

Victor Emanuel Nature Tours

CASA MARIA & HATO PIÑERO

January 31-February 8, 2014



Leader: David Ascanio

Compiled by David Ascanio

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Photo gallery:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157640844149105/>

A colorful welcome by a parade of tanagers, euphonias and trogons was the way to start this unique tour in the Neotropics where you get to see a myriad of tanagers, flycatchers and waterbirds and still look for birds at a relaxed and easy style.

We started in Casa Maria we were able to visit a cloud forest to enjoy bay-headed, speckled, blue-gray, golden, black-headed, white-lined, silver-beaked and blue-necked tanagers at the feeding station. In the lodge, Rufous-and-white Wren, Rufous-vented Chachalaca and Cocoa Woodcreeper serenaded us at every morning. The mosaic of colors were complemented by daily visits to the bird feeder in Casa Maria by Collared Trogon, Buff-throated Saltator and Thick-billed Euphonia.

Casa Maria is so rich in birdlife that it is always an issue to choose the location to start birding. This year we decided to start our days at the light bulb to enjoy the feast of passerine birds coming to feed on moths, and such party included rusty-margined and social flycatchers, plain-brown and black-banded woodcreepers, grayish and streaked saltators, slaty-capped flycatcher and guire, burnished-buff and palm tanagers. A regular pair of Barred Antshrike kept their territory near the light bulb.

To complement such explosion of birds we also visited the edge of a cloud forest where the endemic Rufous-lore Tyrannulet was observed along with the near-endemic Venezuelan Tyrannulet. Our afternoon outings were complemented with visit to the various areas of Casa Maria (including Norbert's lab) and an unforgettable 3D slide show.

Two days were surely not enough to satisfy our bird appetite but we had to move to another great location. This one was in the plains (llanos). In Hato Piñero we spent the following three days exploring the ranch at length. Provided with a safari truck we visited patches of tropical dry forest, scrubby vegetation, secondary growth, wetlands and grasslands. The mix of birds is hard to capture in words. From enormous Jabiru and colorful Scarlet Ibis we had encounters with wood-rails, sunbitterns, primitive Hoatzin and hard-to-forget dozens of Yellow-knobbed Curassow.

Also, a good number of mammals, reptiles and amphibians were observed. Some included spectacled caimans, llanos side-necked turtles, capybaras, iguanas and a 20+ minutes encounter with an ocelot rounded up a fantastic tour.

I really hope you enjoyed this tour the way I have loved it for decades. I am sure you agree with me that Hato Piñero is among the best birding locations in the neotropics!

I don't want to miss the opportunity to share with you some of the other tours where you can see birds in a relaxed way and still get an impressive number of birds. Please, consider joining me at one of the following destinations:

Panama's Canal Zone: A relaxed & easy tour.

Photo gallery: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157637412796535/>
<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157637848314764/>

Costa Rica: A relaxed & easy tour.

Photo gallery: <https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157634553086431/>
(the photo gallery correspond to the Grand Costa Rica tour. I have included it because many of the birds seen in that tour will be seen in the relaxed & easy version of it)

Cuba: people-to-people and birds!

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

The Birdlist.

The order, and common and scientific names are those given by James F. Clements in *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*, 6th Edition, Cornell University Press, with all current updates. The birds observed only in the day tour to El Avila National Park (for the participants arriving earlier to the tour) are denoted with an asterisk (*).

Tinamidae

Red-legged Tinamou. *Crypturellus erythropus*. Heard in Hato Piñero.

Anhimidae

Horned Screamer. *Anhima cornuta*. A pair was observed in Puente Benjam'in and another pair at Laguna Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Anatidae

White-faced Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna viduata*. An uncommon species in Hato Piñero. We observed only two individuals.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna autumnalis*. We have been operating this tour for almost two decades and I have never seen before so many individuals of this species in a single visit to the ranch. This year we saw more than 700 individuals just in laguna Los Cerritos.

Fulvous Whistling Duck. *Dendrocygna bicolor*. In the December tour I was astonished with the finding of several dozen individuals in a wetland at the west side of the ranch. This time we observed about 4 individuals embedded with the large flock of black-bellied whistling-ducks.

Muscovy Duck. *Cairina moschata*. Small flocks were observed in Hato Piñero.

Cracidae

Rufous-vented Chachalaca. *Ortalis ruficauda*. This species was commonly observed in both locations: Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Yellow-knobbed Curassow. *Crax daubentoni*. We enjoyed daily views of this almost extinct species. Although common in Hato Piñero it is almost gone elsewhere. We reported more than 50 individuals each day.

Odontophoridae

Crested Bobwhite. *Colinus cristatus*. A family group of about a dozen individuals was seen twice in Hato Piñero.

Ciconiidae

Maguari Stork. *Ciconia maguari*. A single individual was observed soaring in Hato Piñero. This species is uncommon in the northern part of the ranch.

Jabiru. *Jabiru mycteria*. Few pairs (some feeding juveniles) were observed in Hato Piñero.

Wood Stork. *Mycteria americana*. This species was the commonest of the storks. More than a dozen were seen observed in Hato Piñero.

Fregatidae

Magnificent Frigatebird. *Fregata magnificens*. Only seen along the Caribbean coast.

Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant. *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*. We saw few individuals in Hato Piñero.

Anhimidae

Anhinga. *Anhinga anhinga*. Few individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Pelecanidae

Brown Pelican. *Pelecanus occidentalis*. Only seen along the Caribbean coast.

