

# **ECUADOR: TANDAYAPA PRE-TRIP TO GALAPAGOS CRUISE**

**OCTOBER 29–31, 2014**



**Violet-tailed Sylph**

**©Paul J. Greenfield**

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**BY PAUL GREENFIELD**

Northwest Ecuador's incredible biodiversity and endemism offers the perfect "recipe" for a wonderful introduction to the birds of the Neotropics, as well as presenting travelers who will visit the renowned Galapagos Islands an interesting opportunity to compare one of the world's few megadiverse ecosystems with that of a relatively austere and isolated one. This October 2014 Tandayapa Pre-Tour was designed to achieve these goals and more. We visited three main sites: Pacha Quindi in the Tandayapa Valley; our lodge—Séptimo Paraíso—in the Mindo Valley; and nearby Milpe Bird Sanctuary.

Pacha Quindi is the private residence of VENT leader Tony Nunnery and his lovely wife Barbara Boltz; our first morning was spent at this idyllic spot, overlooking the forested mountains that carpet the Tandayapa Valley. Hummingbirds (17 species in all—Violet-tailed Sylph, Brown and Collared incas, Buff-tailed Coronet, Booted Racket-tail, White-tailed Hillstar, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Fawn-breasted and Empress brilliants, Western Emerald, along with Purple-throated and Little woodstars among them) buzzed and whirled everywhere, beaming every combination of colors imaginable! The activity was dizzying to say the least, and only relieved (?) occasionally by a bout or two, or three, of non-hummer entrances: a cooperative pair of Crimson-rumped Toucanets; a family group of Toucan Barbets; a male Black-and-white Becard; Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers; and Blue-capped, Metallic-green, Golden-naped, Flame-faced, and Golden tanagers to mention just a few of the species that we enjoyed. We reluctantly departed from these unforgettable gardens after enjoying a packed lunch, as the afternoon rolled in, and continued towards our day's final destination—Séptimo Paraíso Hostería and Cloudforest Reserve.

En route we made a brief roadside stop along what is now well-known as the "Paseo del Quinde" Ecoroute in hopes of finding one of this region's flagship species—the multicolored Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan. No photograph or painting can do justice to this spectacular crowd-pleaser, and as a responsive and vocal male flew towards us, we realized it held a round fruit in its long, colorful bill; to our surprise and joy, apparently somewhat wary, he rapidly swooped down to a dead tree trunk where he disappeared into a nest hole—we decided that that was a sign that we needed to move on. We settled into our rooms, but not before checking out a nesting Common Potoo that Jon located; it seemed glued to a cut-off stump in one of the patio's trees. We then met for our nightly birdlist and sumptuous dinner before turning in for the night, heads filled with images of splendid birds and scenery.

The following morning began with a pre-breakfast walk around the hotel grounds. Most everything was new to everybody, so it seemed easy to please, but we came across some real specialties—among them were great views of a beautiful pair of Yellow-collared Chlorophonias in perfect light...it's hard to beat that! Though there were quite a few runners-up and tough contenders, like a super-close Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Ornate Flycatcher, and a classy male Red-headed Barbet, followed by Fawn-breasted, Beryl-spangled, Black-capped, Blue-necked, and Swallow tanagers. After fueling-up (breakfast) we headed to Milpe

Bird Sanctuary, just about 20 minutes to the west. This key foothill site was quite birdy indeed, starting with busy nectar feeders and several new hummingbirds: White-necked Jacobin, Green Thorntail, Green-crowned Brilliant, and Crowned Woodnymph. Broad-billed Motmot, Pale-mandibled Araçari, Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Club-winged Manakin, Chocó Warbler, Rufous-throated and Silver-throated tanagers, and Purple Honeycreeper come to mind. We returned to Séptimo Paraíso for lunch and some additional birding before heading back to Quito—Wedge-billed Hummingbird, Tricolored Brush-Finch, and Black-winged Saltator bid us farewell and set the stage for our upcoming adventure in The Galapagos Archipelago.

