



Yanomamô expedition with Trish Shoultz. Amazonas, Venezuela

August-September 2012

Prepared by David Ascanio



This was primarily a cultural trip and sure enough we nailed our objective. The prime target was to live with the Yanomami and for that we visited a new Shabono located in the Pasimoni river, named Pueblo Viejo. This Shabono is a kind of a share living location for the Yanomami based in El Meray II, a westernized Yanomami community. In this trip we also learned about the culture of the Arawak, the Yekuana, the Piaroa and the Curripaco Amerindian tribes. While at the Shabono (Yanomami rounded construction serving as communal home) I was able to take a solo walk at dawn for about two hours along the long trail leading to the Siapa river. It wasn't easy to locate the trail as the Yanomami don't leave solid marks in their trails (a twisted thin branch is a trail marker for them!). Also, as the birds were singing near the Shabono it was

hard for me to ignore it and continue deep into the trail. For the rest of the trip most of the time was spent riding the rivers with a bongo (large roofed canoe) with a 40 horse power out board.

Said that, the amount of time devoted for birdwatching was minimal and subordinated with the logistical issues of the trip. Much of my recordings around the Shabono were accompanied by screams and cries of the kids.

During the ride back to Samariapo we stopped (and spent the night) in Garzón, at the Colombia side of the Orinoco. There we located a pair of Black-fronted Nunbird (not found in Venezuela yet!). Shall I have realized this I would have troll for this species at the Venezuelan side of the river.

Many of the accounts below represent either a new location or a new habitat for the species. I will include these at the AvesVenezuela website www.avesvenezuela.net

The photos taken during this trip have been posted in the following link:

<http://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157631581549613/>

As a birdwatcher, I felt blessed of having the opportunity to visit such distant and unknown locations of my country and seeing or recording many of the birds fund there. But, I must admit that I felt that having a cultural experience was equally important to me. As a Venezuelan I cannot thanks enough Trish Shoultz for taking me to accompany her in this trip that meant so much for my life.

I will hold for years the memoirs of the long boat rides, the rainy storms (named locally *Chubasco*), the inmanageable black flies, the mosquitoes at night, walking the incredibly damp and humid forest, being afraid to get a snake bite in such remote area, marvelous sunsets, the Yapacana tepui, river with black waters and rivers with white waters...so much for a short time!

I returned from this trip with the conviction that I have to prepare a longer land-based trip to the Pasimoni river in the future. Ditto for the Casiquiare river!

The itinerary:

Aug, 27. Flight from Caracas to Puerto Ayacucho in jet plane.

Aug 28. Small Cessna flight from Puerto Ayacucho to San Carlos de Rio Negro. Loaded the bongo and took a ride to the mouth of the Pasimoni river. Night in Ninal.

Aug 29, Aug 30, Aug 31, Sep 1. 3 days with the Yanomami community of Pueblo Nuevo at the Shabono named Pueblo Viejo.

Sep 2. Boat ride from Pueblo Viejo to Kiraweni (Jeral – Arawak community).

Sep 3. Boat ride from Kiraweni to Capybara (Casiquiare river).

Sep 4. Boat ride from Copybara to Tama-Tama, at the junction of the Casiquiare-Orinoco rivers.

Sep 5. Day visit to La Esmeralda. Night in Tama-Tama.

Sep 6. Boat ride from Tama-Tama to San Antonio del Orinoco.

Sep 7. Boat ride from San Antonio del Orinoco to San Fernando de Atabapo.

Sep 8. Boat ride from San Fernando de Atabapo to Garzon, Colombia.

Sep 9. Boat ride from Garzon to Samariapo. Transfer to Gavilan.

Sep 10. Day at Puerto Ayacucho to close deals and discuss future trips.

Sep 11. Drive to Caracas.

Locations:

CA. Casiquiare river. Habitat: Varzea.

PA. Pasimoni. Habitats: Igapo, floodable Sandy soil savanna, tropical humid forest (terra firme forest).

OR. Orinoco. Habitat: Varzea.

Garzon. Colombian ranch along the Colombia side of the Orinoco. Habitat: Farmland.

RI. River island in the Orinoco below the mouth of the Vichada river.

The Birdlist:

The following birdlist was written while dealing with black flies along the river bank, in rush. For that reason, I did omit the scientific names and kept no taxonomic order. Basically, it was prepared to have it as a reminder of the species seen or heard while on the trip.

Crested Bobwhite, 6 along the road near Samariapo.

Anhinga, CA

Green Ibis, PA, CA, OR (mid)

Whistling Duck sp., Copybara.

Limpkin, Garzon (Colombia).

Great Egret, PS,CA,OR

Cocoi Heron, PS, CA.

Black crowned Night Heron, Capybara.

Capped Heron, PA (rare), CA (common), OR (uncommon)

Striated Heron, PA,CA,OR

Yellow-headed Caracara, Garzon, CA.

Crested Caracara, Marta's place (Gavilan road).

Turkey Vulture, all over.

Black Vulture, PA, CA, OR.

Greater Yellow-headed Vulture, CA.

Laughing Falcon, PA

Crane Hawk, OR (Tama Tama) or black morph of Hook-billed Kite (more likely due to the lack of crescents on wings). Both have small heads.

Plumbeous Kite, CA (juv and adults)

Snail Kite, PA

Roadside Hawk, CA, OR

Bat Falcon, CA

Pearl Kite, road leaving Samariapo

Bicolored Hawk, road leaving Samariapo

Osprey, PA,CA,OR

King Vulture, PA

Red-throated Caracara, PA

Black Caracara, PA, CA, OR

Gray-headed Kite CA soaring low (rare plumage) with dark hood and streaked breast.

Great Black Hawk, CA

Black Hawk Eagle, CA

Chachalaca sp. GARzon.