Ardeidae

Rufescent Tiger Heron. *Tigrisoma lineatum*. We had excellent views of juveniles and adults in Hato Piñero.

Cocoi Heron. *Ardea cocoi*. Common although not numerous in Piñero.

Great Egret. *Ardea alba*. Seen at sides of highways, roads and inside Hato Piñero.

Snowy Egret. *Egretta thula*. Surprisingly, this one was the commonest egret in Laguna Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Little Blue Heron. *Egretta caerulea*. 1 to 3 individuals were seen in Hato Piñero.

Cattle Egret. *Bubulcus ibis*. Common along the sides of roads, highways, pastures and grasslands.

Whistling Heron. *Syrigma sibilatrix*. Pairs were seen in Hato Piñero. This species ranks among the most beautiful herons in Venezuela.

Capped Heron. *Pilherodius pileatus*. Another gorgeous heron. This one was seen in Hato Piñero as well.

Black-crowned Night-Heron. *Nycticorax nycticorax*. We enjoyed views of individuals in juvenile and adult plumage in Hato Piñero.

Boat-billed Heron. *Cochlearius cochlearius*. Only two individuals were observed near Saman Gacho, in Hato Piñero.

Threskiornithidae

Hato Piñero is a superb place for enjoying and learning about the ibises in Venezuela. Here we were able to observe all six species of this family to occur in Venezuela.

White Ibis. *Eudocimus albus*. Two pairs were seen in Hato Piñero.

Scarlet Ibis. *Eudocimus ruber*. We managed to count over 50 individuals in a roost in Puente Benjamín.

Glossy Ibis. *Plegadis falcinellus*. Only two pairs were observed in Hato Piñero.

Sharp-tailed Ibis. *Cercibis oxycerca*. This ibis prefers damp ground (rather than wetlands) and is almost invariably in pairs or family groups. We counted about 4 pairs in Hato Piñero.

Green Ibis. *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*. This is the most secretive of the ibises in Venezuela. Only 5 individuals were seen in Hato Piñero.

Bare-faced Ibis. *Phimosus infuscatus*. This is the commonest and most widespread of all the ibises in Venezuela. We saw it along the roads and highways as well as in grasslands.

Buff-necked Ibis. *Theristicus caudatus*. Unlike most other ibises this one avoids direct contact with water. We enjoyed close views of several individuals searching for arthropods in grasslands.

Roseate Spoonbill. *Ajaia ajaja*. Few individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Cathartidae

Black Vulture. *Coragyps atratus*. A common species.

Turkey Vulture. *Cathartes aura*. A very common species this time of the year. Most individuals were of the North America migrant race (*septentrionalis*).

King Vulture. *Sarcoramphus papa*. We enjoyed 1 individual in Hato Piñero.

Pandionidae

Osprey. *Pandion haliaetus*. A single individual was observed in Hato Piñero.

Accipitridae

Gray-headed Kite. *Leptodon cayanensis*. A single individual in juvenile plumage was seen in Bosque de los Caballos, in Hato Piñero.

(*) **Ornate Hawk-Eagle.** *Spizaetus ornatus*. A single individual was observed soaring in El Avila national park.

Black-collared Hawk. *Busarellus nigricollis*. A fairly common species in Hato Piñero.

Crane Hawk. *Geranospiza caerulescens*. This species was observed inspecting tree cavities in searching for bats and other prey.

Savanna Hawk. *Buteogallus meridionalis*. Several individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Great Black-Hawk. *Buteogallus urubitinga*. A single individual was observed in Hato Piñero.

Roadside Hawk. *Buteo magnirostris*. This is arguably the most widespread bird of prey in northern Venezuela. It was seen almost daily.

White-tailed Hawk. *Buteo albicaudatus*. An individual trying to hunt an Agouti was seen when entering Hato Piñero. Later, a pair was seen in the ranch.

Broad-winged Hawk. *Buteo platypterus*. Boreal migrant. An individual was observed in Palmichal reserve.

Short-tailed Hawk. *Buteo brachyurus*. An individual was observed soaring on route to Hato Piñero.

Eurypygidae

Sunbittern. *Eurypyga helias*. We enjoyed daily views of this astonishing species in Hato Piñero. It is a favorite among the birders visiting the ranch.

Rallidae

Gray-necked Wood-Rail. *Aramides cajanea*. Various pairs were observed walking along the roads inside the ranch.

Aramidae

Limpkin. *Aramus guarauna*. We saw a pair in a small pond along the west road of the ranch.

Recurvirostridae

Black-necked Stilt. *Himantopus mexicanus*. 12+ individuals were seen in Los Cerritos in Hato Piñero.

Charadriidae

Southern Lapwing. *Vanellus chilensis*. Pairs were seen in Hato Piñero. Also, a large flock (60+ individuals) was observed in laguna Los Cerritos.

Jacanidae

Wattled Jacana. *Jacana jacana*. Numerous in Hato Piñero.

Scolopacidae

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularia*. We observed four individuals in Hato Piñero.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. Two individuals were seen in Laguna Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Lesser Yellowlegs. *Tringa flavipes*. A pair was observed in Laguna Los Cerritos. Hato Piñero.

Columbidae

Rock Pigeon. *Columba livia*. Several were observed near Valencia.

Pale-vented Pigeon. *Patagioenas (Columba) cayennensis*. Common in Hato Piñero.

