

**ECUADOR: AMAZONIA AT
NAPO WILDLIFE CENTER
JANUARY 6 – 15, 2006**

**LEADERS:
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To visit the Napo Wildlife Center is to enter another realm, one totally different from our own. Here we left the veneer of “civilization” behind at the bustling frontier town of Coca, and entered the world of the Amazonian rainforest. As we canoed the final segment of our journey to the lodge, we spotted our first birds, gawked at the luxuriant vegetation, and realized that we had left all artificial noise behind. Our explorations had begun, and for the next week we would immerse ourselves in tracking down the special sights of this pristine area, with the help of the alert eyes and ears of our native guides. This great forest is their home and they are eager to show it off, to reveal things to us that we would never find on our own.

One of the greatest avian sights at the Napo Wildlife Center is the spectacle of hundreds of psittacids coming daily to eat clay from banks along the Napo River. Here we watched breathlessly from a blind as dozens of noisy Yellow-crowned, Mealy, and Blue-headed parrots, and Dusky-headed Parakeets descended to the ground right in front of us. Later we hiked to a smaller lick inside the humid forest, where a cacophonous mob of Cobalt-winged Parakeets had gathered. It took a while, but they finally flew down to the mineral lick, and amidst them we spotted colorful Orange-cheeked Parrots and several rare Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlets, while a Scarlet Macaw perched silently overhead. Does it get better than this?

The comical Hoatzin was clearly the favorite bird of our group, and we quickly became familiar with them. Though common over a wide area, this unique species is endlessly fascinating. Found only in South America, it is the only member of its family, and is so odd that taxonomists can't even agree on its closest relatives. They feed on leaves, mostly obtained at night, and have an extra “stomach” for digesting this mass, a strange diet indeed for a sizable bird. As we passed by in canoes, they hissed and flapped, and perhaps retreated a little, but rarely did they go very far. Their nests are crude bowls of twigs placed over the water (we checked on one almost daily), and the chicks have spurs at the bend of the wing for climbing back into the bushes if spooked from the nest. *Archaeopteryx* anyone?

Every excursion into the forest was like working on a complex jigsaw puzzle, every sighting one small piece of a grand picture. Birding from the tower, a very secure marvel of engineering, gave us a new perspective on the canopy as we spotted and even shared “our” tree with aracaris, fruitcrows, puffbirds, cotingas, and dacnis, often at close range. Below us, in the shady midstory, we tracked down trogons and Golden-collared Toucanets, woodcreepers and jacamars, and many more. Far below, in the dark and shady understory, antbirds were present along the trails, the

delicate Banded Antbird that paraded around in front of us undoubtedly the best. Overhead we watched monkeys, including the lovely and very localized Golden-mantled Tamarin, while Giant Otters were regular visitors to the lake in front of the lodge.

Perhaps our single greatest highlight was a canoe trip one especially magical evening, when we went questing for the near-mythical Zigzag Heron. As always, our local guides knew right where to go; as dusk fell, one began calling on cue, a booming hoot from the swampy tangles. With patience it wasn't long before we were all admiring this odd little heron in the spotlight, studying every detail of its plumage. With a million stars overhead, larval "glow worms" lighting our way, and a full moon about to rise, we silently paddled back to the lodge, listening to frog voices en route, and reflecting on this marvelous realm that we had entered for a brief time.

Itinerary:

January 6: The group gathers in Quito, Ecuador.

January 7: A late-morning flight to Coca, where we transferred to the dock on the Napo River for the trip downriver by motorized dugout. Then several hours by canoe up the tiny creek that leads to Anangu Cocha and the lovely Napo Wildlife Center.

January 8: after dividing into two groups, one went to the Tower across the lake for the morning and the other worked the Tower/clearing at the lodge and nearby shore. In the afternoon the groups reversed areas.

January 9: morning excursions on trails and then a late afternoon/evening canoe excursion down the stream.

January 10: all-day excursion to the parrot clay licks on the Napo River and nearby; after lunch some birding at "the landing" and then a leisurely paddle back upstream to the lodge.

January 11: trails for both groups and then an afternoon excursion by canoe.

January 12: trails for both groups and then an afternoon excursion by canoe.

January 13: a morning of birding by canoe down to the landing and back, with a final late afternoon cruise on the lake and sidestream.

January 14: we left Napo Wildlife Center in the half-light of dawn for the return trip to Coca and flight back to Quito; rest of the afternoon at leisure in Quito.

January 15: departure for those not continuing on the Northern Andes Tour.

Bird List: a few highlights, group favorites and rare sightings are underscored.

