

Nature Colombia Caribbean Coast Tour with Prairie and Timbers  
Audubon, Texas.  
January, 2017



The group at Los Flamencos NP.

Nature Colombia Tour Leader: Trevor Ellery

Our Nature Colombia birdwatching tour started on the Caribbean coast near Barranquilla. An early morning start allowed us to connect with the endemic Chestnut-winged Chachalaca at a scrub site on the edge of the city. We then moved on to the main marshes which were alive with birds. We quickly located Stripe-backed Wren, Black-crested Antshrike and Prothonotary Warbler, while Woodpeckers included both Spot-breasted and Red-crowned. Waterfowl were represented by Black-bellied Whistling-Duck and Blue-winged Teal, while a selection of Heron's included several Green, singles of Cooi and Great-blue, plenty of Tricoloured and a smattering of Little-blue.

Overhead vulture were prevalent with stunning views of Lesser Yellow-headed, while other raptors included a scattering of Snail Kite's (some nest building), several each of Osprey and smart Black-collared Hawks and both Yellow-headed and Northern Crested Caracaras.

Limpkins were plentiful, as were multiple Common and Purple Gallinules and Wattled Jacana's, while both Ruddy-ground and Scaled Doves, stalked the dusty road and squadrons of Brown-throated Parakeets streamed overhead. The scrub held groups of Groove-billed Ani's, plenty of highly appreciated and very obliging Russet-throated Puffbirds, a couple of Straight-billed Woodcreepers, and some subtle Northern Scrub Flycatchers. More prominent were striking Grey Kingbirds and gangs of large and boisterous Bicoloured Wrens along with abundant Yellow Warblers

The watery ditches were home to several Yellow-throated Spinetails and both Pied Water and White-headed Marsh Tyrants, while the plentiful Cattle Tyrants made do with the local water Bufflao as a substitute for their namesake. Both Carib and Great-tailed Grackles were a constant presence and we rounded the morning off with good views of a Dwarf Cuckoo.



**This immature Bare-throated Tiger Heron was a surprise in the Mangroves.**





**Dry forest habitat on the coast (Sally Evans).**



**Mangroves (Sally Evans).**





**Spectacled Caiman (Sally Evans).**

After a hot but busy morning we moved on to the shade of some nearby Mangroves where we were able to find Bicolored Conebill, Panama Flycatcher, Chestnut Piculet, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Red-rumped Woodpecker and a pair of Pied Puffbirds perched high in the canopy. An immature Bare-throated Tiger Heron was an added bonus.

We then drove east making some roadside stops to add Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, a selection of commoner waders and plenty of Royal Terns.



The view from out lunch stop (Sally Evans).



Fresh fish for lunch - yum yum.

In the late afternoon we birded near Minca where we managed to see some distant Military Macaw heading for their roost. We also picked up a few commoner species with a low flying Zone-tailed Hawk, a scoped Scaled Pigeon, small nos of Orange-chinned Parakeets and Blue-headed Parrots, a few Rose-breasted Grosbeaks and a single brief Black-backed Antshrike.

The next morning was spent birding above Minca which was very busy and we soon found Rufous-tailed Jacamar, Barred Antshrike, Pale-eyed Pygmy-Tyrant, both Rufous-breasted and Rufous-and White Wren's, Long-billed Gnatwren, Purple Honeycreeper, Swallow Tanager, Golden-winged Sparrow, Rufous-capped Warbler and perhaps best of all a couple of skulking Santa Marta Foliage-gleaners, our first Santa Marta endemic. In the late morning we returned to our Hotel to enjoy the Hummingbird show at the feeders, which included White-necked Jacobin, Pale-bellied Hermit, Black-throated Mango, Rufous-tailed and Steely-vented Hummingbirds and White-vented Plumleteer.

