

**VENEZUELA: CASA MARIA &
HATO PIÑERO**

A RELAXED & EASY TOUR

January 30–February 7, 2015



Yellow-knobbed Curassow (*Crax daubentoni* – Photo: D. Ascanio)

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By David Ascanio

Our Casa Maria and Hato Piñero tour provided an incomparable mix of birds, mammals, and habitats unique to the Neotropics. This year we started in a different way: with views of Blue-and-yellow and Chestnut-fronted macaws flying over the valley of Caracas. We also enjoyed Orange-winged and Yellow-crowned parrots in flight, as well as the Rose-ringed Parakeet (introduced from Asia) commuting to the roosting site.

After a morning filled with macaws, parrots, and a beautiful blue sky, we drove to the famed Casa Maria. This lodge is a naturalist's paradise, given their efforts to turn what was once bare land into a dynamic set of ponds, streams, forest, and lots of birds! Our first morning found us in front of the light bulb where woodcreepers, tanagers, thrushes, warblers, oropendolas, and tyrant flycatchers joined the feast to devour the different sized moths attracted to the light during the previous night. Later, we drove to the Palmichal reserve where we enjoyed more tanagers (Speckled Tanager was a favorite!), euphonias, tyrant flycatchers, and a wonderful patch of cloud forest. In Palmichal we also explored the forest floor and saw a Black-faced Antthrush tossing leaves in search of arthropods.

Although it is hard to pick a favorite location around Casa Maria, I believe the forest edge along the road between Palmichal to Casa Maria was the most productive birding track for the first part of the tour. Every patch of forest gave us amazing birds, from Rufous-and-white Wren to the diminutive but well-dressed Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher. We also experienced Army Ants with some of their specialists including the active Gray-headed Tanager and the uniform Plain-brown Woodcreeper. Other swarm attendants were Cocoa and Black-banded woodcreepers.

In Casa Maria we also admired Norbert's capacity to turn every corner of his property into a magical nature site. From ponds to bugs and birds, this lodge is a must for the Neotropical traveler. Indeed, Norbert's passion for making his own world reminded me of the movie "*Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory*," a title that I adapted for what he has done in Casa Maria: "*Norbert Flauger and the Nature Factory*."

From the hilly terrain surrounding Casa Maria we continued south to the plains (locally named *Llanos*) in the state of Cojedes. As we left the mountains behind, we crossed Cambrian hills (locally named *Galeras*) and vast grasslands. In the late afternoon we reached Hato Piñero, a government-owned ranch. Back to the time when it was privately owned, the Branger family had banned hunting since its conception, and the current administration has followed those rules.

Hato Piñero was a contrasting biome. Despite being in the plains (thus suggesting a fairly homogeneous landscape), the presence of the Cambrian hills (*Galeras*) has allowed for a

narrow but interesting band of dry scrub growing contiguous to large tracks of dry forest. Also, these hills are home to patches of *Curatella* trees (highly resistant to fire) and annual grasses. There is also gallery forest (running alongside rivers) and wetlands varying in size from borrow pits to large lagoons.

At Hato Piñero we enjoyed views of wildlife the way it was 50 years ago when this land was depleted of human presence. To put it simply: Hato Piñero has the largest population of Yellow-knobbed Curassow. Here, they wander around (we saw maybe more than 100 individuals!), along with Capybaras, foxes, rabbits, and deer. Adding to this are Scarlet Ibis and pairs of Scarlet Macaws, along with the unique Sunbittern and the always-suspicious Blue Ground-Dove. You have to experience this to believe it!

On our last day we visited the open grasslands south of the lodge. Along with the sunrise, pairs of Whistling Herons and Red-breasted Blackbirds flew across the enormous orange ball welcoming the day. It was certainly a unique moment.

I want to thank you for joining me in my beloved Venezuela. We need to emphasize that with your participation you have made a big and important contribution to preserve Hato Piñero's natural habitats.

Photo gallery:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157648429028713/>

Also, I don't want to miss this opportunity to let you know about some other VENT *Relaxed and Easy tours* and still get an impressive number of birds. Here are some of my favorite destinations:

Panama's Canal Zone: A Relaxed & Easy tour

Photo galleries:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157648765567967/>

Costa Rica: A Relaxed & Easy tour

Photo galleries:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157649285592572/>

Cuba: People-to-people and Birds!

Photo gallery:

<https://www.flickr.com/photos/davidascanio/sets/72157643519265893/>

I hope to see you again!

ITINERARY

30 January 2015. Pre-trip to El Avila National Park.

31 January 2015. Drive to Casa María. Night Casa María.

01 February 2015. Casa María and Palmichal reserve. Night Casa María.

02 February 2015. Morning around Casa María. Afternoon drive to Hato Piñero. Night Hato Piñero.

03,04,05 February 2015. Hato Piñero.