Eared Dove. *Zenaida auriculata*. In Hato Piñero we observed several dozens.

Common Ground-Dove. *Columbina passerina*. Common in Hato Piñero.

Ruddy Ground-Dove. *Columbina talpacoti*. Common and widespread in Hato Piñero.

Scaled Dove. *Scardafella squammata*. Common and widespread in Hato Piñero.

Blue Ground-Dove. *Claravis pretiosa*. A pair was observed in Hato Piñero.

White-tipped Dove. *Leptotila verreauxi*. We made nice studies of various individuals in Hato Piñero.

Opisthocomidae

Hoatzin. *Opisthocomus hoazin*. While observing this species we learned aspects of the natural history of one of the most fascinating bird species in our planet. The Hoatzin is an herbivorous species having a long crop that function as a rumen to allow digest its diet. It was thought to be related with the *Tinamidae* and later with the *Cracidae*, *Rallidae*, *Otididae*, *Pteroclididae*, *Columbidae*, *Colidae*, *Cariamidae*, and *Cuculidae*. It is now believed to be a very old lineage with a long lonely evolutionary history and no close living relatives. Its taxonomical position has been greatly debated and remains unclear. We enjoyed superb views of it in Hato Piñero.

Cuculidae

Squirrel Cuckoo. *Piaya cayana*. Pairs were observed in Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Smooth-billed Ani. *Crotophaga ani*. Seen frequently along the roads and in El Avila national park.

Groove-billed Ani. *Crotophaga sulcirostris*. Found in scrubby vegetation and forest edge in Hato Piñero.

Strigidae

Great Horned Owl. *Bubo virginianus*. One individual was observed at the roof of the lodge in Hato Piñero.

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. *Glaucidium brasilianum*. Heard frequently in Hato Piñero. One was seen at the ranch.

Black-and-white Owl. *Ciccaba nigrolineata*. We enjoyed, once again, great views of this species in Hato Piñero.

Caprimulgidae

Short-tailed Nighthawk. *Lurocalis semitorquatus*. Heard in Casa María.

Band-tailed Nighthawk. *Nyctoprogne leucopyga*. One individual was seen briefly in Hato Piñero.

Pauraque. *Nyctidromus albicollis*. The commonest nightjar in Hato Piñero. Various individuals were seen in the optional night outing in the ranch.

White-tailed Nightjar. *Hydropsalis cayennensis*. We enjoyed superb views of one individual in Hato Piñero.

Nyctibidae

Great Potoo. *Nyctibius grandis*. Two individuals were seen in the night outing in Hato Piñero.

Apodidae

(*) White-collared Swift. *Streptoprocne zonaris*. Various individuals were observed in El Avila.

Vaux's Swift. *Chaetura vauxi*. We observed three individuals in Palmichal reserve.

Trochilidae

Stripe-throated Hermit. *Phaethornis striigularis*. Three individuals were observed near Casa María.

Sooty-capped Hermit. *Phaethornis augusti*. One individual was seen along the road between Casa María and Palmichal. Since this species also gleans in spider webs in walls of houses it is locally known as *Limpiacasa* (House cleaner).

Ruby Topaz. *Chrysolampis mosquitus*. A female was observed in Hato Piñero.

Violet-fronted Brilliant. *Heliodoxa leadbeateri*. A male was seen at the cloud forest edge.

Violet-chested Hummingbird. *Sternoclyta cyanopectus*. A female was seen near Palmichal reserve.

Blue-tailed Emerald. *Chlorostilbon mellisugus*. Seen a couple of times. One in Casa María and another in Hato Piñero.

White-vented Plumeteer. *Chalybura buffonii*. A common species in Casa María.

Glittering-throated Emerald. *Amazilia fimbriata*. We had daily views of this species in Casa María and in Hato Piñero.

Trogonidae

Collared Trogon. *Trogon collaris*. This beautiful trogon was seen in Casa María and Palmichal reserve.

Cerylidae

Ringed Kingfisher. *Megaceryle torquata*. Few individuals were observed in Hato Piñero. This is the largest kingfisher in Venezuela.

Amazon Kingfisher. *Chloroceryle amazona*. Few individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Bucconidae

Russet-throated Puffbird. *Hypnelus ruficollis*. We enjoyed repeated views of this species in Hato Piñero.

Galbulidae

The jacamars are insectivorous species restricted to the neotropic. They are usually found in pairs or in loose groups. In appearance they show resemblances with the old world bee-eaters but are not related with it. That represents a good example of convergent evolution where two unrelated species acquire similar biological traits.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar. *Galbula ruficauda*. This is a never-to-forget species. We enjoyed pairs near Casa María.

Picidae

Scaled Piculet. *Picumnus squamulatus*, Heard in Casa María. Also seen in Hato Piñero.

Red-crowned Woodpecker. *Melanerpes rubricapillus*. Pairs were seen everyday!

Smoky-brown Woodpecker. *Picoides fumigatus*. A single individual as seen in Casa María. I am almost sure this was a new species for the list of the lodge.

Red-rumped Woodpecker. *Veniliornis kirkii*. Unlike the last year, this time we saw this species really well. It was observed in Casa María and in Hato Piñero.

Lineated Woodpecker. *Dryocopus lineatus*. One individual as observed foraging on the ground at Hato Piñero.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker. *Campephilus melanoleucos*. A pair was seen in Hato Piñero.

