

VICTOR EMANUEL NATURE TOURS, INC.,

HATO PIÑERO

February 12-19, 2005

Guide: David Ascanio

When Victor asked me last year to prepare a tour to Hato Piñero for 2005 many memories came of my early days as a birding leader. It was about 16 years ago that I first visited this amazing ranch, and after this trip I can only say that as a good red wine, Hato Piñero gets better and better over the years.

This list compiles the birds and most of the wildlife recorded in our 2005 February tour to Hato Piñero. The water in *Caño San Jeronimo* (creek) was low, allowing astonishing views of agami herons, hoatzins and a 2 feet distant Green-and-rufous Kingfisher. The *Escorzonera* trail provided my first sight of a pair of Black-and-white Owl for the ranch, and the night outings allowed amazing views of many nocturnal birds plus impressive sights of Brazilian Tapir, a couple of Ocelots and a young Jaguar!

Nowadays the ranch has a management plan, where extensive patches of dry forest are preserved while other areas are designed for the cattle operation. In the south, a good portion of pasture is home for grassland and yellow-browed sparrows while at the north the cambrian-origin hills (locally called *Galeras*) allows extensive patches of dry forest edged by scrubby vegetation. There, the *Curatella* trees are home for many tyrant-flycatchers and other insectivorous species. We spent a morning visiting the forest in the *Galeras*, while one afternoon we visited the *Los Cerritos* lagoon. Another day we birded along the internal road to *Charco Azul* and in one morning we did a boat trip to the narrow San Jeronimo creek. One of the great advantages of a trip of this kind is that we were able to bird at a slow pace, learning about bird-behavior, discussing some of the taxonomical problems and even having time to enjoy the obligant *siesta* after each day's lunch. In total we managed to see a good sample of the fauna of the *Llanos*, including many species of waterbirds, 21 birds of prey and 34 species of Tyrant-Flycatchers!

The last afternoon we visited to southern tip of the ranch, to *MG*. As we drove back, I could perceived the fight of the *Palma Llanera* (*Copernicia* palm tree) surviving the lethal embrace of the strangle Fig, where the last one can't kill the host. Also, the urgent call for a dip of water made by dozens of caymans, the cracks in a soil that is under water for half of the year and the tremendous necessity of rain expressed by every living being in the ranch was calmed by the security that in only 3 months, when the rainy season starts, these same species will be bagging for a inch of dry land and a full sunny day.

At dusk the sun was burning the horizon, and tones of red, yellow and blue melted with dozens of Wood-Storks, Ibises, Parrots and Macaws, cowboys, cattle and dust. I hope you enjoyed this trip as I have been doing for decades.

Nowadays Hato Pinero is threat by government policies for the development of the agriculture in the country and seems like no matter what is going on in other ranches, they will respect the heritage left by the Branger family. We will certainly do our best to help them preserve this amazing sample of the *Venezuela's Llanos*.

We thanks Gertrudis and Simón for sharing their skills and company in the field. Otto, Lebsky and the staff were tremendously kind satisfying our requests, specially

arranging fresh fruits in the outings every day. I hope to see you again in another neotropical birding experience, a region with a tremendous ornithological history and still so much to be learned!