06 February 2015. Hato Piñero to Caracas.

07 February 2015. Topotepuy gardens (for those leaving in the afternoon). Departure.

BIRDS

The order, and common and scientific names are those given by James F. Clements in *The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World*, 6th Edition, Cornell University Press, with all current updates. The birds observed in El Avila National Park and Parque del Este (for the participants arriving a day early) or in Topotepuy (for the participants leaving the country on the afternoon of 07 Feb.) are also mentioned in this list. In all cases, the location where the species were seen is indicated.

Tinamidae

Red-legged Tinamou. *Crypturellus erythropus*. Heard in Hato Piñero.

Anhimidae

Horned Screamer. *Anhima cornuta*. Laguna Los Cerritos.

Anatidae

White-faced Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna viduata*. Laguna Los Cerritos. 12+ individuals.

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck. *Dendrocygna autumnalis*. Laguna Los Cerritos. 500+ individuals.

Muscovy Duck. *Cairina moschata*. Road south. Few pairs.

Cracidae

Rufous-vented Chachalaca. *Ortalis ruficauda*. Common.

Yellow-knobbed Curassow. *Crax daubentoni*. Numerous. There is a sizeable population in Hato Pinero.

Ciconiidae

Jabiru. *Jabiru mycteria*. A pair. Hato Pinero.

Wood Stork. *Mycteria americana*. Few individuals. Hato Pinero.

Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant.*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*. Hato Piñero and Parque del Este, in Caracas.

Anhimidae

Anhinga.*Anhinga anhinga*. Only once. Hato Piñero.

Ardeidae

Rufescent Tiger-Heron.*Tigrisoma lineatum*. Hato Piñero.

Cocoi Heron.*Ardea cocoi*. Hato Piñero.

Great Egret.*Ardea alba*. Hato Piñero and Parque del Este, in Caracas.

Snowy Egret.*Egretta thula*. Very few individuals seen. Hato Piñero.

Little Blue Heron.*Egretta caerulea*. Very few individuals. Hato Piñero.

Cattle Egret.*Bubulcus ibis*. Hato Piñero and along the highway.

Whistling Heron. *Syrigma sibilatrix*. This species ranks among the most beautiful herons in Venezuela. We enjoyed daily views of pairs in Hato Piñero.

Black-crowned Night-Heron.*Nycticorax nycticorax*. Hato Piñero.

Boat-billed Heron. *Cochlearius cochlearius*. Only seen flying away. Hato Piñero.

Threskiornithidae

Hato Piñero is a superb place for enjoying and learning about the ibises in Venezuela. Here we were able to observe all six species of this family to occur in Venezuela.

White Ibis. *Eudocimus albus*. A single one was observed in Hato Piñero.

Scarlet Ibis.*Eudocimus ruber*. One of the favorites of the tour. Flocks were observed flying to a roost in Hato Piñero.

Sharp-tailed Ibis.*Cercibis oxycerca*. This ibis prefers damp ground (rather than wetlands) and is almost invariably in pairs or family groups. We saw 3 pairs in Hato Piñero.

Green Ibis.*Mesembrinibis cayennensis*. This ibis can be seen well only when having sunshine over its neck. We enjoyed superb views in Hato Piñero.

Bare-faced Ibis.*Phimosus infuscatus*. Common and widespread. Seen in all locations including Parque del Este, in Caracas.

Buff-necked Ibis.*Theristicus caudatus*. Unlike most other ibises this one avoids direct contact with water. Hato Piñero.

Roseate Spoonbill. *Ajaia ajaja*. Few individuals were observed in Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Cathartidae

Black Vulture. *Coragyps atratus*. A common species seen almost every day.

Turkey Vulture. *Cathartes aura*. Most individuals seen were of the North America migrant race (*septentrionalis*).

King Vulture. *Sarcoramphus papa*. We observed about 7 individuals soaring in Hato Piñero. Other individuals were observed perched.

Accipitridae

Gray-headed Kite. *Leptodon cayanensis*. A single individual in juvenile plumage was seen in Bosque de los Caballos, in Hato Piñero.

Black Hawk-Eagle. *Spizaetus ornatus*. Topotepuy.

Ornate Hawk-Eagle. *Spizaetus ornatus*. One soaring over Palmichal.

Black-collared Hawk. *Busarellus nigricollis*. Common in Hato Piñero.

Crane Hawk. *Geranospiza caerulescens*. A fairly common and active species in Hato Piñero.

Savanna Hawk. *Buteogallus meridionalis*. Common. Hato Piñero.

Roadside Hawk. *Buteo magnirostris*. This is arguably the most widespread bird of prey in northern Venezuela. It was seen in Hato Piñero.

White-tailed Hawk. *Buteo albicaudatus*. Hato Piñero. Seen only twice.

Broad-winged Hawk. *Buteo platypterus*. Boreal migrant. A juvenile was observed in Palmichal.

