birds into two species.

[Snowy Egret, *Egretta thula*: seen only by tour participants (not that I have any doubt that you can identify the bird) at Alalay.]

Threskiornithidae: Ibises & Spoonbills

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

Cathartidae: New World Vultures

Turkey Vulture, *Cathartes aura*: seen in the Chapare, on two days in the Yungas of La Paz, and on the road to Curupampa on the last day. This bird is one of the most consummately skilled fliers in the world.

Phoenicopteridae: Flamingos

Chilean Flamingo, *Phoenicopterus chilensis*: seen in moderate numbers on both days at Uru Uru. Alas the Andeans and James', which (no disrespect to the Chileans) were what we were really after, were all off in their weird moonscape breeding grounds in south west Bolivia, northern Chile and north Argentina.

Accipitridae: Hawks & Eagles

Plain-breasted Hawk, *Accipiter ventralis*: a quick whip-by bird at the top of the Chulumani road was all we got of this attractive species.

[Long-winged Harrier, *Circus buffoni*: this most elegant inhabitant of lowland savannahs made it rather sneakily onto the highlands tour list – two were seen by the tour participants during their brief stop at Viru Viru airport in Santa Cruz.]

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*: this majestic beast was seen several times on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari and again on the last day near Curupampa.

Roadside Hawk, *Buteo magnirostris*: seen on day one near Cochabamba and day two in the upper Chapare.

Broad-winged Hawk, *Buteo platypterus*: a handsome migrant from the north; we saw one on our first day in the Chapare.

Red-backed Hawk, *Buteo polyosoma*: seen only once as we drove back from the Chapare. This and the following, extremely similar, species are lumped by many authors as Variable Hawk.

Puna Hawk, *Buteo poecilochrous*: this imposing creature was seen first at Arque as we drove from Cochabamba to Oruro (where we had an interesting impromptu lesson in their identification). We then saw them on both days in the puna around La Cumbre and on our last day as we drove to Curupampa. See taxonomic note on Red-backed Hawk.

Falconidae: Falcons & Caracaras

Mountain Caracara, *Phalcoboenus megalopterus*: seen on many days in many places. Quechua and Aymará people consider the smart black and white adults, known as *alkamari*, to be omens of good fortune. By contrast, the milky-tea juveniles, known as *marujita*, are considered portents of ill fortune. Luckily our first one of the day (the one that counts) was always an *alkamari*.

American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*: also seen many times and in many places. Known as *mamani* in Quechua and Aymará, and this is consequently one of the commonest surnames in highland Bolivia.

Rallidae: Rails & Crakes

Plumbeous Rail, *Rallus sanguinolentus*: the wonderful Plumbeous Rail, first seen at Alalay, made a re-appearance at Uru Uru on our second day there, and a curtain call on the last day at Titicaca. We specially enjoyed the fill-in-the-blanks, through-the-reeds 'scope view at Alalay.

Common Moorhen, *Gallinula chloropus*: numerous at Alalay, Uru Uru and Titicaca.

Spot-flanked Gallinule, *Gallinula melanops*: seen very nicely at Alalay on day one. This is only the fourth record (I know of) for Cochabamba department. The first and second records were on previous Naturetrek Bolivia tours. Aka *Porphyriops melanops*.

Giant Coot, *Fulica gigantea*: pretty much as close as we came to charismatic megafauna (an epithet usually reserved for gorillas, rhinos and big cats). Seen very nicely, red-legged for all to see, at the usual site on the road back from Curupampa.

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

Jacanidae: Jacanas

Wattled Jacana, *Jacana jacana*: adults and juveniles were seen very well at Alalay. Fascinating beasts.

Recurvirostridae: Avocets & Stilts

Black-necked Stilt, *Himantopus mexicanus*: impossibly elegant, and seen at both Uru Uru and Titicaca. 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*: this has to have been one of the classiest birds of the whole trip. We saw them very well on both days at Uru Uru. Interestingly, they sound extremely similar to Pied Avocets in the Old World.

Charadriidae: Plovers

Andean Lapwing, *Vanellus resplendens*: around Uru Uru, La Cumbre and Titicaca we saw many of these striking, vociferous birds. Known as *leque leque* in Bolivia, this bird is very often depicted in Andean textiles (though these depictions don't usually look much like the bird).

American Golden Plover, *Pluvialis dominica*: we heroically trudged over the puna in search of a bird of disputed identity at Arque and it proved to be one of these lovely creatures from North America. The species was again seen by some on the last day by Titicaca.

Puna Plover, *Charadrius alticola*: seen beautifully at Uru Uru. A very handsome high Andean chappie.

Scolopacidae: Sandpipers

Greater Yellowlegs, *Tringa melanoleuca*: this big strong beast (at least alongside Lesserlegs) was seen at Uru Uru and Titicaca.

Lesser Yellowlegs, *Tringa flavipes*: seen at Alalay, Uru Uru and Titicaca. Fine and slight by comparison with the last species.

[Spotted Sandpiper, *Actitis macularia*: seen only by some participants at Alalay where it is a reliable though scarce species.]

Baird's Sandpiper, *Calidris bairdii*: flocks of this boreal species were seen in grassland around Uru Uru. Also seen at Titicaca. A recent count from Poopó (the southern end of Uru Uru) recorded more than 15000 birds of this species.