LOCALITIES

SJ San Jeronimo

EC La Escorzonera

MG Manglarito

LG Laguna Grande

Other locations are specified in the text

LIST OF BIRDS

- 1 LITTLE TINAMOU *Crypturellus soui*. Heard in Escorzonera trail
- 2 NEOTROPIC CORMORANT *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*. Several individuals
- 3 ANHINGA *Anhinga anhinga*. SG
- 4 HORNED SCREAMER *Anhima cornuta*. LG and MG
- 5 FULVOUS WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna bicolor*. MG 1 ind
- 6 WHITE-FACED WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna viduata*. Scattered sights.
- 7 BLACK-BELLIED WHISTLING-DUCK *Dendrocygna autumnalis*. Scattered sights
- 8 MUSCOVY DUCK *Cairina moschata*. Groups of up to 24 ind.
- 9 BLUE-WINGED TEAL *Anas discors*. Few ind in El Pao dam
- 10 RUFESCENT TIGER-HERON *Tigrisoma lineatum*. Common near water
- 11 COCOI HERON *Ardea cocoi*. Scattered sights near wetlands
- 12 GREAT EGRET *Ardea alba*. Common and widespread
- 13 SNOWY EGRET *Egretta thula*. Scattered sights
- 14 LITTLE BLUE HERON *Egretta caerulea*. Few records
- 15 CATTLE EGRET *Bubulcus ibis*. Common and widespread
- 16 STRIATED HERON *Butorides striatus*. Scattered sights
- 17 AGAMI HERON *Agamia agami*. A adult and a juvenal in SJ
- 18 WHISTLING HERON *Syrigma sibilatrix*. Pairs in dry savannas
- 19 CAPPED HERON *Pilherodius pileatus*. SJ
- 20 BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nycticorax nycticorax*. Several sights
- 21 YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON *Nyctanassa violacea*. Couple in SJ
- 22 BOAT-BILLED HERON *Cochlearius cochlearius*. SJ and road to Charco Azul
- 23 BUFF-NECKED IBIS *Theristicus caudatus*. Daily views near the guest house
- 24 SHARP-TAILED IBIS *Cercibis oxycerca*. Pairs along the dry savannas
- 25 GREEN IBIS *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*. Scattered sights near wetlands
- 26 BARE-FACED (WHISPERING) IBIS *Phimosus infuscatus*. Daily sights
- 27 WHITE IBIS *Eudocimus albus*. Few records, always with *E. ruber*

- 28 SCARLET IBIS *Eudocimus ruber*. Always gorgeous! Many seen in this trip
- 29 GLOSSY IBIS *Plegadis falcinellus*. 3 ind in MG
- 30 ROSEATE SPOONBILL *Ajaia ajaja*.
- 31 WOOD STORK *Mycteria americana*. Commonest of the Storks in the ranch
- 32 MAGUARI STORK *Euxenura maguari*. 3 ind in MG
- 33 JABIRÚ *Jabiru mycteria*. Daily encounters of pairs feeding in remnants of ponds
- 34 KING VULTURE *Sarcoramphus papa*. Couple of sights
- 35 BLACK VULTURE *Coragyps atratus*.
- 36 TURKEY VULTURE *Cathartes aura*. Daily encounters of N migrant race
- 37 LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE *Cathartes burrovianus*. 1 ind along the road to the ranch
- 38 OSPREY *Pandion haliaetus*. Twice in N side of the ranch
- 39 GRAY-HEADED KITE *Leptodon cayanensis*. One soaring over San Jeronimo.
- 40 SNAIL KITE *Rostrhamus sociabilis*
- 41 CRANE HAWK *Geranospiza caerulescens*. Amazing views at eye level of a ind hunting crabs? along the side of the creek.
- 42 SAVANNA HAWK *Buteogallus meridionalis*
- 43 GREAT BLACK-HAWK *Buteogallus urubitinga*
- 44 HARRIS'S HAWK *Parabuteo unicinctus*. Seen in drier country in the E side
- 45 BLACK-COLLARED HAWK *Busarellus nigricollis*
- 46 ROADSIDE HAWK *Buteo magnirostris*
- 47 ZONE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albonotatus*. Two soaring over an extensive fire along the grassland en route back to Valencia
- 48 WHITE-TAILED HAWK *Buteo albicaudatus*
- 49 NORTHERN CRESTED-CARACARA *Caracara cheriway*
- 50 YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA *Milvago chimachima*
- 51 LAUGHING FALCON *Herpetotheres cachinnans*
- 52 AMERICAN KESTREL *Falco sparverius*
- 53 APLOMADO FALCON *Falco femoralis*. Pair nesting in LG.
- 54 BAT FALCON *Falco ruficularis*
- 55 RUFIOUS-VENTED CHACHALACA *Ortalis ruficauda*
- 56 YELLOW-KNOBBED CURASSOW *Crax daubentoni*. There is definitive no place on earth better to see this species. Daily encounters of large groups
- 57 CRESTED BOBWHITE *Colinus cristatus*
- 58 GRAY-NECKED WOOD-RAIL *Aramides cajanea*
- 59 SUNBITTERN *Eurypyga helias*. AS always, close views in San Jeronimo
- 60 LIMPKIN *Aramus guarauna*
- 61 DOUBLE-STRIPED THICK-KNEE *Burhinus bistriatus*. Many pairs in night outing

