

TANDAYAPA VALLEY:

PRE-TRIP TO THE GALAPAGOS CRUISE

OCTOBER 16, 2009

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Ecuador: Tandayapa Pre-trip

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TOUR REPORT
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By Paul Greenfield

Our Galapagos pre-trip down the northwestern slopes of the Andes west of Quito took us along the lower sector of the renowned Paseo del Quinde Ecoroute and to the Tandayapa Valley. This is a spectacular, species-rich area of lush cloudforest that would serve, not only as an enjoyable orientation to Ecuador's rich biodiversity, but most importantly, as an interesting basis of comparison between areas of similar looking, but biologically markedly distinct highland habitats found along the earth's equator—one on the continent of South America, the other on a distant, isolated Pacific Ocean archipelago found several hundred miles to the west.

We made a few pointed stops along the way to take some time to walk along the Ecoroute, feel the cool mountain air, admire the epiphyte-laden trees, and listen to the sounds of the forest; we came across a small mixed foraging flock of birds, wrestled with a sneaky Spillman's Tapaculo, and began to see a bit of the color that has drawn so many visitors to this wonderful area. The excitement became evident as we found one of the most enigmatic species of this area—the Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan—and began to see a variety of Andean-slope specialties. By midafternoon we had worked our way to Pacha Quinde, the private residence of Tony Nunnery and Barbara Bolz, where we reveled in an explosion of some 17 or 18 species of hummingbirds and the spectacular montane scenery that surrounded us in their impressive garden.

Our day brought with it a diversity of experiences and some special birds too, among them: Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle; Variable Hawk; Green and Sparkling violetears; Western Emerald; Andean Emerald; Fawn-breasted and Empress brilliants; Buff-tailed Coronet; Brown and Collared incas; Gorgeted Sunangel; Booted Racket-tail; Violet-tailed Sylph; Wedge-billed Hummingbird; Purple-throated, White-bellied, and Little woodstars; Crimson-mantled Woodpecker; Cinnamon Flycatcher; Gray-breasted Wood-Wren; Slate-throated Whitestart; Russet-crowned Warbler; Masked Flowerpiercer; Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager; Golden, Golden-naped, and Beryl-spangled tanagers; along with White-winged and Chestnut-capped brush-finches. It turned out to be a very satisfying day for all and a fitting initiation to what would be an unforgettable week among "Las Islas Encantadas"—The Galapagos Islands.

ITINERARY

October 16 –Day-trip to the Tandayapa Valley along the *Paseo del Quinde* Ecoroute to the Bellavista area and to Pacha Quinde (Tony and Barbara's property)

THE SPECIES LIST

HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNs: ARDEIDAE

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)—1 was seen in flight *en route* from Quito

NEW WORLD VULTURES: CATHARTIDAE

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)—Generally very common throughout Ecuador—only 1 was seen overhead near Quito

KITES, EAGLES & HAWKS: ACCIPITRIDAE

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*)—1 flew over the bus as we returned towards the Equatorial Monument

Variable Hawk (*Buteo polyosoma*)—1 was seen as it perched on a ridgetop near Calacalí gas station

FALCONS & CARACARAS: FALCONIDAE

American Kestrel (*Falco sparverius*)—1 was seen briefly at the Calacalí gas station

PIGEONS & DOVES: COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)—Common in areas in and around Quito and other towns

Eared Dove (*Zenaida auriculata*)—Generally common around Quito and more open areas; a few were seen, often in rapid flight

White-tipped Dove (*Leptotila verreauxi*)—1 was seen in the gardens at Pacha Quinde

PARROTS & MACAWS: PSITTACIDAE

Red-billed Parrot (*Pionus sordidus*)—A small group was heard nearby, as they split from a fruiting tree at Pacha Quinde, as our group approached

SWIFTS: APODIDAE

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)—A few were seen in high rapid flight

HUMMINGBIRD: TROCHILIDAE

Green Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*)—3-4 were seen well at Pacha Quinde feeders