Falconidae

Crested Caracara. *Caracara cheriway*. This species was seen every day of the tour.

Yellow-headed Caracara. *Milvago chimachima*. This species is as common as the previous one but usually more numerous than it.

Laughing Falcon. *Herpetotheres cachinnans*. We enjoyed repeated views of a single individual in Hato Piñero.

American Kestrel. *Falco sparverius*. One was seen entering Hato Piñero.

Aplomado Falcon. *Falco femoralis*. We observed a single individual drinking water at a pool on the ground in Hato Piñero.

Psittacidae

Painted (Venezuelan) Parakeet. *Pyrrhura picta (emma)*. Two flocks (12 and 10 individuals) were observed near Casa María. This species has an interesting taxonomic history. First described as a full species (*P.emma*) it was later considered to be a race of Maroon-faced Parakeet (*P.leucotis*). More recently, various authors re-elevated it to species rank and named it Venezuelan Parakeet (*P.emma*). Later, in 2007 Stotz (<http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCprop306.html>) had recommended to remove the race *emma* from *leucotis* meaning that it was not related to Maroon-faced Parakeet but to Painted Parakeet. That last suggestion passed in the SACC with some observations as members of the committee suggested to elevate the race *emma* to species rank. So, for the time being let's call it Painted Parakeet, but bear in mind that in the short term this group might be reshuffled again.

Scarlet-fronted Parakeet. *Aratinga wagleri*. Two flocks were observed flying over Casa María.

Brown-throated Parakeet. *Aratinga pertinax*. This species turned out to be uncommon this year. We saw only one flock in Hato Piñero.

Chestnut-fronted Macaw. *Ara severa*. First seen in Hotel Ole Caribe and later in Hato Piñero (up to six individuals foraging at a fruiting tree).

Scarlet Macaw. *Ara macao*. Seen daily in Hato Piñero. There is no way to put in words the eye impact when you see this impressive birds flying in front of you.

Green-rumped Parrotlet. *Forpus passerinus*. Small flocks were seen in Casa María and Hato Piñero.

Orange-chinned Parakeet. *Brotogeris jugularis*. This species is apparently declining in the Llanos (plains). One of the reasons is the egg-eating behavior of the Capuchin Monkeys. In this trip we saw only in flight.

Red-billed Parrot. *Pionus sordidus*. A pair was observed in Casa María. It was outnumbered by the next species.

Blue-headed Parrot. *Pionus menstruus*. We observed pairs flying over Casa María.

Yellow-crowned Parrot. *Amazona ochrocephala*. A common species in Hato Piñero. Pairs were seen daily.

Orange-winged Parrot. *Amazona amazonica*. Various pairs were observed in Casa María.

Thamnophilidae

Thamnophilidae, along with *Formicariidae* and *Grallaridae*, were formerly treated as a single family. Nowadays, *Thamnophilidae* comprises only the small antbirds while the other two families comprises the antthrushes and the antpittas.

Black-crested Antshrike. *Sakesphorus canadensis*. Nice pair in Hato Piñero.

Barred Antshrike. *Thamnophilus doliatus*. A pair was frequently seen in the light bulb area of Casa María.

(Northern) White-fringed Antwren. *Formicivora intermedia*. A male was enjoyed in scrubby vegetation in Hato Piñero. Although Hilty (2003) followed Ridgely (in Birds of South America) in treating this as a separate species (calling it Northern White-fringed Antwren) the South American Classification Committee has not formally accepted it. Vocal differences between the populations E and W of the Essequibo River suggest that the taxonomic division proposed by Ridgely might be accepted in the near future.

White-bellied Antbird. *Myrmeciza longipes*. Heard at Hato Pinero.

Furnariidae

What is known today as the *Furnariidae* formerly involved two families: The Ovenbirds (*Furnariidae*) and the woodcreepers (*Dendrocolaptidae*). Although there have been a historic controversy (For almost 100 years!) whether they should be treated as one or two separate families DNA sequence published in 2002 have revealed that both must be considered as one family thus reverting all the species into the *Furnariidae*. The proposal for this change was made in September 2004 and was accepted by the SACC committee.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper. *Sittasomus griseicapillus*. This interesting species was seen near Casa Maria. It is likely it will be split into two or three species and the one we heard will be placed with the population occurring in Central America and northern Venezuela.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper. *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*. We had superb views of a single individual visiting Casa María light bulb.

Strong-billed Woodcreeper. *Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*. Heard in Casa María.

Black-banded Woodcreeper. *Dendrocolaptes picumnus*. We enjoyed great studies of a single individual visiting the light bulb in Casa Maria.

Cocoa Woodcreeper. *Xiphorhynchus susurrans*. An individual was seen visiting the light bulb in Casa Maria. This species was formerly a race of Buff-throated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus guttatus*.

Straight-billed Woodcreeper. *Dendroplex (Xiphorhynchus) picus*. Various individuals were observed in Hato Piñero. The race we saw (*phalara*) might be treated as a separate species in the future.

Red-billed Scythebill. *Campylorhamphus trochilirostris*. An individual was seen in Hato Pinero.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper. *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*. A single individual was seen in Casa María area. The distinctive field mark for field identification is the slightly curved bill.

Streaked Xenops. *Xenops rutilans*. One individual was seen near Casa María.

(*) **Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner.** *Philydor rufum*. Seen in El Avila with a feeding flock.