We then left for the clime to El Dorado Lodge in the Santa Marta Mountains. As we climbed up to the lodge we made some brief stops to look at Red-billed Parrot, White-tipped Quetzal, Streaked Xenops, Montane Woodcreeper, Slaty Antwren, Cinnamon Flycatcher, White-lored Warbler and Keel-billed Toucan, it was actually quite a busy drive! We arrived at El Dorado Lodge for a late lunch and then spent some time birding in the grounds. We enjoyed fantastic views of large groups of Band-tailed Guans and a single Sickle-winged Guan that were visiting the seedfeeders, while a single Lined Quail-Dove that came in was much appreciated. The hummingbird feeders were buzzing with plenty of Brown and Lesser Violetears, Crowned Woodnymph and a couple of the endemic White-tailed Starfrontlet's. We also found a few commoner Tanagers and watched both Sierra Nevada and Santa Marta Brush-finches at the Seedfeeder and Blue-naped Chlorophonia on the fruit feeders.





**The almost ethereal El Dorado cloud forest Lodge – avian paradise and our home for several nights (Sally Evans).**



**We had plenty of time to brush up on our hummer id.**



Our third full day began high on the San Lornezo ridge where we were to experience unusual fog and strong winds. This slowed birding to begin with but it gradually cleared and we started to find some interesting birds. A couple of Scaly-naped Parrots passed overhead while small no's of Tyrian Metaltails were seen along the track. A Black-banded Woodcreeper was very obliging and a Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant posed well. A mixed flock held a couple of Smoky-brown Woodpeckers and we also added the endemic pair of Rusty-headed and Streak-capped Spinetails. We also located Santa Marta Wood-Wren, plenty of nice Santa Marta Mountain-tanagers and Yellow-crowned Whitestarts and a couple of Santa Marta Warblers. We finished the morning with a very obliging Masked Trogon as we birded back down to the Lodge.

In the afternoon a walk along the trails added Black-throated Tody-Tyrant, Montane Foliage-gleaner, Brown-capped Vireo and Grey-breasted Wood-Wren, while a pair of Golden-crowned Flycatchers and a Black-hooded Thrush were around the lodge.



**Watching a Black-banded Woodcreeper.**





**Black-banded Woodcreeper, San Lorenzo Ridge.**



**Spectacular view towards the Santa Marta Mountains (Sally Evans).**



**Elfin forest at the top of the ridge with the Caribbean far below in the distance.**





**Epiphyte Heaven (Photo Sally Evans).**



**Birding in the El Dorado Bird Reserve.**



**Some of the fantastic scenery in the reserve (Sally Evans).**

The next morning we birded the lower forest below the reserve where we had a very productive morning finding Grey-throated Leaf-tosser, Santa Marta Tapaculo, Groove-billed Toucanet, Grey-lined Hawk, Long-billed Hermit, Santa Marta Antbird and several obliging Rusty-breasted Antpittas. We also picked up a male Golden-breasted Fruiteater and a White-necked Thrush.

In the afternoon we staked out the seed feeder and this was very successful as eventually a nice group of Black-fronted Wood Quail showed up. We also found some Santa Marta Toucanets and a couple of Golden-bellied Grosbeaks around the lodge.