Great Tinamou (*Tinamus major*) - heard only

Cinereous Tinamou (*Crypturellus cinereus*) - mostly heard, but seen by some on downstream canoe trip.

Undulated Tinamou (*Crypturellus undulatus*) - heard only

- Neotropic Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)
Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*)
Cocoi (White-necked) Heron (*Ardea cocoi*)
Great Egret (*Ardea alba*)
Snowy Egret (*Egretta thula*)
Cattle Egret (*Bubulcus ibis*)
Striated Heron (*Butorides striatus*)
Agami Heron (*Agamia agami*) - stunning adult in the shadows along the stream.
- Black-crowned Night-Heron (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)
Boat-billed Heron (*Cochlearius cochlearius*)
Rufescent Tiger-Heron (*Tigrisoma lineatum*) - frequent along the stream.
Zigzag Heron (*Zebrilus undulatus*) - superb studies in the spotlight.
Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*)
Horned Screamer (*Anhima cornuta*) - circling low overhead; very rare here.
Black Vulture (*Coragyps atratus*)
Turkey Vulture (*Cathartes aura*)
Greater Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes melambrotus*)
King Vulture (*Sarcoramphus papa*)
Osprey (*Pandion haliaetus*)
Swallow-tailed Kite (*Elanoides forficatus*) - seen by a few on trip back to Coca.
- Snail Kite (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*)
Slender-billed Kite (*Rostrhamus hamatus*) - a specialty of these swampy forests.
- Double-toothed Kite (*Harpagus bidentatus*)
Slate-colored Hawk (*Leucopternis schistacea*)
Roadside Hawk (*Buteo magnirostris*)
Black Hawk-Eagle (*Spizaetus tyrannus*)
Black Caracara (*Daptrius ater*)
Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*)
Laughing Falcon (*Herpetotheres cachinnans*)
?Barred Forest-Falcon (*Micrastur ruficollis*)
Bat Falcon (*Falco ruficularis*)
Speckled Chachalaca (*Ortalis guttata*)
Spix's Guan (*Penelope jacquacu*)
Blue-throated Piping-Guan (*Pipile cumanensis*)
Hoatzin (*Opisthocomus hoazin*) - this comical favorite was common and conspicuous along the stream and lakeshore, including one on a nest along the stream.
- Limpkin (*Aramus guarauna*)
Rufous-sided Crake (*Laterallus melanophaius*) - heard only
Gray-necked Wood-Rail (*Aramides cajanea*)

- Azure Gallinule (*Porphyrio flavirostris*)
- Sungrebe (*Heliornis fulica*)
- Wattled Jacana (*Jacana jacana*)
- Pied Lapwing (*Vanellus cayanus*)
- Spotted Sandpiper (*Actitis macularia*)
- Yellow-billed Tern (*Sterna superciliaris*) - seen by a few on trip back to Coca.
- Pale-vented Pigeon (*Patagioenas cayennensis*)
- Plumbeous Pigeon (*Patagioenas plumbea*)
- Ruddy Pigeon (*Patagionenas subvinacea*)
- Eared Dove (*Zenaida auriculata*) - Quito
- Gray-fronted Dove (*Leptotila rufaxilla*) - heard only
- Blue-and-yellow Macaw (*Ara ararauna*) - always spectacular.
- Scarlet Macaw (*Ara macao*) - perched above forest interior "saladero".
- Chestnut-fronted Macaw (*Ara severa*)
- Red-bellied Macaw (*Orthopsittaca manilata*)
- Dusky-headed Parakeet (*Aratinga weddellii*)
- Maroon-tailed Parakeet (*Pyrrhura melanura*)
- Cobalt-winged Parakeet (*Brotogeris cyanoptera*)
- Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet (*Touit huetii*) - spectacular looks at this rarely-seen species sprinkled amidst the hundreds of Cobalt-winged at the interior lick.
- Black-headed Parrot (*Pionites melanocephala*)
- Orange-cheeked Parrot (*Pionopsitta barrabandi*) - an especially colorful parrot, at the forest interior salt lick.
- Blue-headed Parrot (*Pionus menstruus*)
- Yellow-crowned Parrot (*Amazona ochrocephala*)
- Orange-winged Parrot (*Amazona amazonica*)
- Mealy Parrot (*Amazona farinosa*)
- Squirrel Cuckoo (*Piaya cayana*)
- Little Cuckoo (*Piaya minuta*)
- Greater Ani (*Crotophaga major*) - great hordes around the clearing and shore.
- Smooth-billed Ani (*Crotophaga ani*)
- Tropical Screech-Owl (*Megascops choliba*) - heard only
- Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl (*Megascops watsonii*) - heard only
- Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl (*Glaucidium brasilianum*)
- Great Potoo (*Nyctibius grandis*) - at its day roost.
- Common Potoo (*Nyctibius griseus*) - heard only
- Pauraque (*Nyctidromus albicollis*)
- White-collared Swift (*Streptoprocne zonaris*)
- Gray-rumped Swift (*Chaetura cinereiventris*)
- Short-tailed Swift (*Chaetura brachyura*)
- Fork-tailed (Neotropical) Palm-Swift (*Tachornis squamata*)

