

**MANU PERU
BIOSPHERE RESERVE
EXTENSION TO MACHU PICCHU**

AUGUST 20-25, 2010

**Leader: Steve Hilty
Co-Leader and Machu Picchu Guide: Doris Valencia**

Compiled by Steve Hilty

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This short itinerary provides a dramatic contrast to the steamy lowlands and overwhelming biological diversity of the Manu Biosphere Reserve. This is a trip through high mountain valleys carved from powerful rushing rivers, a trip into high Andean grasslands and, most of all, a trip through history. It is, by all accounts, a region of colorful markets and of remarkable people dressed in distinctive but regionally varied clothing. Women carry babies, wrapped in bright blankets, on their backs. Men with broad sandal-clad feet, bent under heavy loads, move with a quick shuffling gait, all amidst majestic ruins, ancient terrace-rimmed valleys, and beside puna lakes shimmering beneath ultraviolet skies. Our route took us through traditional villages, past Usnea-draped basaltic cliffs, into mossy woodland inhabited by sprightly tanagers, and among deep, cold valleys where dawn comes slowly to restless hummingbirds fleeing retreating shadows in endless pursuit of flowers.

Lago Huacarpay and the high puna grasslands of Abra Malaga provide an excellent cross section of high Andean birdlife, while the hotel grounds around the Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel offer an oasis of birds, flowers, and tranquility amidst a cacophony of hawkers of souvenirs, tourists, noise, and congestion in the little town of Aguas Calientes. The hotel grounds, mined to the hilt with orchids, flowering Heliconia, bird-of-paradise, Centropogon, and dozens of other flowering plants, offer hummingbirds, multicolored tanagers, and other small birds a diverse array of places to forage and seek shelter. Inca Wrens, first observed around the Machu Picchu ruins in 1965, were not formally described until 1985. Curiously, these wrens may not have been present during the years of intensive surveys and collecting following the discovery of Machu Picchu in the first half of the last century. Also, it seems that a trip into this valley below these famous ruins would not be complete without at least a glimpse of its most famous avian inhabitant, the Andean Cock-of-the-rock, whose image now adorns everything from t-shirts to luggage tags. And so, of course, one more view of this bird, after our cloud forest trip, was like icing on an already luscious cake.

The combination of birds, scenery, and history is incomparable on this trip. The ruins, as always, remain impressionable, mysterious, and evocative—the more so perhaps because so little is known of their origins, and because of the breathtaking location. The ruins of Machu Picchu are indeed one of the world's great travel destinations, but they are, in themselves, just a brief chapter in a long and fascinating history of human occupation of the Urubamba River Valley.

ITINERARY:

Aug 20: Mid-day flight from Pto. Maldonado to Cuzco followed by visit to Lago Huacarpay (ca. 11,000 ft and field lunch in the shade of our bus. Mid-afternoon journey northward into the sacred

Valley (called Villcanota Valley at its upper end, Urubamba Valley farther down) with one important stop for hummingbirds, and finally on to Yucay (9300 ft.).

Aug 21: Up the dry western slope of Abra Malaga pass. Maximum elevation at the pass is ca 4316 m (14,228 ft); we stopped about a thousand feet (elevation) short of the pass. Mid-afternoon return to Ollantaytambo with a short walking tour (led by Doris Valencia) of this traditional city.

Aug 22: Travel by train to Machu Picchu. A sunny afternoon at the ruins with visible evidence of smoke from fires burning further up the valley (we saw large fires shortly after leaving Ollantaytambo by train).

Aug 23: Cool and refreshing morning of birding around the hotel and on nearby trails with a rather late afternoon return by train (departed at 1600 hrs) to Poroy and by bus to Cuzco (arriving ca.2030 hrs. in hotel lobby)

Aug 24: Morning at leisure and mid-day flight from Cuzco to Lima. Late evening departure home (for some); the rest of us departing at various times on the 25th.

Aug. 25: Final departure from Lima

KEY:

LH - Lago Huacarpay; ca. 3000m (11,000 m)

AM - Abra Malaga (includes entire area from 2800-4000m+; upper area above treeline is puna grassland)

MP - Machu Picchu area; ruins at 2300-2400m+ (ca. 7500 ft)

MPPH - Machu Picchu Pueblo Hotel area, 2000m+ (ca. 6600 ft); now apparently know as the Inkaterra Hotel

Hd - heard

Boldface - rare, uncommon or of special interest

M or MM and F or FF - male(s) or female(s)

LIST OF BIRDS:

This trip was particularly notable for the exceptional number of hummingbirds and tanagers seen; it also was notable for the absence of Andean Condors (this latter not unusual however)