Pectoral Sandpiper, *Calidris melanotos*: handsomely olive-legged, this is a creature we saw at Alalay and Uru Uru. Some also saw it at Titicaca.

Stilt Sandpiper, *Calidris himantopus*: we saw this subtle but distinctive wader from the north on both days at Uru Uru. Aka *Micropalama himantopus*.

Wilson's Phalarope, *Phalaropus tricolor*: first seen on small roadside wetlands as we reached Oruro and seen again near here the following day. Most dramatic though were the rafts and swirling clouds of many hundreds of

these charming birds which could be seen out on Lake Titicaca on our final day. Aka *Steganopus tricolor*. Placed by some in a separate family with its two congeners: Phalaropodidae.

Laridae: Gulls & Terns

Andean Gull, *Larus serranus*: seen every day around Oruro and La Paz. Known, onomatopoeically as *quillwa* in north Bolivian Quechua.

[Franklin's Gull, *Larus pipixcan*: this northern migrant was seen by some in flight over Titicaca, where it is a scarce but regular boreal winter visitor.]

Columbidae: Pigeons & Doves

Spot-winged Pigeon, *Columba maculosa*: we first saw this bulky pigeon near Arque on the drive to Oruro (where it was somewhat outshaded by Cochabamba Mountain-Finch and Mourning Sierra-Finch). It reappeared the next day between Oruro and La Paz, and made a final appearance in greater numbers around Titicaca.

Band-tailed Pigeon, *Columba fasciata*: this is a much racier pigeon than the last. We saw it on the Cerro Tunari and high in the *yungas* of La Paz on the road to Chulumani.

Plumbeous Pigeon, *Columba plumbea*: we saw subtly attractive Plumbeous Pigeons on both days we spent in the Chapare.

Eared Dove, *Zenaida auriculata*: this is a very common bird in the highlands of Bolivia and we saw it many times in many places.

Picui Ground-Dove, *Columbina picui*: this pretty bird, much commoner in the lowlands, was seen around Cochabamba, on the Cerro Tunari and again at Curupampa on the last day.

Bare-faced Ground-Dove, *Metriopelia ceciliae*: we saw this attractive, cinnamon-spotted little dove at several sites around Cochabamba.

Black-winged Ground-Dove, *Metriopelia melanoptera*: having previously been seen quickly by a few people, this handsome bird was seen well by all at the Short-billed Pipit stop between Oruro and La Paz.

Large-tailed Dove, *Leptotila megalura*: it was a surprise to see an individual of this species, a bird I have not previously seen at the site and which I generally associate with taller forest, on the road up the Cerro Tunari in a patch of *Eucalyptus* and dense scrub.

Psittacidae: Parrots

[Green-cheeked Parakeet, *Pyrhura molinae*: we were only able to hear the scrapy calls of this beautiful parakeet in the lower Chapare (just at the point when our luck changed and we began to see birds).]

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

[Black-winged Parrot, *Hapalopsittaca melanotis*: one of rather too many unsatisfactory parrots on this tour. This much sought-after species was only heard, and glimpsed in silhouette by some, high up in the Chapare. This subspecies is also known as Black-eared Parrot.]

[Red-billed Parrot, *Pionus sordidus*: another agonising heard-only parrot. Heard along the San José track in the lower Chapare, a site where it is not uncommon but is apt to be visible only on clear days as it flies over. On our visit the weather was anything but clear.]

[Turquoise-fronted Parrot, *Amazona aestiva*: and yet another. I will probably have my leader's licence revoked over this identification but I'm sticking to it. At the San José track in the lower Chapare one expects to hear and, with luck, see Scaly-naped Parrot. One certainly does not expect to hear Turquoise-fronted which is generally a bird of dry forests and savannahs in the lowlands and foothills (up to about 2000m), though it does appear in some quite humid, Amazonian places in north east Santa Cruz and the Beni departments. Contrary to popular belief, vocalisations of *Amazona* parrots are extremely identifiable and I know the voices of these species, especially Turquoise-fronted, very well. Turquoise-fronted is disciplined and predictable about its calling (a sort of diligent junior civil servant with little hope of ever reaching a management position). Meanwhile, Scaly-naped's calls are much more unpredictable, sometimes even brilliant (more of a Van Gogh), but at times it veers off into noises that the smarter *Amazona* species (Yellow-crowned for example) could fairly describe as *Pionus*-like (and trust me that's not a charitable thing to say: *Pionus* are often very pretty, but vocally they are not up to much and they couldn't fly their way out of a paper bag). But I digress. Anyway, I am absolutely certain that the short, sharp, unvaried calls we heard flying past us in the lower Chapare were indeed being made by a T-f P. How it got there is a different question. It is by far the commonest large parrot in captivity in Bolivia and escapes are frequent (I have seen escaped Military, Blue-and-Yellow, Chestnut-fronted and Red-fronted Macaws, Monk Parakeets, and Turquoise-fronted Parrots in the city of Santa Cruz) so the possibility exists that it was an escaped bird from one of the many surrounding villages. As Geoffroy Rush says in Shakespeare in Love: 'I don't know, it's a mystery.']

Apodidae: Swifts

Andean Swift, *Aeronautes andecolus*: we saw several of these dramatic birds low on the Cerro Tunari. We saw them again on the drive from Cochabamba to Oruro.