- Lesser Swallow-tailed Swift (*Panyptila cayennensis*)
- Rufous-breasted Hermit (*Glaucis hirsuta*)
- Pale-tailed Barbthroat (*Threnetes niger*)
- Great-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis malaris*)
- Straight-billed Hermit (*Phaethornis bourcieri*)
- Gray-breasted Sabrewing (*Campylopterus largipennis*)
- White-necked Jacobin (*Florisuga mellivora*)
- Fiery Topaz (*Topaza pyra*)
- Sparkling Violet-ear (*Colibri coruscans*) - Quito
- Blue-tailed Emerald (*Chlorostilbon mellisugus*)
- Fork-tailed Woodnymph (*Thalurania furcata*)
- Black-tailed Trainbearer (*Lesbia victoriae*) - Quito
- Glittering-throated Emerald (*Polyerata fimbriata*) - by a few at the Coca dock.
- Black-throated Brilliant (*Heliodoxa schreibersii*)
- Long-billed Starthroat (*Heliomaster longirostris*)
- White-tailed Trogon (*Trogon viridis*)
- Violaceous Trogon (*Trogon violaceus*) - heard only
- Blue-crowned Trogon (*Trogon curucui*)
- Black-tailed Trogon (*Trogon melanurus*)
- Ringed Kingfisher (*Ceryle torquata*)
- Amazon Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle amazona*)
- Green Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle americana*)
- Green-and-rufous Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle inda*) - generally the toughest of the New World kingfishers; seen best “under the lights” at night roost over the stream.
- American Pygmy Kingfisher (*Chloroceryle aenea*)
- Blue-crowned Motmot (*Momotus momota*) - mostly heard; glimpsed by some.
- White-eared Jacamar (*Galbalcyrhynchus leucotis*)
- Yellow-billed Jacamar (*Galbula albirostris*)
- White-chinned Jacamar (*Galbula tombacea*)
- Purplish Jacamar (*Galbula chalcothorax*)
- Great Jacamar (*Jacamerops aurea*) - great find at the landing as we first arrived.
- White-necked Puffbird (*Notharchus macrorhynchos*) - closeups from the tower.
- Pied Puffbird (*Notharchus tectus*)
- Chestnut-capped Puffbird (*Bucco macrodactylus*) - great look!
- Lanceolated Monklet (*Micromonacha lanceolata*) - a rare find.
- Brown Nunlet (*Nonnula brunnea*)
- Black-fronted Nunbird (*Monasa nigrifrons*)
- White-fronted Nunbird (*Monasa morphoeus*)
- Swallow-wing (*Chelidoptera tenebrosa*)

- Scarlet-crowned Barbet (*Capito aurovirens*) - colorful and easy to see.
Gilded Barbet (*Capito auratus*)
Lemon-throated Barbet (*Eubucco richardsoni*)
Lettered Aracari (*Pteroglossus inscriptus*)
Ivory-billed Aracari (*Pteroglossus azara*)
Many banded Aracari (*Pteroglossus pluricinctus*)
Golden-collared Toucanet (*Selenidera reinwardtii*) - “neck-breakers” high overhead in the canopy.
Channel-billed Toucan (*Ramphastos vitellinus*)
Red-billed (White throated) Toucan (*Ramphastos tucanus*)
Yellow-tufted Woodpecker (*Melanerpes cruentatus*)
Little Woodpecker (*Veniliornis passerinus*)
Red-stained Woodpecker (*Veniliornis affinis*)
Spot-breasted Woodpecker (*Colaptes punctigula*)
Scaly-breasted Woodpecker (*Celeus grammicus*)
Chestnut Woodpecker (*Celeus elegans*)
Cream-colored Woodpecker (*Celeus flavus*)
Rufous-headed Woodpecker (*Celeus spectabilis*) - a very rare sighting.
Ringed Woodpecker (*Celeus torquatus*) - another uncommonly seen beauty.
Lineated Woodpecker (*Dryocopus lineatus*)
Crimson-crested Woodpecker (*Campephilus rubricollis*)
Plain Xenops (*Xenops minutus*)
Point-tailed Palmcreeper (*Berlepschia rikeri*) - scrambling around on the moriche palms, its distinctive habitat.
Chestnut-winged Hookbill (*Ancistrops strigilatus*)
Chestnut-winged Foliage-gleaner (*Philydor erythropterus*)
Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner (*Philydor erythrocerus*)
Black-tailed Leaf-tosser (*Sclerurus caudacutus*)
Plain-brown Woodcreeper (*Dendrocincla fuliginosa*)
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (*Glyphorhynchus spirurus*)
Long-billed Woodcreeper (*Nasica longirostris*) - spectacular!
Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper (*Dendrexetastes rufigula*)
Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes certhia*)
Black-banded Woodcreeper (*Dendrocolaptes picumnus*)
Striped Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*)
Ocellated Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus ocellatus*)
Buff-throated Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus guttatus*)
Straight-billed Woodcreeper (*Xiphorhynchus picus*)
Great Antshrike (*Taraba major*)
Mouse-colored Antshrike (*Thamnophilus murinus*)
Spot-winged Antshrike (*Pygiptila stellaris*)
Dusky-throated Antshrike (*Thamnomanes ardesiacus*)
Cinereous Antshrike (*Thamnomanes caesius*)