- 62 SOUTHERN LAPWING *Vanellus chilensis*
- 63 BLACK-NECKED STILT *Himantopus mexicanus*
- 64 WATTLED JACANA *Jacana jacana*
- 65 SOLITARY SANDPIPER *Tringa solitaria*
- 66 SPOTTED SANDPIPER *Actitis macularia*
- 67 BLACK SKIMMER *Rhychops niger*. Few ind in MG
- 68 ROCK PIGEON *Columba livia*
- 69 PALE-VENTED PIGEON *Columba cayennensis*
- 70 EARED DOVE *Zenaida auriculata*. Large numbers in savannas
- 71 SCALED DOVE *Scardafella squammata*
- 72 COMMON GROUND-DOVE *Columbina passerina*. Dry forest edge mostly
- 73 PLAIN-BREASTED GROUND-DOVE *Columbina minuta*. Drier open country
- 74 RUDDY GROUND-DOVE *Columbina talpacoti*
- 75 WHITE-TIPPED DOVE *Leptotila verreauxi*
- 76 SCARLET MACAW *Ara macao*. Superb views of pairs
- 77 CHESTNUT-FRONTED MACAW *Ara severa*
- 78 BROWN-THROATED PARAKEET *Aratinga pertinax*
- 79 GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET *Forpus passerinus*
- 80 ORANGE-CHINNED PARAKEET *Brotogeris jugularis*. Interesting species since is rapidly disappearing in the low llanos
- 81 YELLOW-CROWNED PARROT *Amazona ochrocephala*
- 82 DWARF CUCKOO *Coccyzus pumilus*. Close views in MG
- 83 SQUIRREL CUCKOO *Piaya cayana*
- 84 GREATER ANI *Crotophaga major*. Always near water
- 85 SMOOTH-BILLED ANI *Crotophaga ani*. Open savannas
- 86 GROOVE-BILLED ANI *Crotophaga sulcirostris*. More into scrubby vegetation
- 87 STRIPED CUCKOO *Tapera naevia*. Good studies on a ind perched along the fence line
- 88 HOATZIN *Opisthocomus hoazin*. As always, good studies in San Jeronimo
- 89 BARN OWL *Tyto alba*
- 90 TROPICAL SCREECH-OWL *Otus choliba*
- 91 GREAT HORNED OWL *Bubo virginianus*
- 92 FERRUGINOUS PYGMY-OWL *Glaucidium brasilianum*
- 93 BLACK-AND-WHITE OWL *Strix nigrolineata*. Amazing view of a pair in ES.
- 94 GREAT POTOO *Nyctibius grandis*. Many in night outings
- 95 COMMON POTOO *Nyctibius griseus*
- 96 BAND-TAILED NIGHTHAWK *Nyctiprogne leucopyga*. Many at dusk S of the guest house