Ducks & Geese, Anatidae

Torrent Duck, *Merganetta armata*, ca. 15-20 on each trip; Río Urubamba

Speckled (Yellow-billed) Teal, *Anas flavirostris*, LH (15+)

Yellow-billed Pintail, *Anas georgica*, LH (12+)

Puna Teal, *Anas puna*, LH (12+)

Cinnamon Teal, *Anas cyanoptera*, LH (15+)

Grebes, Podicipedidae

White-tufted Grebe, *Rollandia rolland*, LH (4-5 including close pair with chick)

Egrets & Herons, Ardeidae

Great Egret, *Ardea alba*, LH (1)

Little Blue Heron, *Egretta caerulea*, LH (2)

Black-crowned Night-Heron, *Nycticorax nycticorax*, LH (3-4)

Ibises & Spoonbills, Threskiornithidae

Puna Ibis, *Plegadis ridgwayi*, LH

Hawk & Eagles, Accipitridae

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle, *Geranoaetus melanoleucus*, 1 adult soaring close over LH

Flacons & Caracaras, Falconidae

Mountain Caracara, *Phalcoboenus megalopterus*, Abra Malaga (several in or near puna grasslands)

American Kestrel, *Falco sparverius*, LH; Abra Malaga (total ca. 5)

Rails & Gallinules, Rallidae

Plumbeous Rail, *Pardirallus sanguinolentus*, LH (1 bird with rather dull plumage and dull bill color)

Common Gallinule, *Gallinula chloropus*, LH (35+)

Andean (Slate-colored) Coot, *Fulica ardesiaca*, LH ((125+)

Plovers & Lapwings, Charadriidae

Andean Lapwing, *Vanellus resplendens*, LH (2-3); Abra Malaga (10+)

Gulls & Terns, Laridae

Andean Gull, *Larus serranus*, LH (1-2); Río Urubamba (hundreds scattered down river)

Pigeons & Doves, Columbidae

Rock Dove (Feral Pigeon), *Columba livia*, urban areas

Band-tailed Pigeon, *Patagioenas fasciata*, one at ca. 10,000 ft el up Abra Malaga valley

Eared Dove, *Zenaida auriculata*, open areas; a dozen or more in hotel courtyard at Yucay

*White-throated Quail-Dove, *Geotrygon frenata*, hd (but unresponsive) at Inkaterra Hotel

Parrots & Parakeets, Psittacidae

*Mitre Parakeet, *Aratinga mitrata*, flock hd in valley below us while we were at the ruins

Andean Parakeet, *Bolborhynchus orbynesius*, AM (two flocks seen; one of ca. 18; the second of about 10; both in valley below Abra Malaga)

Speckle-faced Parrot, *Pionus tumultuosus*, MPPH (at least 10-12 seen in trees around hotel); this form often split from more northern populations as Plum-crowned Parrot

Swifts, Apodidae

White-collared Swift, *Streptoprocne zonaris*, one flying over Lago Huacarpay

White-tipped Swift, *Aeronautes montivagus*, only one seen quickly as it flew past Inkaterra Hotel (not seen well—or at all—by most people)

Hummingbirds, Trochilidae

Green Violetear, *Colibri thalassinus*, around MPPH (small numbers)

Sparkling Violetear, *Colibri coruscans*, MPPH (much commoner than previous species)

White-bellied Hummingbird, *Amazilia chionogaster*, Yucay area (dry; higher els)

Green-and-white Hummingbird, *Amazilia viridicauda*, MPPH; several in *Inga* sp. trees; feeders etc; seems virtually identical in appearance to White-bellied Hummingbird of drier areas

Speckled Hummingbird, *Adelomyia melanogenys*, MPPH (3-4 at feeders)

Chestnut-breasted Coronet, *Boissonneaua matthewsii*, MPPH (common)

White-tufted Sunbeam, *Aglaeactis castelnaudii*, AM (ca. 5-6; several seen very well)

Collared (Gould's) Inca, *Coeligena coeligena*, MPPH (several; now common and becoming more aggressive and territorial each year)

Violet-throated Starfrontlet, *Coeligena violifer*, one in lower part of AM valley was seen very close (even in scope) as it perched for several minutes; generally uncommon here

Great Sapphirewing, *Pterophanes cyanopterus*, AM (4-5 males including one immature bird showing some patches of rufous on underparts; we enjoyed spectacular views of this species as it hovered with slow wing beats and also as it perched and chased competitors; no females seen)

Giant Hummingbird, *Patagonia gigas*, 1 in lower part of AM valley

Booted Rackettail, *Ocreatus underwoodii*, 1 male and 1 female at MPPH

Black-tailed Trainbearer, *Lesbia victoriae*, 3 males and 1 female in lower part of AM valley