(*) **Montane Foliage-gleaner.** *Anabacerthia striacollis*. Seen in El Avila with a feeding flock.

(*) **Gutulate Foliage-gleaner.** *Syndactyla guttulata*. A pair was observed in El Avila.

Rufous-fronted (Plain) Thornbird. *Phacellodomus inornatus*. Few pairs were observed searching for arthropods on the ground and on branches of the Saman trees. This is the species that builds the large hanging nests in telephone poles and branches of the Saman trees. The nest is also used as breeding site by some seedeaters and by the national bird of Venezuela, the Venezuelan Troupial.

Crested Spinetail. *Cranioleuca subcristata*. Two pairs were nesting in Casa María. Unlike the previous two species this is an arboreal one.

Yellow-chinned Spinetail. *Certhiaxis cinnamomea*. Two pairs were observed in wetlands near the main house of Hato Piñero.

Pale-breasted Spinetail. *Synallaxis albescens*. One pair was seen near Casa María.

Tyrannidae

The Tyrant-Flycatchers are one of the best representative of speciation in the neotropics. For the visitor to Venezuela it can be both frustrating and exciting to see a number of these species approaching after the whistle of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. In our tour we managed to see more than 35 species. Casa María and Hato Pinero are one of the best destinations in northern Venezuela to learn about the confusing species of this family.

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet. *Camptostoma obsoletum*. We enjoyed daily views in Hato Piñero.

Mouse-colored Tyrannulet. *Phaeomyias murina*. A single individual was observed in Hato Pinero.

Forest Elaenia. *Myiopagis gaimardii*. Two individuals were seen approaching to the light bulb in Casa María.

Lesser Elaenia. *Elaenia chiriquensis*. One individual was observed by Kaaren in Hato Pinero.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia. *Elaenia flavogaster*. A single individual was seen a couple of times in Hato Piñero.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher. *Leptopogon superciliaris*. We observed two individuals around the light bulb of Casa María. The ear patch is one of the distinctive field marks.

Rufous-lored Tyrannulet. *Phylloscartes flaviventris*. We enjoyed superb views of a pair in the cloud forest above Casa María.

Sooty-headed Tyrannulet. *Phyllomyias griseiceps*. A pair was seen in Casa María.

Paltry Tyrannulet. *Zimmerius vilissimus*. A single individual was observed repeated times in Casa María. This species is considered a separate species in Hilty, 2003 *Birds of Venezuela*, and named Venezuelan Tyrannulet.

Northern Scrub-Flycatcher. *Sublegatus arenarum*. The resemblance of this species with a *Myiarchus* flycatcher usually drives to a wrong identification. A single individual was seen three times in Hato Piñero.

Pale-tipped Tyrannulet (Inezia). *Inezia caudata*. We enjoyed views of three pairs in Hato Piñero. The common name *Inezia* is waiting for formal recognition by the SACC (South America Classification Committee).

Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant. *Lophotriccus pileatus*. This species can be secretive in Venezuela. We saw it nicely in Palmichal.

Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant. *Lophotriccus pilaris*. Seen twice in Hato Piñero. Its diminutive size plus the rich yellow eyes were a good field mark.

Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher. *Poecilotriccus sylvia*. Heard in Hato Piñero.

Common Tody-Flycatcher. *Todirostrum cinereum*. This species was seen several times in Casa María and in Hato Piñero. Notice that this diminutive tody-flycatcher has a conspicuous voice despite its small size.

Yellow-olive Flycatcher (Flatbill). *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*. A single individual was observed three times in Casa María.

Yellow-breasted Flycatcher (Ochre-lored Flatbill). *Tolmomyias flaviventris*. One individual was seen by Matyn in Hato Pinero.

White-throated Spadebill. *Platyrinchus mystaceus*. Heard in Hato Pinero.

Bran-colored Flycatcher. *Myiophobus fasciatus*. One individual was seen at Casa María reaching the light bulb to hunt for small moths.

Euler's Flycatcher. *Lathrotriccus euleri*. This forest dweller was quite shy and despite our attempts we only got to hear it.

Olive-striped Flycatcher. *Mionectes olivaceus*. A single individual was observed in Casa María.

Smoke-colored Pewee. *Contopus fumigatus*. A single individual was observed in Casa María.

Vermilion Flycatcher. *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. This conspicuous and easy to identify bird (at least for the males!) was seen in Hato Piñero.

Pied Water-Tyrant. *Fluvicola pica*. Common and numerous in Hato Piñero.

White-headed Marsh-Tyrant. *Arundinicola leucocephala*. A single individual was seen twice in Hato Piñero.

Cattle Tyrant. *Machetornis rixosus*. Pairs or single individuals were seen foraging on grassland on riding at the back of capybaras in Hato Piñero.

Dusky-capped Flycatcher. *Myiarchus tuberculifer*. The genus *Myiarchus* comprises one of the most difficult-to-identify birds in the field. Pairs were seen daily in Casa Maria.

Venezuelan Flycatcher. *Myiarchus venezuelensis*. A single individual was observed near the lodge in Hato Piñero.

(*) **Pale-edged Flycatcher.** *Myiarchus cephalotes*. El Avila national park.

Brown-crested Flycatcher. *Myiarchus tyrannulus*. Seen in Casa Maria.

The following seven species are considered by some taxonomists to be an example of adaptive radiation, suggesting a rapidly multiplying lineage from a single ancestor.