**Photographing Grey-throated Leaftosser.**



**Watching Groove-billed Toucanet in the Santa Marta mountains (notice how one of our drivers is hogging the scope).**

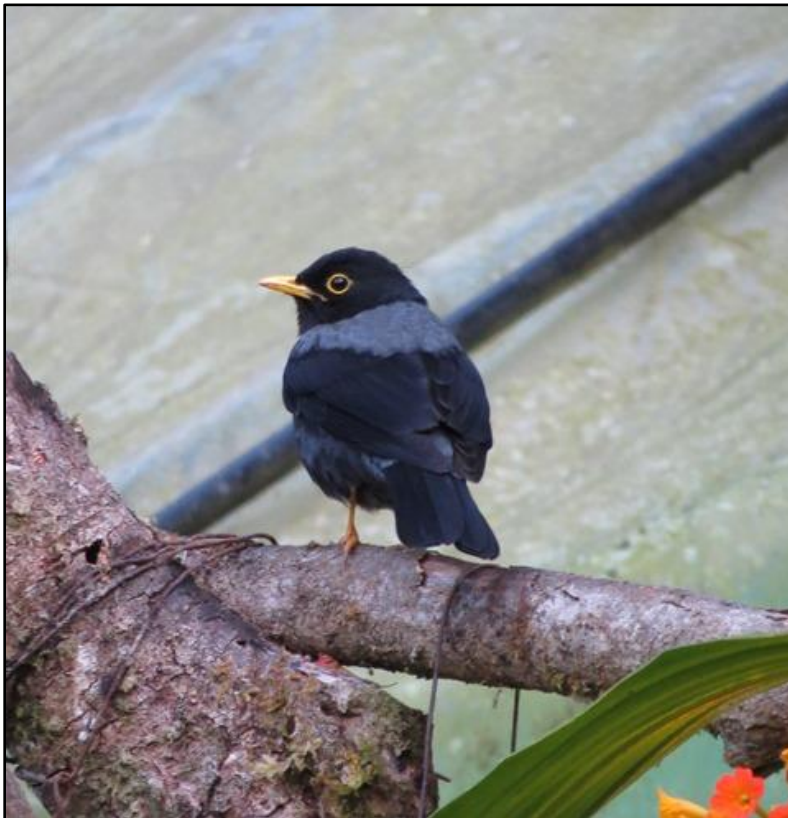


**The Groove-billed Toucanet which posed and posed and posed.**





**White-necked Thrush – El Dorado Bird Reserve.**



**Yellow-legged Thrush, El Dorado Bird Reserve.**



**Crowned Woodnymph (Sally Evans).**



**Patiently waiting for Blossomcrown.**





**Rusty-breasted Antpitta, El Dorado.**



**Immature Grey-lined Hawk – a plumage which is not seen that commonly.**



**Lined Quail-Dove visiting the feeding (gorging) station at El Dorado.**



**Watching the Quail-Dove at El Dorado.**





**Linda gets her Wood-Quail.**



**Black-fronted Wood Quail. We had to wait and wait and wait but when they did show up it was worth it.**



**Sickle-winged Guan – another visitor to the popular El Dorado feeders.**



**This Central American Agouti seemed very happy on the compost heap.**



**Enjoying the always popular feeders at El Dorado Lodge.**





**A nice sunset at the Lodge.**



**A Kinkajou enjoys raiding the hummingbird feeders.**

Our next day was spent descending from the Lodge and birding near Minca. On the descent we managed to add Golden-olive and Lineated Woodpeckers, both Venezuelan and Coopman's Tyrannulets, an obliging Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush and several Yellow-legged Thrushes. We also found a nice male Black-headed Tanager and a group of Yellow-backed Orioles.

In the afternoon we birded near Minca where we found a couple of Lesser Swallow-tailed Swifts that showed very well as they made low passes. We also added Golden-fronted Greenlet, a group of Collared Aracari in the Lodge garden, Streak-headed Woodcreeper and both Streaked and Boat-billed Flycatchers.



**Swotting up.**





**The eight nine nutterfly, *Diaethria phlogaea*, a common site.**

The next morning we had a final morning birding near Minca which added Squirrel Cuckoo, Whooping Motmot, Blue-black Grosbeak, Plain Xenops, Cocoa Woodcreeper, Black-crowned Antshrike, Greenish Elaenia, Grey-headed Tanager and much better views of Black-backed Antshrike and Rosy Thrush Tanager, which most had missed on the first day. We also found Cinnamon Becard and an obliging pair of Crimson-crested Woodpeckers while soaring overhead were Short-tailed Hawk, Grey-headed Kite and Chestnut-collared Swift.