Zone-tailed Hawk. *Buteo albonotatus*. Nice views of an individual. Hato Piñero and from Parque del Este, in Caracas.

Eurypygidae

Sunbittern. *Eurypyga helias*. We enjoyed daily views of this astonishing species in Hato Piñero, both perched and flying. It was Wim's target species!

Rallidae

Gray-necked Wood-Rail. *Aramides cajanea*. Hato Piñero.

Aramidae

Limpkin. *Aramus guarauna*. A single individual by a pond. Hato Piñero.

Burhinidae

Double-striped Thick-Knee. *Burhinus bistriatus*. Seen in the night outing and along the road heading south in Hato Piñero.

Recurvirostridae

Black-necked Stilt. *Himantopus mexicanus*. Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Charadriidae

Southern Lapwing. *Vanellus chilensis*. Few pairs were seen in Hato Piñero.

Jacanidae

Wattled Jacana. *Jacana jacana*. Hato Piñero.

Scolopacidae

Spotted Sandpiper. *Actitis macularia*. Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Solitary Sandpiper. *Tringa solitaria*. Southern road, Hato Piñero.

Lesser Yellowlegs. *Tringa flavipes*. Los Cerritos. Hato Piñero.

Least Sandpiper. *Calidris minutilla*. Los Cerritos, Hato Pinero.

Semipalmated Sandpiper. *Calidris pusilla*. Los Cerritos, Hato Pinero.

Laridae

Large-billed Tern. *Phaetusa simplex*. Various individuals. Los Cerritos, Hato Pinero.

Columbidae

Rock Pigeon. *Columba livia*. Common in urban areas.

Pale-vented Pigeon. *Patagioenas (Columba) cayennensis*. Hato Pinero.

Ruddy Pigeon. *Patagioenas subvinacea*. Heard in El Avila National Park.

Eared Dove. *Zenaida auriculata*. In Hato Piñero we observed several dozen.

Common Ground-Dove. *Columbina passerina*. Hato Piñero.

Ruddy Ground-Dove. *Columbina talpacoti*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero. Also in Parque del Este, Caracas.

Scaled Dove. *Scardafella squammata*. Hato Piñero.

Blue Ground-Dove. *Claravis pretiosa*. Great views of two males and a female in Hato Piñero.

White-tipped Dove. *Leptotila verreauxi*. Hato Piñero.

Opisthocomidae

Hoatzin. *Opisthocomus hoazin*. While observing this species we learned aspects of the natural history of one of the most fascinating bird species on our planet. The Hoatzin is an herbivorous species having a long crop that functions as a rumen to allow it to digest its diet. It was thought to be related to the *Tinamidae* and later to the *Cracidae*, *Rallidae*, *Otididae*, *Pteroclididae*, *Columbidae*, *Colidae*, *Cariamidae*, and *Cuculidae*. It is now believed to be a very old lineage with a long, lonely evolutionary history and no close living relatives. Its taxonomical position has been greatly debated and remains unclear. We enjoyed superb views of it at Hato Pinero.

Cuculidae

Squirrel Cuckoo. *Piaya cayana*. Palmichal and Hato Pinero.

Smooth-billed Ani. *Crotophaga ani*. Road.

Groove-billed Ani. *Crotophaga sulcirostris*. Hato Piñero.

Strigidae

Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. *Glaucidium brasilianum*. Superb views near Palmichal and at Hato Piñero.

Caprimulgidae

Lesser Nighthawk. *Chordeiles acutipennis*. We had great observations of various individuals on the short night trip along the road south of Hato Piñero.

Short-tailed Nighthawk. *Lurocalis semitorquatus*. Few were seen flying at dawn in Casa María.

Band-tailed Nighthawk. *Nyctoprogne leucopyga*. One individual was apparently seen in Hato Piñero.

Pauraque. *Nyctidromus albicollis*. Hato Piñero. Common.

White-tailed Nightjar. *Hydropsalis cayennensis*. We enjoyed superb views of one individual in Hato Piñero.

Trochilidae

Stripe-throated Hermit. *Phaethornis striigularis*. Road between Casa María and Palmichal.

Sooty-capped Hermit. *Phaethornis augusti*. Two individuals were seen along the road between Casa María and Palmichal. This species gleans spider webs in walls of houses, thus it is locally known as *Limpiacasa* (house cleaner).

Ruby Topaz. *Chrysolampis mosquitus*. Females and young males were observed in Hato Piñero.

Black-throated Mango. *Anthracothorax nigricollis*. Hato Piñero.

Speckled Hummingbird. *Adelomyia melanogenys*. El Avila National Park.

Violet-fronted Brilliant. *Heliodoxa leadbeateri*. Various individuals near Casa Maria. Large numbers were seen in Topotepuy.

Blue-tailed Emerald. *Chlorostilbon mellisugus*. Hato Piñero.