Lesser Kiskadee. *Pitangus (Philohydor) lictor*. Basically a miniature of the Great Kiskadee. Notice the thinner bill and preference for areas near water. A pair was seen twice in a pond in Hato Piñero.

Great Kiskadee. *Pitangus sulphuratus*. This one was common and widespread tyrant-flycatcher in both locations. Several were seen throughout the trip. The prominent bill and the reddish wings are diagnostic.

Boat-billed Flycatcher. *Megarynchus pitangua*. This species was found near Casa Maria. It seems like a bird attached to a huge bill!

Rusty-margined Flycatcher. *Myiozetetes cayanensis*. This one was regularly seen in Casa Maria and in Hato Piñero. The *yellow-breasted* flycatchers are hard to tell apart unless habitat, habits and song are known. In the case of this species the mournful and melancholic whistle is one of the key field marks.

Social Flycatcher. *Myiozetetes similis*. Many pairs were observed in Casa Maria and in Hato Piñero. This one looks like a *bleached-out* species in comparison with Rusty-margined Flycatcher. The voice also differs, being sharp and short.

White-bearded Flycatcher. *Phelpsia inornata*. We located a pair near a pond close to the lodge. This is a near-endemic species of Venezuela. The short bill and the prominent and immaculate white beard (and eyebrow) tells it apart from other similar species.

Tropical Kingbird. *Tyrannus melancholicus*. This species was common and widespread. Further studies are needed to determine the local migration pattern across Venezuela.

Gray Kingbird. *Tyrannus dominicensis*. A common species in Piñero. Unmistakable.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher. *Tyrannus savana*. The breeding behavior of this flycatcher in Venezuela remained as a mystery for a long while. Only recently they have found a nest of it! We know that two populations occur in the llanos. Few individuals were seen in Hato Pinero.

Pipridae

Manakins are the quintessence of neotropical birds. The males are usually arranged with beautiful plumage and the display in selected arenas (technically named *lek*) to attract the females that usually have duller plumage.

Lance-tailed Manakin. *Chiroxiphia lanceolata*. We only saw a female in Hato Pinero.

Tityridae

Studies published in 1989 and 1990 concluded that *Tityra*, *Schiffornis* and *Pchyramphus* formed a distinct group, separated from the rest of *Tyrannidae*. This perception rooted finally in September 2007 R. O. when Prum proposed to adopt the family *Tityridae*. This was later accepted by the SACC. In Hilty's field guide these species were treated as *incerta sedis*, meaning that they appeared to be related with the tyrant flycatchers but of uncertain affinity.

Black-crowned Tityra. *Tityra inquisitor*. 3 individuals were seen near Casa Maria.

Chestnut-crowned Becard. *Pachyramphus castaneus*. A trio giving its sad and soft whistle was observed near Casa Maria.

Vireonidae

Brown-capped Vireo. *Vireo leucophrys*. Seen only once near Casa Maria.

Scrub Greenlet. *Hylophilus flavipes*. A single individual was observed at the light bulb of Casa Maria.

Golden-fronted Greenlet. *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*. Common in Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Rufous-browed Peppershrike. *Cyclarhis gujanensis*. Great views of an individual coming to feed on moths in Casa Maria light bulb.

Hirundidae

(*) **Blue-and-white Swallow.** *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*. Various individuals were seen in El Avila.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow. *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*. We enjoyed two individuals on the road above Casa Maria. In the mountains this species have a preference to feed in the vicinity of mountain streams.

Gray-breasted Martin. *Progne chalybea*. Several individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

White-winged Swallow. *Tachycineta albiventer*. More than a dozen individuals were observed in Laguna Los Cerritos in Hato Piñero (we saw only one individual in the 2011 tour and two individuals in the previous tour).

Barn Swallow. *Hirundo rustica*. Hundreds were seen beyond Los Arenales in Hato Piñero.

Troglodytidae

Scaly-breasted Wren. *Microcerculus marginatus*. We enjoyed superb views of an individual crossing a mountains stream in Palmichal. Named Southern Nightingale Wren in Hilty's *Birds of Venezuela*.

House Wren. *Troglodytes aedon*. This one was common in populated areas and in scrubby vegetation. It was seen in both locations.

Stripe-backed Wren. *Campylorhynchus nuchalis*. A pair was observed picking nesting material from the ground near the biological station of Hato Piñero.

Bicolored Wren. *Campylorhynchus griseus*. Two individuals were seen along the road west of Hato Piñero.

Whiskered Wren. *Pheugopedius mystacalis*. A pair was seen along the road between Palmichal and Casa María. This species is very shy and usually remains well inside thick vegetation. We had to work this one to see it well!

Rufous-breasted Wren. *Thryothorus rutilus*. A pair was observed near Casa María.

Rufous-and-white Wren. *Thryothorus rufalbus*. Three individuals were seen in Casa María after the light bulb. This species has a diagnostic soft and suit song.

Buff-breasted Wren. *Cantorchilus leucotis*. Seen in Hato Piñero.

(*) **Gray-breasted Wood-Wren.** *Henicorhina leucophrys*. One individual was seen briefly in El Avila.

Poliophtilidae

Long-billed Gnatwren. *Ramphocaenus melanurus*. Heard only in Casa María.

Tropical Gnatcatcher. *Poliophtila plumbea*. Pairs were frequently seen in Hato Piñero. Despite its small size, this species is conspicuous as it perches in open areas while calling regularly and wagging the tail.