Trochilidae: Hummingbirds

Green-fronted Lancebill, *Doryfera ludovicae*: subtle but one of the star birds of the whole trip. This little-known bird was watched extremely closely and at great length at flowers by the roadside in the Chapare. Aka *Hemistephania ludovicae*.

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

Blue-tailed Emerald, *Chlorostilbon mellisugus*: this bright and beautiful little bird was seen low on the Cerro Tunari.

[Glittering-bellied Emerald, *Chlorostilbon aureoventris*: this lovely hummingbird was surprisingly only seen by Nick (and it was a female at that) in the grounds of our hotel in Cochabamba.]

White-bellied Hummingbird, *Amazilia chionogaster*: we saw this common dry-valley hummingbird at the first stop between Cochabamba and Oruro.

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

Black-hooded Sunbeam, *Aglaeactis pamea*: this wonderful **Bolivian endemic** is one of my absolute favourite birds. As usual in the wet season it was absent from its dry season haunts around Unduavi and the top of the Chulumani road. But it was present in the Berlepsch's Canastero grove of *Eucalyptus* at Curupampa. Rare, endemic, subtly handsome yet colourful, found in the company of numerous other great species – what more can you ask of a hummingbird?

Andean Hillstar, *Oreotrochilus estella*: we never quite had a full frontal of a male of this lovely species. We saw females quickly on the Cerro Tunari and extremely well close to La Cumbre in La Paz. But the only male we saw was distant. Known in Quechua as *lulinchu*.

Bronzy Inca, *Coeligena coeligena*: this bird is much less showy than its Bolivian congeners but is a very lovely creature nonetheless. We saw a couple of this forest species on the day we spent in the lower Chapare, including one which shared the same patch of flowers as the Green-fronted Lancebill, Speckled Hummingbird and Long-tailed Sylph.

Collared Inca, *Coeligena torquata*: this wonderfully orange, emerald and white species was seen quite briefly in the upper Chapare. We then saw one in glorious technicolour, surrounded by Hooded Mountain-Tanagers and Masked Flowerpiercers, on our second visit to the Chulumani road. 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 well at the top of the Chapare and extremely well at the top of the Chulumani road, near Unduavi.

Giant Hummingbird, *Patagona gigas*: what a beast! This magnificent hummer was seen several times on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

Amethyst-throated Sunangel, *Heliangelus amethysticollis*: most people saw this, another attractive species, at the top of the Chapare, where we had heard its distinctive, hard, purring calls the previous day.

Red-tailed Comet, *Sappho sparganura*: much to our delight we watched this wonderful hummer on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

Tyrian Metaltail, *Metallura tyrianthina*: seen many times in the upper Chapare, and the *jungas* of La Paz. A real Tinkerbell: small and attractive but bad-tempered and foot-stamping.

Scaled Metaltail, *Metallura aeneocauda*: this much scarcer species was seen in the upper Chapare and again, extremely well, at Cotapata in La Paz.

Blue-mantled Thornbill, *Chalcostigma olivaceum*: this denizen of the puna was glimpsed from the vehicle on our second day near La Cumbre. Later the same day a brief flypast was seen. No sign of its rarer Olivaceous cousin.

Long-tailed Sylph, *Agelaiocercus kingi*: seen on both days we spent in the Chapare. We watched, and some photographed, one magnificent male in an *Abutilon* shrub by the roadside as we waited for a tyre to be patched. *That* wouldn't happen on the M25.

White-bellied Woodstar, *Chaetocercus mulsant*: two tiny males of this species were seen, perched in the treetops, at the same stand of *Eucalyptus* as the Berlepsch's Canasteros and the sunbeams. Aka *Acestrura mulsant*.

Trogonidae: Trogons And Quetzals

Masked Trogon, *Trogon personatus*: in the lower Chapare a male of this beautiful species was seen high in the treetops of the stand where we saw Blue-banded Toucanets, Versicoloured Barbets and Golden-naped Tanager. We had heard the species singing shortly beforehand.

Capitonidae: Barbets

Versicoloured Barbet, *Eubucco versicolor*: these dazzling birds led us a merry dance in the lower Chapare but most people eventually got good looks at them.

Ramphastidae: Toucans

Blue-banded Toucanet, *Aulacorhynchus derbianus*: unlike its distant cousin the barbet, the Blue-banded Toucanet was thoroughly, almost embarrassingly, obliging on this tour. After a difficult first bird on our day in the upper Chapare, the following day we were treated to superb views of numerous individuals on the San José track below Miguelito.

Hooded Mountain-Toucan, *Andigena cucullata* unanimously considered one of the most glorious birds of the tour. We first saw a pair in roadside vegetation at the top of the Chapare, one of which was later scoped a little further away and watched at length. At Cotapata we had brief views of another bird and later the same day, at Chuspipata, we were treated to sustained looks at a perched bird in full sun. Just stunning.

Channel-billed Toucan, *Ramphastos vitellinus*: a single individual of this great species was seen in a roadside *Cecropia* at the bottom of the San José track.

Picidae: Woodpeckers

Bar-bellied Woodpecker, *Veniliornis nigriceps*: one of these handsomely-striped woodpeckers was seen in our most exciting flock by the roadside at the top of the Chapare.

Golden-olive Woodpecker, *Piculus rubiginosus*: we saw just one individual, somewhat eclipsed by toucanets, of this handsome species in the lower Chapare.