### **ITINERARY:**

- Oct. 30 – Morning drive to Tandayapa Valley and Pacha Quindi, continuing to the lower *Paseo del Quinde* Ecoroute with brief stops at Calacalí gas station and Calacalí Equatorial Monument en route (overnight at Séptimo Paraíso)
- Oct. 31— Early morning at Séptimo Paraíso; mid-morning Milpe Bird Sanctuary; lunch and midday at Séptimo Paraíso; return to Quito

### **BIRDS:**

#### GUANS, CHACHALACAS & CURASSOWS: CRACIDAE

Wattled Guan (*Aburria aburri*)—Heard only at dawn at Séptimo Paraíso

#### HERONS, EGRETS & BITTERNS: ARDEIDAE

Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)—fairly large number were seen overflying Séptimo Paraíso, to and from their roosts; also 1 was seen in the area on the 30 Oct.

#### NEW WORLD VULTURES: CATHARTIDAE

Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)—Generally common throughout Ecuador—small number seen *en route* from Milpe to Séptimo Paraíso

Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aurea*)—As previous species, generally fairly common throughout Ecuador—only were singles seen this trip at Pacha Quindi and Milpe

#### KITES, EAGLES & HAWKS: ACCIPITRIDAE

Plain-breasted Hawk (*Accipiter ventralis*)—Considered a race of Sharp-shinned Hawk (*A. striatus*) by some authors. 1 was merely glanced as it 'shot' right by us at Pacha Quindi

Barred Hawk (*Morphnarchus princeps*)—1 was heard and seen briefly at Pacha Quindi

Harris' Hawk (*Parabuteo unicinctus*)—1 was reported in Quito on 29 October by

Variable Hawk (*Geranoaetus polyosoma*)—2 were seen soaring from Calacalí gas station

#### PIGEONS & DOVES: COLUMBIDAE

Rock Pigeon (*Columba livia*)—Many at Calacalí

Band-tailed Pigeon (*Patagioenas fasciata*)—1 was seen along the Ecoroute; a large flock was seen at Séptimo Paraíso

Eared Dove (*Zenaida auriculata*)—Generally common around Quito and more open highland areas

#### CUCKOOS: CUCULIDAE

Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*)—1 was seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)—8 were seen along the highway *en route* to/from Milpe Bird Sanctuary by most of us

#### POTOOS: NYCTIBIIDAE

**Common Potoo** (*Nyctibius griseus*)—1 was spotted by Jon in the late afternoon of our arrival; was later seen/studied over and over again, apparently at its nest, in the Séptimo Paraíso garden

#### SWIFTS: APODIDAE

White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)—Only 2 were seen overhead at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### HUMMINGBIRD: TROCHILIDAE

White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*)—2 were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

White-whiskered Hermit (*Phaethornis yaruqui*)—1 was seen at Séptimo Paraíso nectar feeders

**Wedge-billed Hummingbird** (*Schistes [Augastes] geoffroyi*)—1 was seen feeding on flowers (does not frequent feeders) at Séptimo Paraíso

Green Violetear (*Colibri thalassinus*)—6 or so were seen repeatedly at nectar feeders at Pacha Quindi

Sparkling Violetear (*Colibri coruscans*)—At least 4 were seen at Pacha Quindi feeders; a common species in the highlands and around Quito

**Green Thorntail** (*Discosura conversii*)—4 (males and females) were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary feeders

Speckled Hummingbird (*Adelomyia melanogenys*)—4 or so were seen repeatedly at Pacha Quinde feeders and shrubs

**Violet-tailed Sylph** (*Agelaiocercus coelestis*)—This Chocó-Andean specialty with its stunning tail was seen repeatedly at Pacha Quindi feeders and shrubs

Black-tailed Trainbearer (*Lesbia victoriae*)—At least 1 was seen at Hotel Quito by some of the group

**Brown Inca** (*Coeligena wilsoni*)—At least 2 were seen a few times at Pacha Quindi

**Collared Inca** (*Coeligena torquata*)—1-2 of this dapper species were seen repeatedly at Pacha Quindi feeders

Buff-tailed Coronet (*Boissonneaua flavescens*)—Common, with its wing-lifting, cinnamon 'wing-pits', buff tail and brilliant chartreuse face, at Pacha Quindi

**Booted Racket-tail** (*Ocreatus underwoodii*)—At least 4 of this wonderful little hummer were seen this trip at Pacha Quindi

**White-tailed Hillstar** (*Urochroa bougeri*)—1 was seen a few times (perched in wood-shed area and at feeders) at Pacha Quindi

**Purple-bibbed Whitetip** (*Urosticte benjamini*)—1 male was seen at Pacha Quindi

Fawn-breasted Brilliant (*Heliodoxa rubinoides*)—Common (8+ were seen) at Pacha Quindi feeders