Turdidae

Pale-breasted Thrush. *Turdus leucomelas*. This species was seen regularly in Casa María.

Spectacled (Bare-eyed) Thrush. *Turdus nudigenis*. A common species around Casa María.

Mimidae

Tropical Mockingbird. *Mimus gilvus*. Various pairs were observed in Hato Piñero. The North American relative (Northern Mockingbird) is known for its capacity to mimic other species song. You would think this species represents its counterpart in the tropics of America, but it isn't. See Yellow-rumped Cacique to find more out about the "mockingbird species" in northern South America!

Parulidae

Tennessee Warbler. *Vermivora peregrina*. Various individuals were seen in Casa María. It is interesting to notice that we saw more than a dozen individuals with red forehead. This is probably stained from a red flower!

American Redstart. *Setophaga ruticilla*. Common around Casa María.

Cerulean Warbler. *Setophaga cerulea*. We enjoyed superb views of a male near Casa María. This site is incredibly reliable for this species!

Tropical Parula. *Parula pitiayumi*. This species was fairly common in 2009. In the years 2010, 2011, 2012 and this year we observed only two individuals in Casa María.

(*) **Blackburnian Warbler.** *Dendroica fusca*. A single individual as seen in El Avila. This species migrates mostly to the Andes.

Yellow Warbler. *Dendroica aestiva*. Various individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Golden-crowned Warbler. *Basileuterus culicivorus*. A pair was seen daily in Casa María searching for moth near the light bulb.

(*) **Three-striped Warbler.** *Basileuterus tristriatus*. A pair in El Avila.

(*) **Slate-throated Whitestart (Redstart).** *Myioborus miniatus*. A very active individual was enjoyed foraging with the mixed species feeding flock at El Avila.

Thraupidae

Red-capped Cardinal. *Paroaria gularis*. (Named **Masked Cardinal** *Paroaria nigrocincta* in *Birds of Northern South America* Restall et al). A pair was seen in Hato Piñero. The race to occur in the Orinoco is now recognized as a separate species, Masked Cardinal.

Hooded Tanager. *Nemosia pileata*. A small family group was seen in two days responding to the whistle of the pygmy owl in Hato Piñero.

(*) **Oleaginous Hemispingus.** *Hemispingus frontalis*. Nice views of a group (5+ individuals) in El Avila national park.

White-lined Tanager. *Tachyphonus rufus*. A common species in Casa María. Male and females were once believed to be two separate species!

Silver-beaked Tanager. *Ramphocelus carbo*. A common species in Casa María.

Blue-gray Tanager. *Thraupis episcopus*. A common and numerous species in both locations.

Glaucous Tanager. *Thraupis glaucocolpa*. Only one individual was seen in the lodge area of Hato Pinero.

Palm Tanager. *Thraupis palmarum*. Daily views in Casa María.

Black-headed Tanager. *Tangara cyanoptera*. Few individuals were seen in Casa María and Palmichal.

Burnished-buff Tanager. *Tangara cayana*. This is probably the most widespread *Tangara* in the lowlands in northern Venezuela. We enjoyed daily views in Casa María.

Blue-necked Tanager. *Tangara cyanicollis*. What a beauty! Seen near Casa María and in Palmichal.

Speckled Tanager. *Tangara guttata*. Two pairs were seen along the road leading from Casa María to Palmichal.

Bay-headed Tanager. *Tangara gyrola*. About 6 individuals were seen in Palmichal. Also, it was seen coming to the light bulb in Casa María.

Golden Tanager. *Tangara arthus*. A pair was observed in Palmichal. This is one of the most beautiful *Tangara* tanagers in Venezuela given its rich mustard-yellow breast and black ear patches.

Guira Tanager. *Hemithraupis guira*. In Casa María we enjoyed views of this astonishing species. The male has a contrasting black mask with a mix of orange and yellow on the breast.

White-eared Conebill. *Conirostrum leucogenys*. A female was observed in Casa María. This could be a new species for the lodge bird inventory.

Chestnut-vented Conebill. *Conirostrum speciosum*. We saw it three times in Hato Pinero. The groups responded well to the whistle of the pygmy owl!

Saffron Finch. *Sicalis flaveola*. This is a common species in Hato Piñero. Several adult and juveniles were seen.

Blue-black Grassquit. *Volatinia jacarina*. Seen a couple of times. One near Casa María and another in Hato Pinero.

Gray Seedeater. *Sporophila intermedia*. Two males were seen in Hato Piñero.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater. *Sporophila nigricollis*. 4 adult individuals were seen along the road between Casa María and Palmichal.

Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch (Lesser Seed-Finch). *Oryzoborus angolensis*. An individual in female plumage was observed coming to the light bulb in Casa María.

Pileated Finch. *Coryphospingus pileatus*. A male was observed reacting after the whistle of the pygmy owl in Hato Piñero. This species is named Gray Pileated Finch in Hilty (2003).

Bananaquit. *Coereba flaveola*. We enjoyed daily views of individuals feeding on fruit and nectar. This conspicuous species may well be split in more than 3 species sometime in the future.

(*) **Black-faced Grassquit.** *Tiaris bicolor*. A pair was observed in the gardens of the hotel in Caracas.

Streaked Saltator. *Saltator striatipectus*. Two pairs were enjoyed near Casa María.

(Southern) **Grayish Saltator.** *Saltator coerulescens*. Pairs and single individuals were seen in Casa María.