Blue-chinned Sapphire. *Chlorestes notatus*. Casa Maria.

Violet-headed Hummingbird. *Klais guimeti*. Palmichal reserve and El Avila.

White-vented Plumeleteer. *Chalybura buffonii*. Casa María and vicinity.

Long-billed Starthroat. *Heliomaster longirostris*. Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal. Feeding in flowers of an immortelle tree.

Glittering-throated Emerald. *Amazilia fimbriata*. Hato Piñero.

Copper-rumped Hummingbird. *Amazilia tobaci*. Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal. Feeding in flowers of an immortelle tree. Also in El Avila National Park.

Golden-tailed Sapphire. *Chrysuronia oenone*. Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal. Also seen in Topotepuy.

Trogonidae

White-tipped Quetzal. *Pharomachrus fulgidus*. El Avila National Park. Heard only.

Collared Trogon. *Trogon collaris*. Palmichal.

Cerylidae

Ringed Kingfisher. *Megaceryle torquata*. Hato Piñero and wetlands along the road. This is the largest kingfisher in Venezuela.

Amazon Kingfisher. *Chloroceryle amazona*. Hato Piñero.

Bucconidae

Russet-throated Puffbird. *Hypnelus ruficollis*. Fairly common in Hato Piñero.

Galbulidae

The jacamars are insectivorous species restricted to the Neotropics. They are usually found in pairs or in loose groups. In appearance they show resemblances to the old world bee-eaters, but are not related to them. This represents a good example of convergent evolution where two unrelated species acquire similar biological traits.

Rufous-tailed Jacamar. *Galbula ruficauda*. Pairs were observed near Casa Maria.

Ramphastidae

Groove-billed Toucan. *Aularcohynchus sulcatus*, A pair was seen near Casa Maria.

Picidae

Scaled Piculet. *Picumnus squamulatus*, Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Red-crowned Woodpecker. *Melanerpes rubricapillus*. Pairs were seen every day, including El Avila National Park.

Red-rumped Woodpecker. *Veniliornis kirkii*. Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Golden-olive Woodpecker. *Colaptes rubiginosus*. El Avila National Park.

Lineated Woodpecker. *Dryocopus lineatus*. Hato Piñero.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker. *Campephilus melanoleucos*. Hato Piñero.

Falconidae

Crested Caracara. *Caracara cheriway*. This species was seen every day.

Yellow-headed Caracara. *Milvago chimachima*. This species is as common as the previous one but usually more numerous.

Laughing Falcon. *Herpetotheres cachinnans*. Hato Piñero.

American Kestrel. *Falco sparverius*. Hato Piñero.

Aplomado Falcon. *Falco femoralis*. Various individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Psittacidae

Painted (Venezuelan) Parakeet. *Pyrrhura picta (emma)*. Two flocks (20 and 30+ individuals) were observed in Casa Maria reforested area and along the road to Palmichal. This species has an interesting taxonomic history. First described as a full species (*P. emma*), it was later considered to be a race of Maroon-faced Parakeet (*P. leucotis*). More recently, various authors re-elevated it to species rank and named it Venezuelan Parakeet (*P. emma*). Later, in 2007 Stotz had recommended to remove the race *emma* from *leucotis* meaning that it was not related to Maroon-faced Parakeet but to Painted Parakeet. That last suggestion passed in the South American Classification

Committee with some observations as members of the committee suggested to elevate the race *emma* to species rank. So, for the time being let's call it Painted Parakeet, but bear in mind that in the short term this group might be reshuffled again.

Blood-eared Parakeet. *Pyrrhura hoematotis*. Endemic to the Coastal Cordillera. Nice studies of a group in El Avila National Park.

Scarlet-fronted Parakeet. *Aratinga wagleri*. Flocks were observed flying high above Casa María. Also seen in El Avila National Park.

Brown-throated Parakeet. *Aratinga pertinax*. Vicinity of Casa Maria and Hato Piñero. Also seen in El Avila National Park.

Chestnut-fronted Macaw. *Ara severa*. First seen in Caracas. Also observed near Casa Maria, Hato Piñero and El Avila National Park.

Scarlet Macaw. *Ara macao*. Seen daily in Hato Piñero.

Blue-and-yellow Macaw. *Ara ararauna*. Introduced population in Caracas.

Green-rumped Parrotlet. *Forpus passerinus*. Hato Piñero.

Orange-chinned Parakeet. *Brotogeris jugularis*. Only seen in flight in Hato Piñero.

Red-billed Parrot. *Pionus sordidus*. A pair was observed near Casa Maria.

Blue-headed Parrot. *Pionus menstruus*. Several were observed near Casa María.

Yellow-crowned Parrot. *Amazona ochrocephala*. Hato Piñero.

Orange-winged Parrot. *Amazona amazonica*. Various pairs were observed in Casa María and in Caracas.

Rose-ringed Parakeet. *Psittacula krameri*. Introduced. Caracas.