Green-crowned Brilliant (*Heliodoxa jacula*)—Common at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; a few more

were seen at Séptimo Paraíso

**Empress Brilliant** (*Heliodoxa imperatrix*)—a pair came in to Pacha Quinde feeders

**Little Woodstar** (*Chaetocercus bombus*)—1 juvenile was seen (also scoped) at *Verbena* flowers at Pacha Quindi

**Purple-throated Woodstar** (*Calliflox mitchellii*)—Common at Pacha Quindi feeders

**Western Emerald** (*Chlorostilbon melanorhynchus*)—1 glittering (stunning!) male was seen at Pacha Quindi feeders. This population has often been considered a subspecies of Blue-tailed Emerald (*Chlorostilbon mellisugus*) of the eastern Andes and

lowlands

**Crowned Woodnymph** (*Thalurania colombica*)—Previously considered a separate species, Green-crowned Woodnymph (*T. fannyi*), but is just recently lumped with Purple-crowned Woodnymph. 8 were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; mostly stunning males

**Andean Emerald** (*Amazilia franciae*)—Common at Pacha Quindi; also 5 were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

**Rufous-tailed Hummingbird** (*Amazilia tzacatl*)—A common lowland species in western Ecuador; many seen on both days (an active nest was seen at Pacha Quindi)

#### TROGONS & QUETZALS: TROGONIDAE

**Chocó Trogon** (*Trogon comptus*)—Aka Blue-tailed Trogon by some authors. Heard only at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### MOTMOTS: MOMOTIDAE

**Rufous Motmot** (*Baryphthengus martii*)—Heard only, then one glimpsed as it ‘shot’ across the entrance road at Séptimo Paraíso

**Broad-billed Motmot** (*Electron platyrhynchus*)—1 was seen (also scoped) and a couple others were heard at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### BARBETS: CAPITONIDAE

**Red-headed Barbet** (*Eubucco bourcierii*)—1 classy male was seen well at Séptimo Paraíso; heard also at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### TOUCAN-BARBETS: SEMNORNITHIDAE

**Toucan Barbet** (*Semnornis ramphastinus*)—3-4 were seen somewhat distantly at Pacha Quindi

#### TOUCANS: RAMPHASTIDAE

**Crimson-rumped Toucanet** (*Aulacorhynchus haematopygius*)—A cooperative pair was seen well (and scoped) at Pacha Quindi

**Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan** (*Andigena laminirostris*)—A male was seen well along the Ecoroute; it eventually flew to its nest. A special Chocó-Andean endemic

**Pale-mandibled Araçari** (*Pteraglossus erythropygius*)—Often considered a race of Collared Araçari (*P. torquatus*); as Pale-mandibled, it is a Tumbesian bioregional endemic. At least 1 was seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

**Chestnut-mandibled Toucan** (*Ramphastos swainsonii*)—Considered a race of Black-mandibled Toucan (*R. ambiguus*) by some authors. 1 was seen in the botanical garden area at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

**Chocó Toucan** (*Ramphastos brevis*)—1 was glimpsed as it flew through forest at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; a Chocó bioregional endemic species

#### WOODPECKERS & ALLIES: PICIDAE

Smoky-brown Woodpecker (*Picoides fumigatus*)—No longer in genus *Veniliornis*. 1 was seen in canopy at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Golden-olive Woodpecker (*Colaptes rubiginosus*)—A pair was seen a few times at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### PARROTS & MACAWS: PSITTACIDAE

Barred Parakeet (*Bolborhynchus lineola*)—Small to medium-sized, high-flying flocks were seen at Pacha Quindi and along the Ecoroute

Rose-faced Parrot (*Pyrilia pulchra*)—Heard only at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Bronze-winged Parrot (*Pionus chalcopterus*)—About 8 were seen in flight at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; another single bird was seen perched from our van as we left the sanctuary.