- 97 PAURAUQUE *Nyctidromus albicollis*
- 98 WHITE-TAILED NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus cayennensis*. Many singing S of the guest house
- 99 LITTLE NIGHTJAR *Caprimulgus parvulus*. One ind S of the guest house
- 100 NEOTROPICAL PALM-SWIFT *Tachornis squamata*. Always close to *Cvopernicia* Palm trees.
- 101 BLUE-TAILED EMERALD *Chlorostilbon mellisugus*
- 102 WHITE-TAILED GOLDENTHROAT *Polytmus guainumbi*. Near ES
- 103 GLITTERING-THROATED EMERALD *Amazilia fimbriata*
- 104 COPPER-RUMPED HUMMINGBIRD *Amazilia tobaci*. Daily views
- 105 RINGED KINGFISHER *Megaceryle torquata*
- 106 AMAZON KINGFISHER *Chloroceryle amazona*
- 107 GREEN KINGFISHER *Chloroceryle americana*
- 108 GREEN-AND-RUFOUS KINGFISHER *Chloroceryle inda*. Astonishing views few feet from the boat. This ind was perched for a good while
- 109 RUFOUS-TAILED JACAMAR *Galbula ruficauda*
- 110 RUSSET-THROATED PUFFBIRD *Hypnelus ruficollis*. Various ind singing in the *Mata*.
- The following *Picidae* were all seen very weel:
- 111 SCALED PICULET *Picumnus squamulatus*
- 112 SPOT-BREASTED WOODPECKER *Chrysoptilus punctigula*
- 113 LINEATED WOODPECKER *Dryocopus lineatus*. Two chcks were seen inside a nest with parents bringing worms.
- 114 RED-CROWNED WOODPECKER *Melanerpes rubricapillus*
- 115 RED-RUMPED WOODPECKER *Veniliornis kirkii*
- 116 CRIMSON-CRESTED WOODPECKER *Campephilus melanoleucos*
- 117 PALE-BREASTED SPINETAIL *Synallaxis albescens*
- 118 YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL *Certhiaxis cinnamomea*. Always close to wetlands
- 119 RUSTY-BACKED SPINETAIL *Cranioleuca vulpina*. Excellent studies of pairs in SG
- 120 PLAIN THORNBIRD *Phacellodomus inornatus*
- 121 PLAIN XENOPS *Xenops minutus*
- 122 STRONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER *Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*. Amazing views of a pair in SJ
- 123 STRAIGHT-BILLED WOODCREEPER *Xiphorhynchus picus*
- 124 STREAK-HEADED WOODCREEPER *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*
- 125 RED-BILLED SCYTHEBILL *Campylorhamphus trochillirostris*. Another nice sight in SJ
- 126 BLACK-CRESTED ANTSHRIKE *Sakesphorus canadensis*
- 127 BARRED ANTSHRIKE *Thamnophilus doliatus*
- 128 NORTHERN WHITE-FRINGED ANTWREN *Formicivora intermedia*
- 129 WHITE-BELLIED ANTBIRD *Myrmeciza longipes*. After a little effort, everyone managed to see very well singing atop a dead branch

Tyrant-Flycatchers are probably one of the best example of biodiversity in the neotropics. For the new visitor it can be both frustrating and exciting to experience a number of these species coming after the whistle of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. In one time we had more than 35 individuals representing 13 species calling and scaring away the owl. Hato Piñero is certainly one of the best places to provide an introduction of this amazing family. Following is a couple of words of each species as we tried to learn some of the field marks.