- Pygmy Antwren (*Myrmotherula brachyura*)
- Short-billed Antwren (*Myrmotherula obscura*)
- White-flanked Antwren (*Myrmotherula axillaris*)
- Gray Antwren (*Myrmotherula menetriesii*)
- Banded Antwren (*Dichrozona cincta*) - beautiful skulker on the forest floor.
- Gray Antbird (*Cercomacra cinerascens*) - heard only
- Black-faced Antbird (*Myrmoborus myotherinus*)
- Silvered Antbird (*Sclateria naevia*)
- Plumbeous Antbird (*Myrmeciza hyperythra*)
- White-shouldered Antbird (*Myrmeciza melanoceps*)
- Sooty Antbird (*Myrmeciza fortis*)
- White-plumed Antbird (*Pithys albifrons*) - professional army ant attendant.
- Bicolored Antbird (*Gymnopithys leucaspis*)
- Lunulated Antbird (*Gymnopithys lunulata*) - localized specialty of the region.
- Dot-backed Antbird (*Hylophylax punctulata*)
- Rufous-capped Antthrush (*Formicarius colma*) - heard only
- Black-faced Antthrush (*Formicarius analis*) - heard only
- Rusty-belted Tapaculo (*Lisocles thoracicus*) - heard only
- Screaming Piha (*Lipaugus vociferans*)
- Plum-throated Cotinga (*Cotinga maynana*)
- Spangled Cotinga (*Cotinga cayana*)
- Bare-necked Fruitcrow (*Gymnoderus foetidus*)
- Purple-throated Fruitcrow (*Querula purpurata*)
- Blue-backed Manakin (*Chiroxiphia pareola*)
- Wire-tailed Manakin (*Pipra filicauda*) - female on the nest.
- White-crowned Manakin (*Pipra pipra*)
- Blue-crowned Manakin (*Pipra coronata*) - heard only
- Orange-crested Manakin (*Heterocercus aurantiivertex*) - scarce regional specialty of the flooded varzea tangles.
- Dwarf Tyrant- Manakin (*Tyranneutes stolzmanni*)
- Wing-barred Piprites (*Piprites chloris*)
- White-lored Tyrannulet (*Ornithion inerme*) - heard only
- Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet (*Tyrannulus elatus*)
- Golden-faced Tyrannulet (*Zimmerius chrysops*)
- Yellow-browed Tody-Flycatcher (*Todirostrum chrysocrotaphum*) - colorful sprite in the Tower tree.
- Eastern Wood-Pewee (*Contopus virens*)
- Drab Water-Tyrant (*Ochthornis littoralis*)
- Cinnamon Attila (*Attila cinnamomeus*)
- Citron-bellied Attila (*Attila citriniventris*) - heard only
- Dusky-capped Flycatcher (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*)
- Lesser Kiskadee (*Philohydor lictor*)
- Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)