#### TYPICAL ANTBIRDS: THAMNOPHILIDAE

Slaty Antwren (*Myrmotherula schisticolor*)—1 was seen with a mixed species foraging flock at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### ANTPITTAS: GRALLARIIDAE

Chestnut-crowned Antpitta (*Grallaria ruficapilla*)—Heard only along the Ecoroute

#### TAPACULOS: RHINOCRYPTIDAE

Spillmann's Tapaculo (*Scytalopus spillmanni*)—Heard only along the Ecoroute

#### ANTTHRUSHES: FORMICARIIDAE

Rufous-breasted Antthrush (*Formicarius rufipectus*)—Heard only at Séptimo Paraíso

#### OVENBIRDS & WOODCREEPERS: FURNARIIDAE

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*)—2 were seen with a mixed species foraging flock at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

**Strong-billed Woodcreeper** (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus*)—1 beauty was seen at very close range at Séptimo Paraíso

Spotted Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus erythropygius*)—2 pairs were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; eventually we all got good looks

Montane Woodcreeper (*Lepidocolaptes lacrymiger*)—2 were seen along the Ecoroute; the most common montane woodcreeper in the Andes of Ecuador

Scaly-throated Foliage-Gleaner (*Anabacerthia variagaticeps*)—2 were seen gleaning the underside of mossy branches at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Red-faced Spinetail (*Cranioleuca erythropis*)—3 or so of this arboreal species were seen at Séptimo Paraíso

Slaty Spinetail (*Synallaxis brachyurus*)—Heard only at Séptimo Paraíso

#### TYRANT FLYCATCHERS: TYRANNIDAE

**Lesser Elaenia** (*Elaenia chiriquensis*)—1 was seen several times at Séptimo Paraíso

Golden-faced Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius chrysops*)—At least 1 was seen a few times at Séptimo Paraíso

**Ornate Flycatcher** (*Myiotriccus ornatus*)—6 or so of this charming little flycatcher were

seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary  
Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant (*Lophotriccus pileatus*)—Heard only at Milpe Bird Sanctuary  
Common Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum cinereum*)—A pair was seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary  
Western Wood-Pewee (*Contopus sordidulus*)—1 was seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; a boreal migrant species  
Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)—Hard only at Pacha Quindi; 1 was seen at Séptimo Paraíso  
Golden-crowned Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*)—1 were seen (scoped) at Pacha Quindi by some of us  
Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)—3 were seen along the highway *en route* to Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### MANAKINS: PIPRIDAE

**Club-winged Manakin** (*Machaeropterus deliciosus*)—Heard only by all; some of us saw 1 (even displaying!) inside forest at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### TITYRAS & ALLIES: TITYRIDAE

Cinnamon Becard (*Pachyramphus cinnamomeus*)—3 or so were seen at Séptimo Paraíso  
Black-and-white Becard (*Pachyramphus albogriseus*)—1 male was seen at Pacha Quindi; 2 more were seen the following day at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary  
One-colored Becard (*Platypsaris homochrous*)—5 were seen (4 females and 1 male) at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### VIREOS & ALLIES: VIREONIDAE

Brown-capped Vireo (*Vireo leucophrys*)—2 were seen at Pacha Quindi; and singles were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary  
Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)—At least were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

#### SWALLOWS: HIRUNDINIDAE

Blue-and-white Swallow (*Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*)—Usually fairly common and widespread; we saw only a few—2 by Jon on our first day, and another 2 at Milpe Bird Sanctuary on our second

#### WRENS: TROGLODYTIDAE

House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)—Heard, and 1 seen around Séptimo Paraíso Lodge; often considered a separate species, Southern House-Wren (*T. musculus*)  
Gray-breasted Wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucophrys*)—Mostly heard only; 1 was seen pretty well at Séptimo Paraíso

#### THRUSHES & ALLIES: TURDIDAE

Andean Solitaire (*Myadestes ralloides*)—Heard only on both days  
Swainson's Thrush (*Catharus ustulatus*)—Heard only, then singles were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary  
**Ecuadorian Thrush** (*Turdus maculirostris*)—3 or so were seen at Séptimo Paraíso  
Great Thrush (*Turdus fuscater*)—Generally common highland species

#### NEW WORLD WARBLERS: PARULIDAE

Tropical Parula (*Setophaga pitiayumi*)—Singles were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary

**Chocó Warbler** (*Myiothlypis chlorophrys*)—Considered a race of Golden-bellied Warbler (*M. chrysogaster*) by some authors, though voices are totally different and ranges are totally separate. 2 were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Slate-throated Whitestart (*Myioborus miniatus*)—A rather common mixed flock participant at lower elevations; 2 were seen at Pacha Quindi; 5 were seen in all at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary. Also called Redstart by many authors, though the species shows NO red!