Green-barred Flicker, *Colaptes melanochloros*: seen very well on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

Andean Flicker, *Colaptes rupicola*: one of the most charismatic species of the puna. We saw them on four days of the tour: on the Cerro Tunari, around Oruro, around Titicaca, and at Curupampa. This last site is the only place I have ever known them to associate with wood (as a woodpecker should). Known, onomatopoeically, in Quechua as *yaka yaka*.

Lineated Woodpecker, *Dryocopus lineatus*: we saw one of these striking birds on the day we spent in the lower Chapare. At the time it was a ray of hope as it was just about the only bird we had seen all morning, and then the tide turned...

Dendrocolaptidae: Woodcreepers

Montane Woodcreeper, *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*: we saw this very attractive, delicate woodcreeper in the upper Chapare. Aka *Lepidocolaptes affinis*.

Furnariidae: Ovenbirds

Common Miner, *Geositta cunicularia*: this puna-loving passerine was seen well on both days around Oruro and was glimpsed on the last day on the road to Curupampa.

Slender-billed Miner, *Geositta tenuirostris*: our only individual of this elegant species was seen on a hilltop above the shore of Titicaca.

Plain-breasted Earthcreeper, *Upucerthia jelskii*: we had sustained looks at this elegant bird around fields at the top of the Cerro Tunari and again at Arque.

[Rock Earthcreeper, *Upucerthia andaecola*: unfortunately not everyone was able to see this handsome earthcreeper at mid altitude on the Cerro Tunari.]

Bar-winged Cinclodes, *Cinclodes fuscus*: very common everywhere where there was open ground or water in the extreme highlands. A couple of times we saw this and the next species side by side for easy comparison.

White-winged Cinclodes, *Cinclodes atacamensis*: a wonderful bird of high altitude streams. Its colours are more vivid and much more clearly defined than Bar-winged's. We saw it both at the top of the Cerro Tunari and near La Cumbre in La Paz.

Rufous Hornero, *Furnarius rufus*: commonly seen, in upper dry valleys, around Cochabamba and on the drive to Oruro.

Wren-like Rushbird, *Phleocryptes melanops*: this smart-plumaged rush-dweller was seen at Alalay and Titicaca.

Brown-capped Tit-Spintail, *Leptasthenura fuliginiceps*: first glimpsed flying across the road on the Cerro Tunari. Later we were able to watch the tit-like behaviour of this lovely little bird very closely at Curupampa.

Tawny Tit-Spintail, *Leptasthenura yanacensis*: tour after tour we see just one individual of this charming, rare species in the Choquetanga valley. Same again on this tour.

Black-throated Thistletail, *Schizoeaca harterti*: we first saw the Cochabamba and Santa Cruz subspecies (*S. b. bejaranoi*) of this wonderful **Bolivian endemic** at the top of the Chapare (almost the first bird of the day – there were grumblings over having to look up from cups of steaming coffee). We then saw the La Paz subspecies (*S. b. harterti*) on two days in the *yungas*. What a superb little bird.

Azara's Spintail, *Synallaxis azarae*: heard only in the upper Chapare but seen in the lower Chapare where a couple of birds were calling all morning from the same dense patch of *Chusquea* bamboo.

Light-crowned Spintail, *Cranioleuca albiceps*: we had many excellent views of the orange-crowned Cochabamba form in the upper Chapare. But the white-crowned birds of La Paz completely failed to make an appearance (disgraceful in my opinion). This species, while not endemic, is largely restricted to Bolivia.

Maquis Canastero, *Asthenes heterura*: This wonderfully-orange **Bolivian endemic** was seen well both at the top of the Cerro Tunari and on top of a tumbledown house by the roadside at Arque. Aka Iquico Canastero.

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

Rusty-vented Canastero, *Asthenes dorbignyi*: this handsome little creature was seen well on the slopes above Alalay and low on the Cerro Tunari.

Berlepsch's Canastero, *Asthenes berlepschi*: this subtle **Bolivian endemic** is found only on Mount Illampu and is therefore one of the most range-restricted birds on earth. The many good looks at this bird that we had a Curupampa allowed us to see the features which separate it from the very similar Rusty-vented (of which it may be only a form), which include more rufous in the outer tail feathers, vague or absent bib, and plain face. All in all a very pleasing little bird, and one we saw singing, nest-building and making every attempt to ensure that future Naturetrekkers are able to enjoy future generations of the species at the same site.

Scribble-tailed Canastero, *Asthenes maculicauda*: we were treated to good looks at this lovely bird on our second visit to the Valle de Choquetanga in La Paz. This was a favourite with almost everyone in the group.

Pearled Treerunner, *Margarornis squamiger*: the gold-spotted southern form of this beautiful beast was seen in the upper Chapare and again in the *yungas* of La Paz.

Streaked Tuftedcheek, *Pseudocolaptes boissonneautii*: we admired the fox-faced handsomeness of this charismatic bird in a flock at the top of the Chapare. I feel sorry for any bird having to lug round a scientific name like that. Imagine having to sign a cheque.

[Montane Foliage-Gleaner, *Anabacerthia striaticollis*: unfortunately only a few people were able to see this species on our visit to the lower Chapare.]

Thamnophilidae: Typical Antbirds

[Variable Antshrike, *Thamnophilus careulescens*: a few half-hearted calls were all we got out of this retiring species on our first and second days in the Chapare.]