Bearded Mountaineer, *Oreonympha nobilis*, 1 male seen repeatedly (close!) in roadside tree tobacco above city of Yucay; an endemic and notably local

Tyrian Metaltail, *Metallura tyrianthina*, AM (2-3 males)

Long-tailed Sylph, *Agelaiocercus kingi*, MPPH (perhaps 3 seen; feeders)

White-bellied Woodstar, *Chaetocercus mulsant*, one male at MPPH

Motmots, Momotidae

Blue-crowned (formerly Highland) Motmot, *Momotus momota aequatorialis*, MPPH (seen by Dave and Chris)

Woodpeckers, Picidae

Ocellated Piculet, *Picumnus dorbygianus*, one female at MPPH (seen very nicely)

Golden-olive Woodpecker, *Piculus rubiginosus*, 1 at MPPH

Andean Flicker, *Colaptes rupicola*, Abra Malaga (3-4 including one very close)

Ovenbirds & Allies, Furnariidae

Bar-winged Cinclodes, *Cinclodes fuscus*, 25+ seen at higher elevations at AM

Wren-like Rushbird, *Phleocryptes melanops*, LH (1 seen very well for an extended period of time)

Creamy-crested Canastero, *Asthenes dorbignyi*, AM (pair seen very well)

Streak-throated Canastero, *Asthenes humilis*, AM (2 seen in puna zone; 1 distant; 1 quite close)

Typical Antbirds, Thamnophilidae

Variable Antshrike, *Thamnophilus caerulescens*, MPPH (pair seen very well; male very excited and displaying white intrascapular patch which is a sign of hostility and/or aggression)

*Stripe-headed Antpitta, *Grallaria andicola*, 1 calling bird spotted by DV but it disappeared before anyone could see it and would not return; a disappointment

Tyrant Flycatchers, Tyrannidae

Tufted Tit-Tyrant, *Anairetes parulus*, pair in middle part of AM valley

Yellow-bellied Elaenia, *Elaenia flavogaster*, one hd repeatedly around MPPH

Sierran Elaenia, *Elaenia pallatangae*, a couple around MPPH

Streak-necked Flycatcher, *Mionectes striaticollis*, MPPH (1)

Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet, *Phylloscartes ventralis*, MPPH (at least a couple pair seen)

Sclater's Tyrannulet, *Phyllomyias sclateri*, MPPH (a couple pair; one pair quite close)

Plumbeous-crowned Tyrannulet, *Phyllomyias plumbeiceps*, 1 with mixed species flock; only seen by a few people

Many-colored Rush-Tyrant, *Tachuris rubrigastra*, LH (a couple seen very well at LH); spectacular little flycatcher

Smoke-colored Pewee, *Contopus fumigatus*, MPPH

Black Phoebe, *Sayornis nigricans*, around MPPH and on Río Urubamba etc

Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola maculirostris*, 1 in plowed ground near LH

Puna Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola juninensis*, AM (30+ above treeline in puna of Abra Malaga

Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola flavinucha*, AM (1 seen in puna; an austral migrant)

Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant, *Muscisaxicola rufivertex*, LH (ca. 4 seen well); also 1 in Abra Malaga puna zone
Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca rufipectoralis*, AM (1)
White-browed Chat-Tyrant, *Ochthoeca leucophrys*, Lago Huacarpay (1 seen briefly)
Golden-crowned Flycatcher, *Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*, MPPH (one from breakfast table; another mid-morning at MPPH)
Tropical Kingbird, *Tyrannus melancholicus*, pair building nest in extreme top of high branch at MPPH (seemed a poor nest site)

Cotingas, Cotingidae

Andean Cock-of-the-rock, *Rupicola peruviana*, MPPH (perhaps the largest number of this species seen on the hotel grounds; at least 4 adult males plus a female and one bird which was likely a subadult male; adult males and the female all seen very well and some quite close; certainly a trip highlight)

Vireos, Vireonidae

Brown-capped Vireo, *Vireo leucophrys*, MPPH (a couple)
Red-eyed Vireo, *Vireo olivaceus*, MPPH (a few; mainly heard giving short 2-noted song of austral or resident birds but rather different from that of boreal birds)

Swallows, Hirundinidae

Blue-and-white Swallow, *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*, common around ruins and MPPH
Brown-bellied Swallow, *Notiochelidon murina*, in upper Urubamba Valley and Ollantaytambo