Thamnophilidae

Thamnophilidae, along with *Formicariidae* and *Grallaridae*, were formerly treated as a single family. Nowadays, *Thamnophilidae* comprises only the small antbirds while the other two families comprise the antthrushes and the antpittas.

Black-crested Antshrike. *Sakesphorus canadensis*. Hato Piñero.

Barred Antshrike. *Thamnophilus doliatus*. Hato Piñero.

(Northern) White-fringed Antwren. *Formicivora intermedia*. A pair was observed in Hato Piñero. Although Hilty (2003) followed Ridgely (in *Birds of South America*) in treating this as a separate species (calling it Northern White-fringed Antwren), the South American Classification Committee has not formally accepted it. Vocal differences between the populations E and W of the Essequibo River suggest that the taxonomic division proposed by Ridgely might be accepted in the near future.

White-bellied Antbird. *Myrmeciza longipes*. Heard in Hato Pinero.

Formicariidae

Black-faced Antthrush. *Formicarius analis*. Superb views of an individual in Palmichal.

Grallariidae

Chestnut-crowned Antpitta. *Grallaria ruficapilla*. Excellent views of two individuals in El Avila National Park.

Furnariidae

What is known today as the *Furnariidae* formerly involved two families: The Ovenbirds (*Furnariidae*) and the woodcreepers (*Dendrocolaptidae*). Although there has been a historic controversy (for almost 100 years!) whether they should be treated as one or two separate families, the DNA sequence published in 2002 has revealed that both groups must be considered as one family, thus reverting all the species into the *Furnariidae*. The proposal for this change was made in September 2004 and was accepted by the SACC committee.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper. *Sittasomus griseicapillus*. Seen near Casa Maria.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper. *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*. We had superb views of various individuals moving along with army ants near Casa Maria. It was also seen visiting the light bulb in Casa Maria.

Black-banded Woodcreeper. *Dendrocolaptes picumnus*. We enjoyed superb views of a pair moving along with army ants near Casa Maria. It was also seen visiting the light bulb in Casa Maria.

Cocoa Woodcreeper. *Xiphorhynchus susurrans*. Seen visiting the light bulb in Casa Maria. This species was formerly a race of Buff-throated Woodcreeper, *Xiphorhynchus guttatus*.

Straight-billed Woodcreeper. *Dendroplex (Xiphorhynchus) picus*. Hato Piñero. The race we saw (*phalara*) might be treated as a separate species in the future.

Red-billed Scythebill. *Campylorhamphus trochilirostris*. Palmichal reserve.

Streak-headed Woodcreeper. *Lepidocolaptes souleyetii*. Casa María and Hato Piñero.

Plain Xenops. *Xenops minutus*. One individual was seen in Palmichal.

Buff-fronted Foliage-gleaner. *Philydor rufum*. El Avila National Park.

Montane Foliage-gleaner. *Anabacerthia striacollis*. Palmichal and El Avila National Park.

Gutulate Foliage-gleaner. *Syndactyla guttulata*. El Avila National Park. An endemic to Venezuela.

Rufous-fronted (Plain) Thornbird. *Phacellodomus inornatus*. Few pairs were observed searching for arthropods on the ground and on branches of the Saman trees, in Hato Piñero. This is the species that builds the large hanging nests with chambers. The nest is also used as breeding site by some seedeaters and by the national bird of Venezuela, the Venezuelan Troupial.

Crested Spinetail. *Cranioleuca subcristata*. Two pairs were nesting in Casa María. Unlike the previous two species this one is arboreal.

Yellow-chinned Spinetail. *Certhiaxis cinnamomea*. Two pairs were observed in wetlands near the main house of Hato Piñero.

Pale-breasted Spinetail. *Synallaxis albescens*. Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Black-throated Spinetail. *Synallaxis castanea*. El Avila National Park. An endemic to Venezuela.

Tyrannidae

The Tyrant-Flycatchers are one of the best representatives of speciation in the Neotropics. For the visitor to Venezuela it can be both frustrating and exciting to see a number of these species approaching after the whistle of the Ferruginous Pygmy-Owl. On our tour we managed to see 37 species. Casa María and Hato Pinero (including the day tour to El Avila National Park) are one of the best destinations in northern Venezuela to learn about the confusing members of this family.

Rough-legged (White-fronted) Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias burmeisterii (zeledoni)*. Superb studies of a pair in El Avila National Park.

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet. *Camptostoma obsoletum*. Hato Piñero. Observed joining the pygmy-owl mob.

Mouse-colored Tyrannulet. *Phaeomyias murina*. Hato Pinero. Observed joining the pygmy-owl mob.

Forest Elaenia. *Myiopagis gaimardii*. Casa Maria.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia. *Elaenia flavogaster*. Hato Piñero.