Formicariidae: Ground Antbirds

[Short-tailed Antthrush, *Chamaeza campanisoma*: 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*: alas we were unable to persuade a singing individual of this huge and beautiful **Bolivian endemic** to hop out of dense vegetation in the Chapare.]

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 (thank heavens for one cooperative Tapaculo) at the top of the Cerro Tunari and again, scurrying Mouse-like among the rocks, on our second visit to the Valle de Choquetanga above La Paz. Formerly part of Andean Tapaculo, *Scytalopus magellanicus*.

[Diademed Tapaculo, *Scytalopus schulenbergi*: heard, and glimpsed by a lucky few at the top of the Chulumani road. A recently discovered species.]

[Olive-crowned Crescent-chest, *Melanopareia maximiliani*: heard briefly on the Cerro Tunari and again the following day at the first stop *en route* to Oruro.]

Tyrannidae: Tyrant Flycatchers

White-crested Elaenia, *Elaenia albiceps*: bizarrely scarce on this tour, and seemingly absent from cloudforest sites where usually it is abundant. We saw White-crested Elaenias in scrub on the low slopes of the Cerro Tunari and in Curupampa.

[Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, *Camptostoma obsoletum*: heard only, both low on the Cerro Tunari and at our first stop outside Cochabamba the next day.]

White-banded Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus stictopterus*: seen once at the top of the Chapare. Striking as always.

White-throated Tyrannulet, *Mecocerculus leucophrys*: this pretty bird was first seen at the roadside in the upper Chapare and was positively common at the top of the road to Chulumani.

Tufted Tit-Tyrant, *Anairetes parulus*: this charming creature was first seen at mid elevation on the Cerro Tunari, then again early on the journey to Oruro. We also met it on both days in the *yungas* of La Paz.

Torrent Tyrannulet, *Serpophaga cinerea*: this charismatic and daring little bird was seen very well by a raging torrent (how about that?) in the Chapare.

Greater Wagtail-Tyrant, *Stigmatura budytoides*: these great birds (sound great, look great) were seen at our breakfast stop, not far outside Cochabamba, on the day we drove to Oruro.

Bolivian Tyrannulet, *Zimmerius bolivianus*: perhaps the least-patterned bird to bear the name tyrannulet. We saw this subtle species often in the upper and lower Chapare.

Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet, *Phylloscartes ventralis*: seen once only in the lower Chapare.

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

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

Many-coloured Rush-Tyrant, *Tachuris rubrigastra*: a glorious eye-full of a bird. We had superb views of various plumages at Alalay.

Ochre-faced Tody-Flycatcher, *Poecilatriccus plumbeiceps*: heard several times in the upper and lower Chapare and seen here briefly on the track down to Laguna Esperanza. Aka *Todirostrum plumbeiceps*. Very pretty by any name.

Cinnamon Flycatcher, *Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea*: this lovely bird was seen in a mixed flock at Laguna Esperanza in the Chapare, and again at Cotapata.

[Cliff Flycatcher, *Hirundinea ferruginea*: this pretty species was only seen by the lowland tour participants on the first morning in Cochabamba, before the arrival of the highlands group.]

Olive-sided Flycatcher, *Contopus cooperi*: we saw just one of these northern migrants on the day we spent in the lower Chapare. Aka *Contopus (Nuttalornis) borealis*.

Smoke-coloured Pewee, *Contopus fumigatus*: seen at Laguna Esperanza in the Chapare.

Western Wood-Pewee, *Contopus sordidulus*: one of these unassuming birds was seen, and heard gently calling, down the San José track in the lower Chapare.

Black Phoebe, *Sayornis nigricans*: phoebes were seen on riverside rocks in the lower Chapare.

White-winged Black-Tyrant, *Knipolegus aterrimus*: this handsome bird (in both sexes) was seen low on the Cerro Tunari.

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

Taczanowski's Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola grisea*: seen at the top of the Cerro Tunari and in the Valle de Choquetanga. A recent split from Plain-capped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola alpina*.

Puna Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola juninensis*: one seen and much appreciated by all near La Cumbre.

[White-fronted Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola albifrons*: unfortunately only Nick was able to see one of these hulking great ground-tyrants, flying high above a cliff face, as we drove past La Cumbre.]

Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola flavinucha*: a large flock of recent arrivals from the south were seen around the lake at La Cumbre on our second day in La Paz. They were a much deserved reward for a week of largely-unrepaid searching for ground-tyrants.

Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola rufivertex*: we had good looks at this distinctive, clean-plumaged species at Arque, between Cochabamba and La Paz.

Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, *Agriornis montana*: this normally uncommon bird was seen at Arque, at the Valle de Choquetanga and on our last day towards Curupampa.

[Streak-throated Bush-Tyrant, *Myiotheretes striaticollis*: seen by the lowlands tour participants as we walked in to the airport to collect the highlands group. On the Cerro Tunari Nick subsequently saw an impossibly distant bird fly through a scope view of a Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle perched on a far hillside.]

Rufous-webbed Bush-Tyrant, *Polioptila rufipennis*: this scarce, perfectly elegant bird was much admired by the roadside, just before our lunch stop at Arque.

Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca rufipectoralis*: this cheery little bird was seen in the upper Chapare and at the treeline in the *jungas* of La Paz.

Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca fumicolor*: we saw this pretty creature first near *Polylepis* above a stream (classic habitat) at the top of the Cerro Tunari. Some people then saw it again between Cochabamba and Oruro. Finally we all saw it once more in the Valle de Choquetanga.