Orinocan Saltator. *Saltator orenocensis*. We glimpsed one individual in Hato Pinero.

Buff-throated Saltator. *Saltator maximus*. Two pairs were foraging close Casa María in a patch of secondary growth.

Emberizidae

Black-striped Sparrow. *Arremonops conirostris*. A pair was seen reacting after the whistle of the pygmy owl near Casa María.

(*) **Ochre-breasted Brush-Finch.** *Atlapetes semirufus*. A pair in El Avila national park.

Yellow-browed Sparrow. *Ammodramus aurifrons*. A single individual was observed singing in Hato Piñero.

Cardinalidae

Summer Tanager. *Piranga rubra*. A female was seen in Casa María. The pale bill and the crested-shaped nape were distinctive field marks. Notice that taxonomic studies have demonstrated that the *Piranga* are now placed with the *Cardinalidae*. Therefore, these are not tanagers but cardinals!

Icteridae

Red-breasted Blackbird. *Sturnella militaris*. Small groups were observed in the grassland between the lodge and the airstrip of Hato Pinero.

Carib Grackle. *Quiscalus lugubris*. This species was observed at almost every day of the tour.

Shiny Cowbird. *Molothrus bonariensis*. Few were seen in Hato Pinero.

Giant Cowbird. *Molothrus oryzivora*. A single individual was seen flying over Casa María.

Venezuelan Troupial. *Icterus icterus*. We enjoy daily views in Hato Piñero. This is the national bird of Venezuela.

Yellow Oriole. *Icterus nigrogularis*. Few were observed in Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Yellow-rumped Cacique. *Cacicus cela*. Various groups were seen in Hato Piñero. This is the species that imitates other bird songs in northern South America.

Russet-backed Oropendola. *Psarocolius angustifrons*. Three individuals were observed moving along with Crested Oropendola.

Crested Oropendola. *Psarocolius decumanus*. This one is commoner than the previous species as it tolerates more open areas. Many were seen in Casa Maria and in Hato Piñero.

Fringillidae

Trinidad Euphonia. *Euphonia trinitatis*. A pair was seen in Hato Piñero. The validity of this species maybe questioned in the future because of its resemblance with the widespread amazonian Purple-throated Euphonia, *Euphonia chlorotica*.

Thick-billed Euphonia. *Euphonia laniirostris*. Various individuals were seen in Casa Maria. The thickness of the bill is the id field mark.

Golden-rumped Euphonia. *Euphonia cyanocephala*. A pair was observed reacting to the pygmy owl whistle near Casa Maria.

Orange-bellied Euphonia. *Euphonia xanthogaster*. About three individuals reached the bird feeder in palmichal.

(*) **Blue-naped Chlorophonia.** *Chlorophonia cyanea*. El Avila.

Lesser Goldfinch. *Carduelis psaltria*. About three individuals were seen along the road between Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Bird species not included in the field checklist that were observed in El Avila national park.

Sparkling Violetear. *Colibri coruscans*, **Olive-backed Woodcreeper.** *Xiphorhynchus triangularis*, **Montane Woodcreeper.** *Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*, **Black-throated Spinetail.** *Synallaxis castanea*, **Golden-breasted Fruiteater.** *Pipreola aureopectus*, **Chestnut-crowned Antpitta.** *Grallaria ruficapilla*, **Flavescent Flycatcher.** *Myophobus flavicans*, **Mountain Elaenia.** *Elaenia frantzii*, **Glossy Back Thrush.** *Turdus serranus*, **Caracas Tapaculo.** *Scytalopus caracae*, **Black-crested Warbler.** *Basileuterus nigrocristata*, **Beryl-spangled Tanager.** *Tangara nigroviridis*, **Blue-capped Tanager.** *Thraupis cyanocephala*, **Hepatic Tanager.** *Piranga flava*, **Chestnut-capped Brush Finch.** *Arremon bruneinucha*, **Rufous-collared Sparrow.** *Zonotrichia capensis*.

Other species list.

Mammals

Crab-eating Fox (Common Zorro). *Cerdocyon thous*. Hato Piñero, **White-tailed Deer.** *Odocoileus virginianus*. Hato Piñero, **Red-rumped Agouti.** *Dasyprocta leporina*, Hato Piñero, **Three-toed Sloth.** *Bradypus trydactyla*. Casa Maria, **Red-tailed Squirrel.** *Sciurus granatensis*. Hato Piñero, **Capibara.** *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*. Hato Piñero, **Weeping Capuchin Monkey.** *Cebus olivaceus*. Hato Piñero and Casa Maria, **Little Brown Bat. (Molossidae).** Hato Piñero. This one was a common species around the main house. **Ocelot.** *Leopardus pardalis*. 20+ minutes view of a single individual in Hato Piñero!

Reptiles

Green Iguana. *Iguana iguana*. Hato Piñero, **Spectacled Cayman.** *Cayman crocodilus*. Hato Piñero, **Llanos Side-necked Turtle.** *Podocemis vogli*. Hato Piñero, **Common House Geckoo.** *Hemidactylus frenatus*. Hato Piñero, **Ameiva Lizard.** *Ameiva sp.* Casa Maria. **Ferdelance.** *Bothrops sp.* Cloud forest above Casa Maria.

Other groups

Tree Frog. *Hyla sp.*, **Orb-weaver Spider.** *Araneidae*. **Arboreal termite.**