- Boat-billed Flycatcher (*Megarhynchus pitangua*)
- Social Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes similis*)
- Gray-capped Flycatcher (*Myiozetetes granadensis*)
- Sulphur-bellied Flycatcher (*Myiodynastes luteiventris*)
- Piratic Flycatcher (*Legatus leucophaeus*)
- Tropical Kingbird (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)
- Pink-throated Becard (*Pachyramphus minor*)
- Black-tailed Tityra (*Tityra cayana*)
- Gray-breasted Martin (*Progne chalybea*)
- White-winged Swallow (*Tachycineta albiventer*)
- White-banded Sallow (*Atticora fasciata*)
- Southern Rough-winged Swallow (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)
- Black-capped Donacobius (*Donacobius atricapillus*) - a noisy friend always present along the lakeshore and stream.
- Thrush-like Wren (*Campylorhynchus turdinus*)
- Coraya Wren (*Thryothorus coraya*)
- Buff-breasted Wren (*Thryothorus leucotis*)
- House Wren (*Troglodytes aedon*)
 - “Southern” House Wren (*Troglodytes (a.) musculus*)
- White-breasted wood-Wren (*Henicorhina leucosticta*)
- Scaly-breasted (Southern Nightingale) Wren (*Microcerculus marginatus*) - heard only.
- Great Thrush (*Turdus fuscater*) - Quito
- Black-billed Thrush (*Turdus ignobilis*)
- Lawrence's Thrush (*Turdus lawrencii*) - heard only, but a remarkable mimic.
- White-necked Thrush (*Turdus albicollis*)
- Violaceous Jay (*Cyanocorax violaceus*)
- Red-eyed Vireo (*Vireo olivaceus*)
- Magpie Tanager (*Cissopis leveriana*)
- Flame-crested Tanager (*Tachyphonus cristatus*)
- Scarlet Tanager (*Piranga olivacea*)
- Masked Crimson Tanager (*Ramphocelus nigrogularis*) - brilliant!
- Silver-beaked Tanager (*Ramphocelus carbo*)
- Blue-gray Tanager (*Thraupis episcopus*)
- Palm Tanager (*Thraupis palmarum*)
- Thick-billed Euphonia (*Euphonia lanirostris*)
- Orange-bellied Euphonia (*Euphonia xanthogaster*)
- Rufous-bellied Euphonia (*Euphonia rufiventris*)
- Paradise Tanager (*Tangara chilensis*)
- Green-and-gold Tanager (*Tangara schrankii*)
- Opal-rumped Tanager (*Tangara velia*)
- Opal-crowned Tanager (*Tangara callophrys*)
- Black-faced Dacnis (*Dacnis lineata*)

Yellow-bellied Dacnis (*Dacnis flaviventer*)
Blue Dacnis (*Dacnis cayana*)
Green Honeycreeper (*Chlorophanes spiza*)
Purple Honeycreeper (*Cyanerpes caeruleus*)
Swallow Tanager (*Tersina viridis*)
Chestnut-bellied Seedeater (*Sporophila castaneiventris*)
Red-capped Cardinal (*Paroaria gularis*)
Giant Cowbird (*Molothrus oryzivorus*)
Moriche Oriole (*Icterus chryscephalus*)
Orange-backed Troupial (*Icterus croconotus*)
Yellow-rumped Cacique (*Cacicus cela*) - an entertaining colony in the trees right over the lodge.

Solitary Cacique (*Cacicus solitarius*)
Casqued Oropendola (*Psarocolius oseryi*)
Crested Oropendola (*Psarocolius decumanus*)
Russet-backed Oropendola (*Psarocolius angustifrons*)
Oriole Blackbird (*Gymnomystax mexicanus*)

Mammal List:

Golden-mantled Tamarin (*Saguinus tripartitus*)
Dusky Titi Monkey (*Callicebus moloch*)
Common Squirrel Monkey (*Saimiri sciureus*)
White-fronted Capuchin (*Cebus albifrons*)
Red Howler Monkey (*Alouatta seniculus*)
Amazon Dwarf Squirrel (*Microsciurus flaviventer*)
Amazon Bamboo-Rat (*Dactylomys dactylinus*) - at night with the light.
bulldog (fishing) bat (*Noctilio sp?*)
Tayra (*Eira barbara*)
Giant Otter (*Pteronura brasiliensis*)
White-lipped Peccary (*Tayassu pecari*) - not seen but tremendous crashing in the forest close at hand.

Reptile & Amphibian List:

“green glass frog”
“folded up frog”
Black Caiman
Yellow-spotted River Turtle (*Podocnemis unifilis*)
Caiman Lizard (*Dracaena guianensis*)
Striped Tegú Lizard (*Tupinambis longilineus*) - along waterfront at lodge.
anoles (several species, both in leaf litter and on the trees).
Turnip-tailed Gecko
?boa sp? (Large pink-bellied snake curled up in the vines).
“red-and-orange snake in the water”

Ecuador: Napo Wildlife Center Tour 2006 (cont):

10

“weird little worm snake”

“little snake in burrow” (with circles on it)