- 130 SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET *Camptostoma obsoletum*. Short and compact!
- 131 MOUSE-COLORED TYRANNULET *Phaeomyias murina*. Broad wing-bars
- 132 FOREST ELAENIA *Myiopagis gaimardii*. No crest, disctintive call
- 133 YELLOW-BELLIED ELAENIA *Elaenia flavogaster*. Pairs, prom crest
- 134 LESSER ELAENIA *Elaenia chiriquensis*. No crest, uniform
- 135 NORTHERN SCRUB-FLYCATCHER *Sublegatus arenarum*. Resembles a Myiarchus flycatcher, but bill much shorter
- 136 PALE-TIPPED INEZIA *Inezia caudata*. Disctintive voice. White supraloral line
- 137 PALE-EYED PYGMY-TYRANT *Lophotriccus pilaris*. Small and diminutive
- 138 SLATE-HEADED TODY-FLYCATCHER *Poecilotriccus sylvia*. Small beauty
- 139 COMMON TODY-FLYCATCHER *Todirostrum cinereum*. Common and noisy
- 140 YELLOW-OLIVE FLATBILL *Tolmomyias sulphurens*. Big eyes, and large flat bill
- 141 OCHRE-LORED FLATBILL *Tolmomyias flaviventris*. All yellow, no much ochraceous on this race
- 142 WHITE-THROATED SPADEBILL *Platyrinchus mystaceus*. The prince of the Tyrant-Flycatchers of the ranch. Pair singing
- 143 VERMILION FLYCATCHER *Pyrocephalus rubinus*. All red, very red!
- 144 CATTLE TYRANT *Machetornis rixosus*. Riding Capybaras
- 145 PIED WATER-TYRANT *Fluvicola pica*. Near wetlands
- 146 WHITE-HEADED MARSH-TYRANT *Arundinicola leucocephala*. Also, near wetlands
- 147 DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tuberculifer*. Disctintive long parakeet-like voice
- 148 SHORT-CRESTED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus ferox*. Disctintive short trill
- 149 VENEZUELAN FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus venezuelensis*. As for the ablve species, disctintive voice
- 150 BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER *Myiarchus tyrannulus*. Common, in pairs. Red outer tail feathers.
- 151 GREAT KISKADEE *Pitangus sulphuratus*. Large bill, voice is good field mark
- 152 LESSER KISKADEE *Philohydor lictor*. A smaller version of the one above. Always near water
- 153 BOAT-BILLED FLYCATCHER *Megarynchus pitangua*. A bill with a bird attached!
- 154 WHITE-BEARDED FLYCATCHER *Phelpsia inornata*. The cute of the kiskadee-type flycatchers. Veyr short bill
- 155 SOCIAL FLYCATCHER *Myiozetetes similis*. The discoloured of the kiskadee-type flycatchers
- 156 RUSTY-MARGINED FLYCATCHER *Myiozetetes cayanensis*. The mournful whistle
- 157 STREAKED FLYCATCHER *Myiodynastes maculatus*. Active, in forest edges
- 158 VARIEGATED FLYCATCHER *Empidonomus varius*. Silent. Prominent eyebrow
- 159 TROPICAL KINGBIRD *Tyrannus melancholicus*. Commonest of the family

- 160 GRAY KINGBIRD *Tyrannus dominicensis*. All gray, mantle is darker gray
- 161 FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER *Tyrannus savana*. Tail is more than distinctive field mark. Some ind were molting the tail feathers
- 162 WHITE-NAPED XENOPSARIS *Xenopsaris albinucha*. Small, diminutive relative of the Becards. A good record for the ranch
- 163 WHITE-WINGED BECARD *Pachyramphus polychopterus*. All black with wing patches. Distinctive plumage in male, confusing in the female
- 164 LANCE-TAILED MANAKIN *Chiroxiphia lanceolata*. Lek in LE
- 165 RED-EYED VIREO *Vireo olivaceus*
- 166 SCRUB GREENLET *Hylophilus flavipes*. Many in LG
- 167 GOLDEN-FRONTED GREENLET *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*
- 168 GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN *Progne chalybea*
- 169 WHITE-WINGED SWALLOW *Tachycineta albiventer*. Always neat wetlands
- 170 BLUE-AND-WHITE SWALLOW *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*. Many in Valencia
- 171 SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*
- 172 BARN SWALLOW *Hirundo rustica*
- 173 BLACK-CAPPED DONACOBIOUS *Donacobius atricapillus*. Pairs coming to playback
- 174 BICOLORED WREN *Campylorhynchus griseus*. In the *Mata S* of the guest house
- 175 STRIPE-BACKED WREN *Campylorhynchus nuchalis*. Pairs near guest-house
- 176 BUFF-BREASTED WREN *Thryothorus leucotis*. Pairs in riverine forest
- 177 HOUSE WREN *Troglodytes aedon*
- 178 TROPICAL GNATCATCHER *Poliopitila plumbea*
- 179 BARE-EYED THRUSH *Turdus nudigenis*
- 180 PALE-BREASTED THRUSH *Turdus leucomelas*. LE
- 181 TROPICAL MOCKINGBIRD *Mimus gilvus*
- 182 YELLOW WARBLER *Dendroica aestiva*. Always coming after Pygmy-Owl whistle
- 183 NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH *Seiurus noveboracensis*
- 184 BANANAQUIT *Coereba flaveola*
- 185 CHESTNUT-VENTED CONEBILL *Conirostrum speciosum*. One of the best places in Venezuela for this species. Many pairs seen!
- 186 HOODED TANAGER *Nemosia pileata*. Travelling with the above species
- 187 BLUE-GRAY TANAGER *Thraupis episcopus*
- 188 GLAUCOUS TANAGER *Thraupis glaucocolpa*. Couple near the Biological station
- 189 PALM TANAGER *Thraupis palmarum*
- 190 TRINIDAD EUPHONIA *Euphonia trinitatis*. *Bing-bing!* Always calling
- 191 BURNISHED-BUFF TANAGER *Tangara cayana*
- 192 SOUTHERN GRAYISH-SALTATOR *Saltator coerulescens*. Pairs in LE