Slaty-capped Flycatcher. *Leptopogon superciliaris*. Observed around the light bulb of Casa Maria. The ear patch is one of the distinctive field marks.

Sepia-capped Flycatcher. *Leptopogon amaurocephalus*. Hato Piñero. Apparently, an undescribed race.

Rufous-lored Tyrannulet. *Phylloscartes flaviventris*. Pair in the cloud forest above Casa Maria. A Venezuelan endemic!

Sooty-headed Tyrannulet.*Phyllomyias griseiceps*. Casa María.

Paltry Tyrannulet. *Zimmerius vilissimus*. El Avila and road between Casa Maria to Palmichal.

Northern Scrub-Flycatcher.*Sublegatus arenarum*. Hato Piñero.

White-throated Tyrannulet. *Mecocerculus leucophrys*. El Avila National Park.

Pale-tipped Tyrannulet (called Inezia in Hilty's Birds of Venezuela).*Inezia caudata*. Hato Piñero. The common name *Inezia* is waiting for formal recognition by the South America Classification Committee.

Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant.*Lophotriccus pilaris*. Superb nice views in Hato Piñero.

Slate-headed Tody-Flycatcher. *Poecilatriccus sylvia*. Seen near Casa Maria.

Common Tody-Flycatcher.*Todirostrum cinereum*. A common species in Hato Piñero.

Yellow-olive Flycatcher (Flatbill). *Tolmomyias sulphurescens*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Yellow-breasted Flycatcher (Ochre-lored Flatbill).*Tolmomyias flaviventris*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

White-throated Spadebill. *Platyrinchus mystaceus*. Heard in Hato Pinero.

Smoke-colored Pewee. *Contopus fumigatus*. El Avila and Casa Maria.

Vermilion Flycatcher.*Pyrocephalus rubinus*. Hato Piñero.

Pied Water-Tyrant.*Fluvicola pica*. Hato Pinero.

White-headed Marsh-Tyrant.*Arundinicola leucocephala*. Hato Piñero.

Cattle Tyrant.*Machetornis rixosus*. Hato Pinero.

Pale-edged Flycatcher.*Myiarchus cephalotes*. El Avila National Park and cloud forest above Casa Maria.

Brown-crested Flycatcher. *Myiarchus tyrannulus*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

The following seven species are considered by some taxonomists to be an example of adaptive radiation, suggesting a rapidly multiplying lineage from a single ancestor.

Lesser Kiskadee.*Pitangus (Philohydor) lictor*. Basically a miniature of the Great Kiskadee. Notice the thinner bill and preference for areas near water. It was seen repeated times in Hato Piñero.

Great Kiskadee.*Pitangus sulphuratus*. This was a common and widespread tyrant-flycatcher in both locations. Several were seen throughout the trip. The prominent bill and the reddish wings were diagnostic field marks.

Boat-billed Flycatcher.*Megarynchus pitangua*. This species was seen in Casa Maria daily. It seems like a bird attached to a huge bill!

Rusty-margined Flycatcher.*Myiozetetes cayanensis*. This one was seen in Casa Maria and in Hato Piñero. The *yellow-breasted* flycatchers are hard to tell apart unless habitat, habits, and song are known. In the case of this species the mournful and melancholic whistle is one of the key field marks.

Social Flycatcher.*Myiozetetes similis*. Many pairs were observed in Casa Maria and in Hato Piñero. This one looks like a *bleached-out* species in comparison with Rusty-margined Flycatcher. The voice also differs, being sharp and short.

Golden-crowned Flycatcher.*Myiodynastes chrysocephalus*. El Avila National Park.

Streaked Flycatcher. *Myiodynastes maculatus*. Casa Maria. We saw the resident race.

White-bearded Flycatcher.*Phelpsia inornata*. We located a pair near a pond close to the lodge. This is a near-endemic species of Venezuela. The short bill and the prominent and immaculate white beard (and eyebrow) tell it apart from other similar species.

Tropical Kingbird.*Tyrannus melancholicus*. This species was common and widespread. Further studies are needed to determine the local migration pattern across N Venezuela.

Gray Kingbird.*Tyrannus dominicensis*. Seen only once in Hato Piñero.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher.*Tyrannus savana*. Recently found to nest in Venezuela. Hato Pinero.

Cotingidae

Golden-breasted Fruiteater.*Pipreola aureopectus*. El Avila National Park.

Pipridae

Manakins are the quintessence of Neotropical birds. The males are usually arranged with beautiful plumage and they display in selected arenas (technically named *lek*) to attract the females that usually have duller plumage.

Lance-tailed Manakin.*Chiroxiphialanceolata*. We enjoyed superb views of a male in Hato Pinero.