Sparkling Violetear (*Colibri coruscans*)—5-6 were seen at Pacha Quinde feeders; also the common hummer in the Quito area (hotel grounds)

Western Emerald (*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus*)—2 stunning males came in to the Pacha Quinde feeders. This population has often been considered a subspecies of Blue-tailed Emerald (*Chlorostilbon mellisugus*)

Rufous-tailed Hummingbird (*Amazilia tzacatl*)—A common lowland species in western Ecuador. At least 2 were seen at Pacha Quinde feeders

Andean Emerald (*Amazilia franciae*)—Rather common at Pacha Quinde feeders; stunning

glittering pale blue-green head in good light!
Speckled Hummingbird (*Adelomyia melanogenys*)—3 were seen at Pacha Quinde feeders; certainly one the drabest hummingbirds
Fawn-breasted Brilliant (*Heliodoxa rubinoides*)—Common at Pacha Quinde feeders
Empress Brilliant (*Heliodoxa emperatrix*)—1 male, of this rather scarce, spectacular Chocó-Andean endemic was seen twice at Pacha Quinde feeders
Buff-tailed Coronet (*Boissonneaua flavescens*)—Common at Pacha Quinde feeders; remember wing-lifting, cinnamon “wing-pits” and buffy tail; with glittering pale-green face in good light! Also a few seen in the field along the Ecoroute
Brown Inca (*Coeligena wilsoni*)—2 or so were seen regularly at Pacha Quinde feeders; dark brown with white pectoral spots
Collared Inca (*Coeligena torquata*)—2 of this rather large and “dapper” montane species came to Pacha Quinde feeders
Gorgeted Sunangel (*Heliangelus strophianus*)—1 was seen in a shrub along the Ecoroute
Booted Racket-tail (*Ocreatus underwoodii*)—Always a favorite! Quite common at Pacha Quinde feeders; remember big white “boots” and racket tipped tail
Black-tailed Trainbearer (*Lesbia vistoriae*)—A few were seen at the Hotel Quito gardens
Violet-tailed Sylph (*Agelaiocercus coelestis*)—This Chocó-Andean specialty with its stunning tail, was quite common at Pacha Quinde feeders
Wedge-billed Hummingbird (*Augastes geoffroyi*)—At least 1 individual was seen feeding at various flowers at Pacha Quinde (does not use the feeders)
Purple-throated Woodstar (*Calliflox mitchellii*)—Quite common, males, females and juveniles were seen at Pacha Quinde feeders; a bee-like Chocó-Andean endemic
White-bellied Woodstar (*Chaetocercus mulsant*)—At least 1 was seen at Pacha Quinde feeders; somewhat bulkier than the previous species, with white belly
Little Woodstar (*Chaetocercus bombus*)—1 female was seen a few times at Pacha Quinde feeders

TROGONS & QUETZALS: TROGONIDAE

Golden-headed Quetzal (*Pharomachrus auriceps*)—Heard only: along the Ecoroute and at Pacha Quinde

NEW WORLD BARBETS: CAPITONIDAE

Toucan Barbet (*Semnornis ramphastinus*)—Heard only along the Ecoroute; a special Chocó-Andean endemic

TOUCANS: RAMPHASTIDAE

Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan (*Andigena laminirostris*)—4 were seen along the Ecoroute, including some nice looks; a special Chocó-Andean endemic

WOODPECKERS & ALLIES: PICIDAE

Crimson-mantled Woodpecker (*Piculus rivolii*)—1 of this spectacular species was seen closeby, but in somewhat hazy light, while feeding on fruit in the lower branches of a nearby tree; along the Ecoroute

OVENBIRDS: FURNARIIDAE

Azara's Spinetail (*Synallaxis azarae*)—This typically skulking species was heard only along the Ecoroute

Lineated Foliage-gleaner (*Syndactyla subalaris*)—Heard only along the Ecoroute

Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner (*Anabacerthia variegaticeps*)—1 was seen somewhat distantly with a mixed foraging flock along the Ecoroute