D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca oenanthoides*: another pretty species, and one that was much wished-for by some; we thoroughly deserved to see it, through the pouring rain, when we finally caught up with it on our first visit to the Valle de Choquetanga.

White-browed Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca leucophrys*: yet another attractive bird in this great genus. This one we saw low on the Cerro Tunari.

Great Kiskadee, *Pitangus sulphuratus*: common but distinctly dashing. We saw it around Alalay and at a few other sites in Cochabamba including the grounds of our hotel.

Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*: another very common and widespread species. We saw it hunting from the pylons at the start of the San José track in the lower Chapare and in the grounds of our hotel in Cochabamba.

Cotingidae: Cotingas

Red-crested Cotinga, *Ampelion rubrocristatus*: we saw this handsome and distinguished bird on our visit to the Cerro Tunari.

White-tipped Plantcutter, *Phytotoma rutila*: seen superbly around Alalay and over breakfast outside Cochabamba on the drive to Oruro. Formerly placed in the now defunct Plantcutter family, Phytotomidae.

[Barred Fruiteater, *Pipreola arcuata*: this wonderful bird was, alas, only heard giving its plaintive, sibilant call, on our first visit to the *yungas* of La Paz.]

Vireonidae: Vireos

Rufous-browed Peppershrike, *Cyclarhis gujanensis*: gotta love a bird with a name like that. And it's good-looking too. We saw one low on the Cerro Tunari as we looked for Red-tailed Comets and Grey-bellied Flowerpiercers.

Brown-capped Vireo, *Vireo leucophrys*: a little lemon, a little beige, and a lovely little thing. Seen at Laguna Esperanza in the Chapare.

Corvidae: Jays

Green Jay, *Cyanocorax yncas*: this lovely bird was hard to come by at first but we finally saw it well on the way back up the San José track. Split by some as Inca Jay.

Hirundinidae: Swallows & Martins

Andean Swallow, *Hirundo andecola*: many seen on many days of the tour – on the Cerro Tunari, at Uru Uru, and at the Valle de Choquetanga. Our best views were of perched birds (alongside Blue-and-White and Barn for comparison) over lunch at Titicaca. Aka *Haplochelidon andecola*.

Blue-and-White Swallow, *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*: seen on most days of the tour except on days 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*: seen on both days we spent at high altitude sites above La Paz. Very pretty in a subtle sort of way.

Barn Swallow, *Hirundo rustica*: this common northern migrant was not seen until lunchtime on the last day at Titicaca.

Troglodytidae: Wrens

[Fulvous Wren, *Cinnycerthia fulva*: this is not a reliable bird at any site on the tour. It was identified from an excellent description by those who were lucky enough to see it in the upper Chapare. Formerly considered part of Sepia-brown Wren, *Cinnycerthia peruana*.]

[Moustached Wren, *Thryothorus genibarbis*: we heard the very distinctive vocalisations of this skulker, right at the upper end of its altitudinal distribution, in the lower Chapare.]

House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*: seen or heard at numerous sites throughout the tour. Split by some as Southern House Wren, *Troglodytes musculus*.

Mountain Wren, *Troglodytes solstitialis*: this delightfully pretty little bird was seen on both days we spent in the Chapare.

[Grey-breasted Wood-Wren, *Henicorbina leucophrys*: we only heard the lovely song of this retiring bird on the day we spent in the lower Chapare.]

Poliophtilidae: Gnatcatchers

Masked Gnatcatcher, *Poliophtila dumicola*: wonderfully dainty, and seen over breakfast outside Cochabamba as we drove to Oruro.

Cinclidae: Dippers

White-capped Dipper, *Cinclus leucocephalus*: everyone had good views of this charismatic species on a raging stream (shared with Torrent Tyrannulets) in the lower Chapare. This species is known in Quechua as *mayup'isqu* meaning river-bird.

Turdidae: Thrushes & Solitaires

Great Thrush, *Turdus fuscater*: fairly 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. Its name (the chiguanco bit, not the thrush bit) derives from the Quechua name for the bird – *chivaku*. It is said in south east Perú that the *chivaku* used to be a most beautiful bird but that he was given a message to take to the earth by Christ. The proud *chivaku* misremembered Christ's message and, for his error, was turned into a very dull-looking bird.

Glossy Black Thrush, *Turdus serranus*: seen on both days in the Chapare, but never very convincingly.

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

Mimidae: Mockingbirds

Brown-backed Mockingbird, *Mimus dorsalis*: this lovely bird was seen rather unsatisfactorily on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari. We then had a glorious eyeful of the bird in a roadside tree on the day we drove to Oruro from Cochabamba.

Motacillidae: Pipits

Short-billed Pipit, *Anthus furcatus*: one of these birds was seen very well in the puna between Oruro and La Paz. Someone commented, quite rightly, that the face pattern is very reminiscent of Woodlark (though I suspect that on the basis of habitat and distribution we can safely rule out Woodlark).

Páramo Pipit, *Anthus bogotensis*: we were treated to the peachy beauty of this high altitude bird in the Valle de Choquetanga.

Thraupidae: Tanagers

Three-striped Hemispingus, *Hemispingus trifasciatus*: at the top of the Chulumani road (which like the San José track was dismal on the way down and spectacular on the way back up) we saw several of these oh-so-attractive little birds.