Hoatzin, CA, Tama Tama.

Spix's Guan, CA

Pipin Guan, CA (feeding largely on Euterpes palms. Perched on the stem of the palm leaves!)

Southern lapwing, Garzon

Purple Gallinule, RI

Pied Lapwing, heard in PA. need confirmation.

Gray Plover, CA (flying).

Large-billed Tern, PA, CA

Pale-vented Pigeon, RI

Ruddy Pigeon? Or Plumbeous Pigeon, PA

Ruddy Ground Dove, Garzon

White-tipped Dove, RI

Blue-and-yellow Macaw, PA, CA, OR

Scarlet Macaw, CA

Red-and-green Macaw, CA

Chestnut-fronted Macaw, OR

Mealy Parrot, PA

Black-headed Parrot, PA

Cobalt-winged Parakeet, PA, OR

Orange-cheeked Parrot, PA

Pearly-breasted Cuckoo, CA

Black-bellied Cuckoo, PA

Violaceous Jay, CA, OR

Common Potoo, PA

Sand-colored Nighthawk, GARzon – at dusk-

Pauraque, PA, OR

Tepui Swift, PA

Chaetura sp, PA

Fork-tailed Palm Swift, CA

Fork-tailed Woodnymph, PA

Fiery-tailed Awwbill, PA

White-necked Jacobin, Tama-Tama

Gray-chinned Hermit, PA

Amazonian White-tailed Trogon, Tama Tama.

Amazonian Violaceous Trogon, heard Tama Tama.

Swallow wing Puffbird, CA, OR

Ringed Kingfisher, CA, OR

Amazon Kingfisher, OR

Green Kingfisher, PA?,OR

American Pygmy Kingfisher, PA

Blue-crowned Motmot, PA

Black-fronted Nunbird, OR (Colombia side), Garzon. Not checked Venezuelan side.

Gilded Barbet, PA

Red-billed Toucan, heard PA, OR

Scaly-breasted Woodpecker, Tama Tama

Chestnut Woodpecker, CA

Cream-colored Woodpecker, heard CA?

Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, PA

Lineated Woodpecker, PA

Golden-spangled Piculet, Tama Tama

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper, PA

Striped Woodcreeper, CA

Buff-throated Woodcreeper, CA

Long-billed Woodcreeper, OR Colombia side
Plain-crowned Spinetail, RI
Rusty-backed Spinetail (with rusty backs!), RI
Olive-backed Foliage Gleaner, PA
Black-crested Antshrike, OR
Cherrie's Antwren, PA, Tama Tama
Warbling Antbird, PA
Gray Antwren, PA
Dusky-throated Antshrike, PA
Cinereous Antshrike, PA
Black-throated Antshrike, heard Tama Tama?
Scale-backed Antbird, PA
White-shouldered Antshrike, PA
Thrush-like Antpitta, heard PA
Spotted Antpitta, heard across the CA river in Capybara
Rufous-capped Antthrush, PA
Blue-crowned Manakin, PA
Thrush-like Schiffornis, PA
Drab water Tyrant, CA, OR (less common)
Fuscous Flycatcher, RI
Fan tailed Flycatcher, PA
Forest Elaenia, PA
Gray-crowned Flycatcher, PA
Yellow-margined Flycatcher, PA
Rufous-tailed Flatbill, Tama Tama, pair
Helmeted Pygmy Tyrant, PA, CA?

Short-tailed Pygmy Tyrant, PA
River Tyrannulet, RI
Yellow Tyrannulet, RI
Riverside Tyrant, RI
Slender-footed Tyrannulet, PA
White-lored Tyrannulet, heard PA
Amazonian Inezia, PA
Tropical Kingbird, CA, OR
Great Kiskadee, OR, RI. Open nest (flat cup) in Garzon!
Social Flycatcher, RI
Rusty-margined Flycatcher, PA
Gray-capped Flycatcher, CA (arawac village, near palms)
Sulphury Flycatcher, San Antonio, near Yapacana
Streaked Flycatcher, CA
Piratic Flycatcher, mouth of PASimoni?
Fork-tailed Flycatcher, GARzon
Short-crested Flycatcher, GARzon
Tropical Mockingbird, road from Samariapo?
Citron-bellied Attila, PA (common), CA (less common)
Pompadour Cotinga, PA (heard), Tama Tama (seen)
Screamong Piha, Tama Tama
Grayish Mourner, Tama Tama, PA
Cinereous Mourner, Wheel chair community in CA
Bare-necked Fruitcrow, OR
White-winged Swallow, OR, RI, CA?
Black-collared Swallow, CA

White-banded Swallow, PA, CA
Gray-breasted Martin, mouth of PA
Coraya Wren, PA
Buff-breasted Wren, RI
Wing-banded Wren, PA
White-necked Thrush, heard only once CA
Red-eyed Vireo, PA
Hylophilus sp. (Buff-cheeked?), PA
Orange-headed Tanager, RI
Yellow-backed Tanager, PA
Bananaquit, PA
Short-billed Honeycreeper, CA
Blue-gray Tanager, San Carlos Rio Negro, PA, CA, OR (last location without wing bar)
Turquoise Tanager, OR
Silver-beaked Tanager, RI
Grayish Saltator, RI (Amazonian repertoire)
Pectoral Sparrow, PA
Chestnut-bellied Seedeater, San Carlos Rio Negro
Orange-fronted Yellow Finch, OR
Saffron Finch?, Garzon
Yellow-browed Sparrow, RI
Moriche Oriole, Tama Tama
Olive Oropendola, CA, OR?
Yellow-rumped Cacique, PA?, CA, OR
Spotted Sandpiper, PA, CA, OR
Common Ground Dove, PA

Greater Ani, CA, OR

Yellow-crested Manakin?, PA