TAPACULOS: RHINOCRYPTIDAE

Spillmann's Tapaculo (*Scytolopus spillmanni*)—1 was glimpsed by a few of us and heard closeby by all, only along the Ecoroute

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: TYRANNIDAE

Southern Beardless Tyrannulet (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)—1 was reported seen in the Hotel Quito gardens

White-crested Elaenia (*Elaenia albiceps*)—3-5 were seen at a fruiting tree along the Ecoroute

Sierran Elaenia (*Elaenia pallatangae*)—3-4 were seen with the previous species

Cinnamon Flycatcher (*Pyrrhomyias cinnamomea*)—1 was seen by part of our group along the Ecoroute

CONTINGAS & ALLIES: COTINGIDAE

Green-and-black Fruiteater (*Pipreola riefferii*)—1 was seen (glimpsed) distantly along the Ecoroute

SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE

Blue-and-white Swallow (*Notiochelidon cyanoleuca*)—The most common and widespread swallow in Ecuador; several were seen flying about from Quito to Tandayapa

Brown-bellied Swallow (*Orochelidon murina*)—A few were seen at higher elevations, where it replaces the previous species

WRENS: TROGLODYTIDAE

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*)—Only a few heard; 1 was seen by a few of us, along the Ecoroute

THRUSHES & ALLIES: TURDIDAE

Andean Solitaire (*Myadestes ralloides*)—Heard only, once along the Ecoroute

Great Thrush (*Turdus fuscater*)—Generally common highland species; 1 was seen along the upper Ecoroute; others in the gardens of Hotel Quito

NEW WORLD WARBLERS: PARULIDAE

Slate-throated Whitestart (*Myioborus miniatus*)—A rather common mixed flock participant at lower elevations; only 1 was seen at Pacha Quinde. Also called Redstart by many authors.

Russet-crowned Warbler (*Basileuterus coronatus*)—1 was seen in undergrowth at Pacha Quinde

TANAGERS & ALLIES: THRAUPIDAE

Cinereous Conebill (*Conirostrum cinereum*)—1 was reported seen in the gardens at Hotel Quito

Dusky Bush-Tanager (*Chlorospingus semifuscus*)—1 was seen along the Ecoroute

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager (*Anisognathus somptuosus*)—Several were seen along the Ecoroute and at Pacha Quinde

Golden Tanager (*Tangara arthus*)—At least 2 were seen at Pacha Quinde

Golden-naped Tanager (*Tangara ruficervix*)—2 were seen along the Ecoroute; another 2 were seen at Pacha Quinde

Beryl-spangled Tanager (*Tangara nigroviridis*)—1 was seen along the Ecoroute

Black-capped Tanager (*Tangara heinei*)—1 was seen at Pacha Quinde

BUNTINGS, SPARROWS & ALLIES: EMBERIZIDAE

Yellow-bellied Seedeater (*Sporophila nigricollis*)—1 female was seen near the village of Tandayapa, along the Ecoroute

Black Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa humeralis*)—1 was reported seen in the gardens of Hotel Quito

Masked Flowerpiercer (*Diiglossopsis cyanea*)—1 was seen fairly well with a mixed foraging flock along the Ecoroute

White-winged Brush-Finch (*Atlapetes leucopterus*)—2 were seen at Pacha Quinde; at the rice feeder

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch (*Buarremon brunneinuchus*)—1 was seen at the rice feeder at Pacha Quinde

Rufous-collared Sparrow (*Zonotrichia capensis*)—Common highland species throughout the Andes

SALTATORS, CARDINALS & ALLIES: CARDINALIDAE

Southern Yellow-Grosbeak (*Pheucticus chrysogaster*)—1 was reported seen in the gardens at Hotel Quito

SISKINS, & ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE

Hooded Siskin (*Carduelis magellanica*)—A group of 6 were seen at the Calacalí gas station