Rust-and-Yellow Tanager, *Thlypopsis ruficeps*: not as easy as in some years. We nonetheless saw this delightful bird both in the upper Chapare and in the *yungas* of La Paz.

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

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

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

Blue-capped Tanager, *Thraupis cyanocephala*: this handsome tanager was seen many times, in the cloudforests of both the Chapare and La Paz.

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

Hooded Mountain-Tanager, *Buthraupis montana*: this wonderfully big and beautiful tanager was seen well at the top of the Chulumani road one day and *superbly* well on the same road the next.

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, *Anisognathus igniventris*: this glorious creature was seen in the upper Chapare and on both days we visited the *yungas* of La Paz.

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, *Anisognathus somptuosus*: this strikingly beautiful 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), and in the lower Chapare.

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

Fawn-breasted Tanager, *Pipraeidea melanonota*: in the lower Chapare we saw this lovely bird, similar to the last but slighter and less intensely coloured.

Saffron-crowned Tanager, *Tangara xanthocephala*: just wonderful. We saw many of these delightful creatures over the two days we spent in the Chapare. The southern birds found here have a more strikingly colourful head pattern than those found to the north.

Golden-naped Tanager, *Tangara ruficervix*: it took us some craning of necks and some peering through binocular-clouding drizzle but high in the canopy of a tree in the lower Chapare we watched a pair of these pretty birds.

Blue-necked Tanager, *Tangara cyanicollis*: two of these jewel-like birds were seen in a *Cecropia* in the lower Chapare.

Beryl-spangled Tanager, *Tangara nigroviridis*: a subtle one but a wonderful one. Only a couple of these strange-plumaged birds were seen at San José in the lower Chapare.

Blue-and-black Tanager, *Tangara vassorii*: and finally, to complete our run of perfect *Tangara* tanagers, we saw many pretty Blue-and-blacks, also on our day in the lower Chapare.

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

Blue-backed Conebill, *Conirostrum sitticolor*: another lovely bird in an impossibly brilliant family, it was seen in the upper Chapare.

White-browed Conebill, *Conirostrum ferrugineiventre*: this delightful treeline species was seen well on our way back up the Chulumani road (with the Three-striped Hemispingus flock) and again the following day at the Valle de Choquetanga.

[Giant Conebill, *Oreomanes fraseri*: alas, only one or two people managed to see this brilliant beast in *Polylepis* at mid elevation on the Cerro Tunari.]

Rusty Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa sittoides*: very common this year – males and females – on the low to middle slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

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 and at Curupampa.

Grey-bellied Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa carbonaria*: We saw this very classy **Bolivian near endemic** at mid elevation on the Cerro Tunari.

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

Masked Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa cyanea*: seen and heard giving its fine call several times on both days in the Chapare and on our second day in the *yungas* of La Paz.

Plushcap, *Catamblyrhynchus diadema*: this fabled bird was seen very well in bamboos (of course) at the top of the Chulumani road and later the same day at Chuspipata. Enchantingly lovely. The taxonomy of the species 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*: very common in the Chapare but bizarrely absent on this tour from the *yungas* of La Paz.

[White-winged Tanager, *Piranga leucoptera*: some members of the group managed to see this handsome little tanager on the San José track.]

Orange-bellied Euphonia, *Euphonia xanthogastra*: this, our only euphonia on the highlands tour, was seen very well both at Laguna Esperanza and San José.

[Blue-naped Chlorophonia, *Chlorophonia cyanea*: this stunning creature was seen by a lucky few on the day we spent in the lower Chapare.]

Emberizidae: Finches & New World Sparrows

Rufous-collared Sparrow, *Zonotrichia capensis*: ultra-abundant everywhere, seen every day. Wonderful all the same.

Yellow-browed Sparrow, *Ammodramus aurifrons*: two individuals of this species were a surprise along the San José track; we imagined they must have been pushed up from their usual habitat along the river by the extremely heavy rains we had been having.

Black-hooded Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus atriceps*: we saw this very handsome, *Polylepis*-associated 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 (after not inconsiderable effort) near La Cumbre and at Curupampa. The highlands only participants had previously seen Peruvian Sierra-Finches at El Alto airport on the day they arrived.

Mourning Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus fruticeti*: boldly beautiful males and stripy females of this species were seen at the roadside near Arque on the day we drove to Oruro.

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus unicolor*: this attractively understated little bird was seen at the top of the Cerro Tunari and in the Valle de Choquetanga. It is scarcer than Ash-breasted and seems to be more tied to wet places.

Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus plebejus*: groups and flocks of this very common puna 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, and photographed, at very close quarters at Arque. It was seen again the following day *en route* to La Paz.

Slaty Finch, *Haplospiza rustica*: we saw a slaty male and a streaky-olive female of this scarce, difficult-to-come-by little bird on the San José track in the lower Chapare.

Grey-crested Finch, *Lophospingus griseocristatus*: a very charismatic bird; it was seen by some at Alalay and we all caught up with it at breakfast outside Cochabamba on the drive to Oruro.

White-winged Diuca-Finch, *Diuca speculifera*: we saw these boldly handsome creatures by the roadside on our second visit to the puna near La Cumbre. The 747 of South American finches.

Short-tailed Finch, *Idiopsar brachyurus*: we saw an individual of this monster-beaked, rubble-loving bird at the very top of the Cerro Tunari.