Wrens, Troglodytidae

Inca Wren, *Thryothorus eisenmanni*, MP ruins (a couple pairs heard; one pair seen very well along the lower part of the “Inca Trail” above the ruins); **endemic**
House Wren, *Troglodytes aedon*, all areas including puna
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, *Henicorhina leucophrys*, a pair seen very well in woodland area above the MPPH buildings; others hd)

Dippers, Cinclidae

White-capped Dipper, *Cinclus leucocephalus*, Rio Urubamba (a couple)

Thrushes, Turdidae

Chiguanco Thrush, *Turdus chiguanco*, AM etc; higher drier regions; also MPPH

New World Warblers, Parulidae

Tropical Parula, *Parula pitiayumi*, MPPH (2 seen)
Slate-throated Redstart (Whitestart), *Myioborus miniatus*, MPPH (several)
Spectacled Redstart (Whitestart), *Myioborus melanocephalus*, MPPH 1 pair; here overlaps with previous sp)
Russet-crowned Warbler, *Basileuterus coronatus*, MPPH (one very close responsive bird)

Tanagers & Allies, Thraupidae

Cinereous Conebill, *Conirostrum cinereum*, AM and Yucay
Rust-and-yellow Tanager, *Thlypopsis ruficeps*, pair at ruins; 2nd pair above MPPH
Blue-and-yellow Tanager, *Thraupis bonariensis*, LH (dull female); MPPH (many)
Blue-gray Tanager, *Thraupis episcopus*, MPPH (very common; white-shouldered Amazonian race)

Palm Tanager, *Thraupis palmarum*, MPPH (a feeders)

Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, *Anisognathus igniventris*, pair in lower part of Abra Malaga valley

Fawn-breasted Tanager, *Pipraeidea melanonota*, one seen briefly above MPPH

Saffron-crowned Tanager, *Tangara xanthocephala*, MPPH (up to a dozen; adults with orange caps and younger birds with lemon-yellow heads)

Golden-naped Tanager, *Tangara ruficervix*, beautiful pair seen in woodland above MPPH; in *Trema* fruiting trees

Blue-necked Tanager, *Tangara cyanicollis*, MPPH (seen several times); in *Trema* fruiting trees

Beryl-spangled Tanager, *Tangara nigroviridis*, MPPH (a couple); in *Trema* fruiting trees

Blue-and-black Tanager, *Tangara vassorii*, one above MP ruins

Silvery Tanager, *Tangara viridicollis*, MPPH (several seen very well; common here but local elsewhere); regular visitors to banana feeders at MPPH

Black-throated Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa brunneiventris*, Abra Malaga (common)

Rusty Flowerpiercer, *Diglossa sittoides*, MPPH (1 male)

Blue Dacnis, *Dacnis cayana*, one female at banana feeders at MPPH

Golden-billed Saltator, *Saltator aurantiirostris*, Abra Malaga (several)

Buntings & Sparrows etc, Emberizidae

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus unicolor*, AM (4-5 males in puna zone)

Ash-breasted Sierra-Finch, *Phrygilus plebejus*, AM (a few; roadsides in puna zone)

White-winged Diuca-Finch, *Diuca speculifera*, Abra Malaga (4 in puna grassland)

Chestnut-breasted Mountain-Finch, *Poospiza caesar*, AM (1 seen at our first stop at bottom of Abra Malaga valley; foraging on ground for extended period of time where dug in short grass for seeds; **endemic**)

Band-tailed Seedeater, *Catamenia analis*, LH and AM (common; higher elevations)

Plain-colored Seedeater, *Catamenia inornata*, 2 at highest stop on Abra Malaga road (birds feeding on ground inside a circular rock corral)

Bright-rumped Yellow-Finch, *Sicalis uropygialis*, Abra Malaga (a pair in puna grassland; scarce and unpredictable here and a good find)

Rufous-collared Sparrow, *Zonotrichia capensis*, LH (abundant); Yucay and Abra Malaga

Cardinals & Allies, Cardinalidae

Black-backed Grosbeak, *Pheucticus aureoventris*, one at Ollantaytambo train station; several at MPPH

Blackbirds etc, Icteridae

Yellow-winged Blackbird, *Agelaius thilius*, LH (a few flying over marsh)

Dusky-green Oropendola, *Psarocolius atrovirens*, MPPH (several around hotel grounds)

Siskins and Euphonias, Fringillidae

Thick-billed Euphonia, *Euphonia laniirostris*, several at MPPH

Blue-naped Chlorophonia, *Chlorophonia cyanea*, one male repeatedly at bananas at MPPH

Hooded Siskin, *Spinus magellanicus*, one male at Laguna Huacarpay; a female at 3800 m in puna

Olivaceous Siskin, *Spinus olivaceus*, one male at MPPH

MAMMALS

Alpacas and llamas (long domesticated)