Tityridae

Studies published in 1989 and 1990 concluded that *Tityra*, *Schiffornis* and *Pachyramphus* formed a distinct group, separated from the rest of *Tyrannidae*. This perception rooted finally in September 2007 R. O. when Prum proposed to adopt the family *Tityridae*. This was later accepted by the SACC. In Hilty's field guide these species were treated as *incerta sedis*, meaning that they appeared to be related to the tyrant flycatchers but of uncertain affinity.

Black-crowned Tityra. *Tityra inquisitor*. A pair was seen near Casa Maria.

Chestnut-crowned Becard. *Pachyramphus castaneus*. Palmichal reserve.

Vireonidae

Brown-capped Vireo. *Vireo leucophrys*. El Avila National Park and Casa Maria.

Red-eyed Vireo. *Vireo olivaceus*. El Avila National Park and Casa Maria.

Scrub Greenlet. *Hylophilus flavipes*. Hato Piñero.

Golden-fronted Greenlet. *Hylophilus aurantiifrons*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Rufous-browed Peppershrike. *Cyclarhis gujanensis*. Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Hirundidae

(*) **Blue-and-white Swallow.** *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*. El Avila and Caracas.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow. *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*. Road between Casa Maria to Palmichal.

Gray-breasted Martin. *Progne chalybea*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

White-winged Swallow. *Tachycineta albiventer*. Hato Piñero. Few pairs were observed in Los Cerritos.

Barn Swallow. *Hirundo rustica*. Los Cerritos, Hato Piñero.

Troglodytidae

House Wren. *Troglodytes aedon*. Seen daily.

Stripe-backed Wren. *Campylorhynchus nuchalis*. Hato Piñero.

Whiskered Wren. *Pheugopedius mystacalis*. Heard only near Palmichal.

Rufous-breasted Wren. *Thryothorus rutilus*. Casa Maria.

Rufous-and-white Wren. *Thryothorus rufalbus*. Casa María. We enjoyed its sweet and unique song.

Buff-breasted Wren. *Cantorchilus leucotis*. Hato Piñero.

Gray-breasted Wood-Wren. *Henicorhina leucophrys*. El Avila.

Poliophtilidae

Long-billed Gnatwren. *Ramphocaenus melanurus*. Heard only in Casa Maria.

Tropical Gnatcatcher. *Poliophtila plumbea*. Hato Piñero.

Donacobiidae

Black-capped Donacobius. *Donacobius atricapilla*. A group of 5 individuals gave us an amazing choreography! Hato Piñero.

Turdidae

Pale-breasted Thrush. *Turdus leucomelas*. Casa Maria and El Avila National Park.

Spectacled (Bare-eyed) Thrush. *Turdus nudigenis*. Casa Maria and El Avila National Park.

Glossy-black Thrush. *Turdus serranus*. El Avila National Park.

Mimidae

Tropical Mockingbird. *Mimus gilvus*. Various pairs were observed in Hato Piñero. The North American relative (Northern Mockingbird) is known for its capacity to mimic other species song. You would think this species represents its counterpart in the tropics of America, but it doesn't. See Yellow-rumped Cacique to find out more about the "mockingbird species" in northern South America!

Parulidae

Black-and-white Warbler. *Mniotilta varia*. Road between Casa Maria and palmichal. Also in El Avila National Park.

Tennessee Warbler. *Vermivora peregrina*. Various individuals were seen in Casa Maria. It is interesting to note that we saw about six individuals with red foreheads, a stain from *Pehrria compacta* flowers.

American Redstart. *Setophaga ruticilla*. Casa Maria and El Avila National Park.

Black-crested Warbler. *Basileuterus nigrocristatus*. El Avila National Park.

Tropical Parula. *Parula pitiayumi*. A pair was observed in Casa Maria.

Blackburnian Warbler. *Dendroica fusca*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero. A Neotropical migrant.

Yellow Warbler. *Dendroica aestiva*. Various individuals were observed in Hato Piñero.

Blackpoll Warbler. *Setophaga striata*. El Avila National Park and Casa Maria.

Golden-crowned Warbler.*Basileuterus culicivorus*. Casa Maria.

Three-striped Warbler. *Basileuterus tristriatus*. El Avila National Park.

Slate-throated Whitestart (Redstart).*Myioborus miniatus*. El Avila National Park and Casa Maria.

Thraupidae

Red-capped Cardinal. *Paroaria gularis*. Hato Piñero. The race to occur in the Orinoco basin is now recognized as a separate species, **Masked Cardinal**, *Paroaria nigrocincta*.

Hooded Tanager. *Nemosia pileata*. Hato Piñero.

Gray-headed Tanager.*Eucometis penicillata*. Nice studies of various individuals following an Army Ant swarm. Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal.

White-lined Tanager.*Tachyphonus rufus*. Casa María.

Silver-beaked Tanager.*Ramphocelus carbo*. Casa María.

Blue-gray Tanager.*Thraupis episcopus*. A common and numerous species in all locations.

Glaucous Tanager. *Thraupis glaucocolpa*. Hato Pinero.