#### TANAGERS & ALLIES: THRAUPIDAE

White-lined Tanager (*Tachyphonus rufus*)—1 male was seen briefly at Milpe Bird Sanctuary fruit feeders

Lemon-rumped Tanager (*Ramphocelus icteronotus*)—Considered a race of Flame-rumped Tanager (*R. flammigerus*) by some authors. A common species of the western lowlands; many were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager (*Anisognathus somptuosus*)—12 or so of this fairly common and beautiful mountain-tanager were seen at Pacha Quindi and along the lower Ecoroute

Fawn-breasted Tanager (*Pipraeidea melanonota*)—1 juvenile bird was seen at Séptimo Paraíso

Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*)—Fairly common this trip, especially at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; also a few were seen at Séptimo Paraíso

Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*)—6 were seen; at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird ‘ Sanctuary

Blue-capped Tanager (*Thraupis cyanocapala*)—3 or so were seen; at Pacha Quindi and along the Ecoroute

Golden-naped Tanager (*Tangara ruficervix*)—3 were seen by some of us at Pacha Quindi and along the Ecoroute

Black-capped Tanager (*Tangara heinei*)—A pair was seen briefly at Séptimo Paraíso

Blue-necked Tanager (*Tangara cyanicollis*)—2 of this somewhat common but stunning lowland tanager were seen at Séptimo Paraíso; the species seems to be spreading to higher elevations

**Rufous-throated Tanager** (*Tangara rufigula*)—2 or so was seen in canopy at Milpe Bird Sanctuary; a Chocó bioregional endemic

**Beryl-spangled Tanager** (*Tangara nigroviridis*)—A few of this beautiful tanager were seen Along the Ecoroute and at Séptimo Paraíso

Metallic-green Tanager (*Tangara labradorides*)—3 were seen at Pacha Quindi by some of us

**Flame-faced Tanager** (*Tangara parzudakii*)—A pair of this ‘eye-catching’ species were seen closely at Pacha Quindi by some of us

Golden Tanager (*Tangara arthus*)—Rather common; 2 were seen at Pacha Quindi; several were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Silver-throated Tanager (*Tangara icterocephala*)—1 or so were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Swallow Tanager (*Tersina viridis*)—5 or so were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Purple Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*)—At least 2 males were seen at Milpe Bird



## Sanctuary

White-sided Flowerpiercer (*Diglossa albilatera*)—1 male was seen at Pacha Quindi by a few of us

Variable Seedeater (*Sporophila corvina*)—2 were seen at Séptimo Paraíso

Bananaquit (*Coereba flaveola*)—At least 2 were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary nectar feeders

Buff-throated Saltator (*Saltator maximus*)—2 were seen well at Séptimo Paraíso

**Black-winged Saltator** (*Saltator atripennis*)—1 was seen at Séptimo Paraíso

## BUNTINGS & NEW WORLD SPARROWS: EMBERIZIDAE

**Tricolored Brush-Finch** (*Atlapetes tricolor*)—A pair was seen at Septimo Paraíso

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

Dusky Chlorospingus (*Chlorospingus semifuscus*)—1-2 were seen on both days; at Pacha Quindi and Séptimo Paraíso. Formally called Dusky Bush-Tanager

## SISKINS, CROSSBILLS & ALLIES: FRINGILLIDAE

Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia laniirostris*)—4 or so were seen at Séptimo Paraíso and Milpe Bird Sanctuary

Golden-rumped Euphonia (*Euphonia cyanocephala*)—A pair was seen briefly at Pacha Quindi

Orange-bellied Euphonia (*Euphonia xanthogaster*)—3 or so were seen at Milpe Bird Sanctuary

**Yellow-collared Chlorophonia** (*Chlorophonia flavirostris*)—A fabulous pair were seen well at Séptimo Paraíso

Hooded Siskin (*Spinus magellanicus*)—A flock of at least 6 were seen at close range from our van at Calacalí

## REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS:

**Gem Anole** (*Anolis gemmosus*)—1 of this mostly green anole was seen at Pacha Quindi

**Mist Whorltail Iguana** (*Stenocercus varius*)—3 or so of this small, attractive and local species of iguanid was seen (scoped too) at Pacha Quindi; listed as *Vulnerable* by IUCN

Pastures Rainfrog (*Pristimantis achatinus*)—1 was seen at Pacha Quindis