- 193 ORINOCAN SALTATOR *Saltator orenocensis*. Close studies in LE
- 194 RED-CAPPED CARDINAL *Paroaria gularis*
- 195 BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT *Volatinia jacarina*
- 196 GRAY SEEDEATER *Sporophila intermedia*
- 197 RING-NECKED SEEDEATER *Sporophila insularis*. Superb good studies of this recent split. Seems to prefer forest edges
- 198 SAFFRON FINCH *Sicalis flaveola*. Common and widespread
- 199 STRIPE-TAILED YELLOW-FINCH *Sicalis citrina*. Good sights in MG
- 200 GRAY PILEATED-FINCH *Coryphospingus pileatus*. Amazing views after Pygmy-Owl whistle
- 201 GRASSLAND SPARROW *Ammodramus humeralis*
- 202 YELLOW-BROWED SPARROW *Ammodramus aurifrons*. Phone-call voice
- 203 YELLOW-HOODED BLACKBIRD *Agelaius icterocephalus*
- 204 EASTERN MEADOWLARK *Sturnella magna*
- 205 RED-BREASTED BLACKBIRD *Sturnella militaris*. Many in drier savannas S of guest-house
- 206 CARIB GRACKLE *Quiscalus lugubris*. Many large groups
- 207 SHINY COWBIRD *Molothrus bonariensis*
- 208 VENEZUELAN TROUPIAL *Icterus icterus*. Daily encounters of Venezuela's national bird
- 209 YELLOW ORIOLE *Icterus nigrogularis*. Usually alone or in pairs
- 210 YELLOW-RUMPED CACIQUE *Cacicus cela*. Some nesting colonies
- 211 CRESTED OROPENDOLA *Psarocolius decumanus*. Few. This is prob the southernmost distribution into the *Llanos*.

LIST OF MAMMALS, REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

List of Mammals follows Linares 1998, *Mamíferos de Venezuela*. Sociedad Conservacionista Audubon de Venezuela.

- 1 COMMON OPOSSUM *Didelphis marsupialis*
- 2 CAPUCHIN MONKEY *Cebus olivaceus*
- 3 RED-HOWLER MONKEY *Alouatta seniculus*
- 4 CRAB-EATING FOX *Cerdocyon thous*
- 5 OCELOT *Leopardus pardalis*. Pair hunting near LE
- 6 JAGUAR *Panthera onca*. A 5 seconds view of a cub running across the road near Manglarito
- 7 BRAZILIAN RABBIT *Sylvilagus brasiliensis*
- 8 BRAZILIAN TAPIR *Tapirus terrestris*
- 9 WHITE-TAILED DEER *Odocoileus virginianus*
- 10 CAPYBARA *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*
- 11 RED-TAILED SQUIRREL *Sciurus granatensis*

- 12 LITTLE BROWN-BAT (Molossidae)
- 13 GREATER FISHING-BAT *Noctilio leporinus*
- 14 IGUANA *Iguana iguana*
- 15 SPECTACLED (COMMON) CAYMAN *Cayman crocodilus*
- 16 LLANOS SIDE-NECKED TURTLE *Podocemis vogli*
- 17 TREE FROG *Hyla crepitans*