Blue-capped Tanager. *Thraupis cyanocephala*. El Avila.

Palm Tanager.*Thraupis palmarum*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Black-headed Tanager.*Tangara cyanoptera*. Road between Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Burnished-buff Tanager.*Tangara cayana*. Only one individual was seen by some participants in Casa Maria.

Blue-necked Tanager.*Tangara cyanicollis*. Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Speckled Tanager.*Tangara guttata*. Palmichal reserve.

Bay-headed Tanager.*Tangara gyrola*. Casa Maria and Palmichal.

Golden Tanager. *Tangara arthus*. El Avila National Park.

Beryl-spangled Tanager. *Tangara nigroviridis*. El Avila National Park.

Green Honeycreeper.*Chlorophanes spiza*. Palmichal reserve.

Guira Tanager.*Hemithraupis guira*. Casa Maria.

White-eared Conebill. *Conirostrum leucogenys*. Casa Maria.

Saffron Finch.*Sicalis flaveola*. Hato Piñero.

Blue-black Grassquit.*Volatinia jacarina*. Hato Pinero.

Gray Seedeater.*Sporophila intermedia*. Hato Piñero.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater.*Sporophila nigricollis*. Casa Maria.

Pileated Finch.*Coryphospingus pileatus*. Hato Piñero. This species is called Gray Pileated Finch in Hilty (2003).

Bananaquit.*Coereba flaveola*. Common. Seen in both locations. This conspicuous species may well be split into more than 3 species sometime in the future.

(Southern) Grayish Saltator. *Saltator coerulescens*. Hato Piñero.

Orinocan Saltator.*Saltator orenocensis*. We glimpsed one individual in Hato Pinero.

Buff-throated Saltator.*Saltator maximus*. Casa Maria.

Emberizidae

Black-striped Sparrow. *Arremonops conirostris*. A pair was seen reacting after the whistle of the pygmy owl near Casa Maria.

Ochre-breasted Brush-Finch. *Atlapetes semirufus*. Topotepuy.

Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch.*Buarremon brunneinuchus*. El Avila National Park.

Yellow-browed Sparrow. *Ammodramus aurifrons*. Hato Piñero.

Common Chlorospingus (Common Bush Tanager).*Chlorospingus flavopectus*. El Avila National Park.

Cardinalidae

Taxonomic research suggests that the *Piranga* should be placed with the *Cardinalidae*. Therefore, these are not tanagers but cardinals.

Summer Tanager.*Piranga rubra*. A mottled male was seen in Casa María.

White-winged Tanager.*Piranga leucoptera*. El Avila National Park.

Icteridae

Red-breasted Blackbird. *Sturnella militaris*. Hato Pinero.

Carib Grackle.*Quiscalus lugubris*. Common and widespread. Seen in both locations.

Yellow-hooded Blackbird. *Chrysomus icterocephalus*. Hato Piñero.

Shiny Cowbird. *Molothrus bonariensis*. Hato Piñero.

Giant Cowbird. *Molothrus oryzivora*. Seen near Casa María.

Venezuelan Troupial. *Icterus icterus*. Hato Piñero. The national bird of Venezuela.

Yellow Oriole. *Icterus nigrogularis*. Hato Piñero.

Yellow-rumped Cacique. *Cacicus cela*. Hato Piñero. This is the species that imitates other bird songs in northern South America.

Russet-backed Oropendola. *Psarocolius angustifrons*. Road between Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Crested Oropendola. *Psarocolius decumanus*. Casa Maria and Hato Piñero.

Fringillidae

Trinidad Euphonia. *Euphonia trinitatis*. Hato Piñero.

Thick-billed Euphonia. *Euphonia laniirostris*. Casa Maria.

Golden-rumped Euphonia. *Euphonia cyanocephala*. El Avila National Park.

Orange-bellied Euphonia. *Euphonia xanthogaster*. Palmichal reserve.

MAMMALS

Crab-eating Fox (Common Zorro). *Cerdocyon thous*.

White-tailed Deer. *Odocoileus virginianus*.

Three-toed Sloth. *Bradypus trydactila*.

Red-tailed Squirrel. *Sciurus granatensis*.

Capybara. *Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*.

Weeping Capuchin Monkey. *Cebus olivaceus*.

Greater (Bulldog) fishing bat. *Noctilio sp.*

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Green Iguana.*Iguana iguana.*

Spectacled Cayman.*Cayman crocodilus.*

Llanos Side-necked Turtle.*Podocemis vogli.*

Red-footed Tortoise,*Geochelone carbonaria.*

Common House Gecko.*Hemidactylus frenatus.*

Ameiva Lizard. *Ameiva sp.*

Cane Toad, *Bufo marinus.*

Tree frog, *Rana sp.*

OTHER GROUPS

Orb-weaver spider. *Araneidae.*

Arboreal Termite, Fire Ants, and Army Ants