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

Rufous-sided Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza hypochondria*: we were able to make close comparison between the last species and this one, which is common on the low to middle slopes of the Cerro Tunari.

Ringed Warbling-Finch, *Poospiza torquata*: we saw this lovely bird by Alalay, low on the Cerro Tunari, and over breakfast the next day outside Cochabamba.

Cochabamba Mountain-Finch, *Poospiza garleppi*: yippee! First we had great view of this beautiful, endangered, charismatic, mega-endemic over lunch at mid-altitude on the Cerro Tunari. We then briefly saw one the next day at a roadside stop near Arque.

Puna Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis lutea*: a handful of these impossibly bright birds were seen as we had lunch at Huayrapata on the drive from Oruro to La Paz.

Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis uropygialis*: this very charismatic inhabitant of the puna was first seen at the top of the Cerro Tunari. We then saw it again at Arque, around Oruro and at La Cumbre.

Citron-headed Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis luteocephala*: we saw this dramatically lovely **Bolivian virtual endemic**, in the company of the following species, by the roadside between Cochabamba and Oruro.

Greenish Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis olivascens*: subtle but also lovely. This bird was glimpsed by the roadside as we travelled to and from the Chapare but was finally seen well by all on the Cerro Tunari. Also seen the next day *en route* to Oruro.

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

Grassland Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis luteola*: seen very briefly in roadside rushbeds near Achacachi, shortly after the turn-off to Curupampa.

Double-collared Seedeater, *Sporophila caerulescens*: we were pleased to catch up with this handsome fellow, normally a bird of the lowlands tour, over breakfast outside Cochabamba on the day we drove on to Oruro.

Band-tailed Seedeater, *Catamenia analis*: this very pretty bird was seen low on the Cerro Tunari and at Curupampa on the final day.

Plain-coloured Seedeater, *Catamenia inornata*: we saw this unassuming bird from mid-elevation to the top of the Cerro Tunari, the following day during the drive to Oruro, and near La Cumbre.

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

Cardinalidae: Grosbeaks & Saltators

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**.

Parulidae: New World Warblers

Slate-throated Whitestart, *Myioborus miniatus*: these lovely birds were seen on our second day in the Chapare. Aka Slate-throated Redstart.

Brown-capped Whitestart, *Myioborus brunniceps*: seen on the Cerro Tunari and the following day on the drive to Oruro. A pretty bird in a wonderful genus. Aka Brown-capped Redstart.

Spectacled Whitestart, *Myioborus melanocephalus*: very common in upper-level cloud-forest flocks; seen, in fact, on all four days in this habitat. Aka Spectacled Redstart.

Citrine Warbler, *Basileuterus luteoviridis*: we saw this bold-browed warbler on two days in the upper *yungas* of La Paz.

Pale-legged Warbler, *Basileuterus signatus*: less contrasty than the last species, we saw this bird in the upper Chapare and on one day in the *yungas* of La Paz.

Three-striped Warbler, *Basileuterus tristriatus*: we saw this very attractive little warbler on the walk down to Laguna Esperanza in the Chapare. We heard its fine, ascending song the following day in the lower Chapare.

Icteridae: New World Blackbirds

Dusky-Green Oropendola, *Psarocolius atrovirens*: seen perched on pylons at the Subestación San José in the lower Chapare.

Yellow-winged Blackbird, *Chrysosomus thilius*: we saw this beautiful bird, the stripy females just as attractive as the males, in rushbeds around Uru Uru and Titicaca. Aka *Agelaius thilius*.

[Chopi Blackbird, *Gnorimopsar chopi*: another sneaky lowlander which made it on to the list by being seen at Viru Viru as the group left the country.]

Bolivian Blackbird, *Oreopsar bolivianus*: we saw this subtly brown-winged **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 in several upper dry valley sites around Cochabamba early in the tour. 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*: this common but beautiful bird was seen in our hotel grounds in Cochabamba and at our breakfast stop outside Cochabamba as we drove to Oruro. This one is a *bona fide* brood parasite (if that's not an oxymoron) and a true cowbird.

Fringillidae: Old World Finches & Siskins

Hooded Siskin, *Carduelis magellanica*: seen frequently around Cochabamba and at the end of the tour at Curupampa.

Black Siskin, *Carduelis atrata*: this wonderful bird of the *altiplano* was first seen as we drove towards La Paz from Oruro. Later we saw them again, in the company of the last species, while we watched Berlepsch's Canastero at Curupampa.

Mammals

Camelidae: Camels

Vicuña, *Vicugna vicugna*: we saw small 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 south of the Salar de Uyuni.

Sciuridae: Squirrels

Bolivian Squirrel, *Sciurus ignitus*: we had a great look at a couple of these pretty squirrels in a roadside *Cecropia* in the Chapare. They were markedly more reddish and contrasty than the animals I am used to seeing in Santa Cruz department. In her book 'Neotropical Rainforest Mammals', Louise Emmons says 'The small brown squirrels of the genus *Sciurus* in Peru and Bolivia are confusing and in need of taxonomic revision; they are often misidentified in museum collections.' So squirrel aficionados, watch this space.

Caviidae: Cavies

Wild Cavy, *Cavia* sp. or *Galea* sp.: seen on the lower slopes of the Cerro Tunari in Cochabamba. Identification of these species (even these genera) is nightmarishly tricky.