After an early lunch we drove out to the Guajira peninsula where a little late afternoon birding in the scrub added White-tailed Kite, Bare-eyed Pigeon, White-whiskered Spinetail, White-fringed Antwren, Northern Scrub Flycatcher, Tropical Gnatcatcher and Orinoco Saltator. We then finished the day at Los Flamencos lagoon. The lagoon held Reddish Egret, Roseate Spoonbill a nice group of six Marbled Godwit and good nos of waders including plenty of Willet. The gathering of gulls and Terns was impressive with large nos of Laughing Gulls, a single Lesser Black-backed Gull and a few Cabot's Terns. A nearby roost of Green-rumped Parrotlets was also much appreciated.



*Grey-headed Kite soaring above Minca.*



*Black-backed Antshrike Minca.*



*Los Flamencos NP with the Sierra Nevada Mountain in the background.*





**Los Flamencos NP (Sally Evans).**



**Los Flamencos – lots of birds (Sally Evans).**



**Sunset Camarones (Sally Evans).**



*Dinner at our Hotel in the Guajira.*

Our penultimate morning was spent in the Guajira targeting the remaining specialty birds. We managed to find Vermilion Cardinal, Buffy Hummingbird, Red-billed Emerald, Pale-legged Hornero, Slender-billed and Pale-tipped Inezia's, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant, Glaucous Tanager, Black-faced Grassquit, Pileated Finch, Trinidad Euphonia and Tocuyo Sparrow. A pair of Pearl Kites showed well and we visited a Harris's Hawk nest and had a White-tailed Hawk soaring over the road. The morning finished with an obliging pair of Double-striped Thick-knee's near the lagoon

We then retired to the beach for a sumptuous lunch. In the early afternoon we spent some time working the Terns at the lagoon mouth and added Yellow-billed, Common, Cayenne and Gull-billed Terns and a single Black Skimmer, while a Scarlet Ibis also gave good views.

In the mid-afternoon we drove back west retracing our steps to a forest Lodge situated near Tayrona National Park. En-route we enjoyed good views of Wood Stork and a Wilson's Snipe in a roadside pool.





**Our local guide Jose (Sally Evans).**



**Fish lunch on the beach.**





**Serious Birding (Sally Evans).**



**Our first birding and shopping tour (maybe it will catch on?) – Sally Evans.**

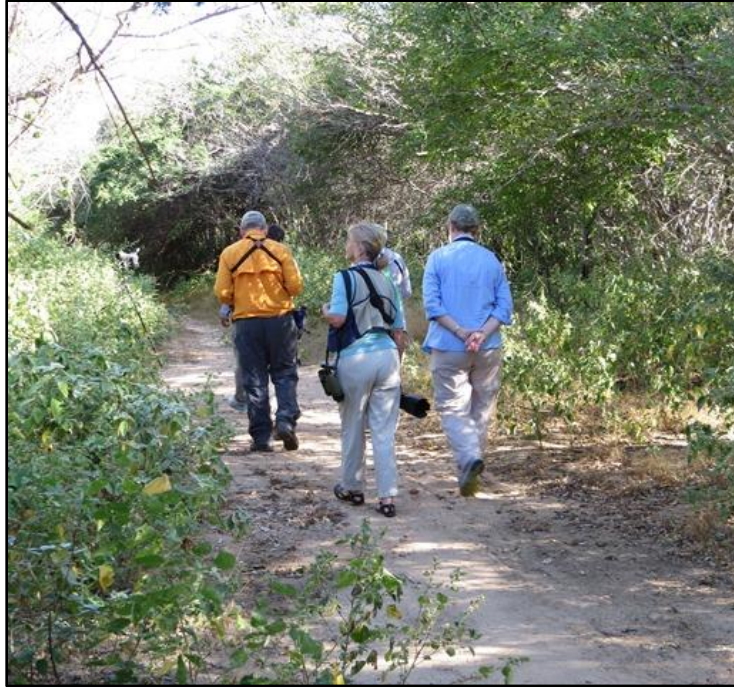




**Bare-eyed Pigeon in the Guajira.**



**Los Flamencos NP.**



**Birding in the Guajira.**



**Los Flamencos sign.**





**Watching Double-striped Thick-knees at Los Flamencos.**



**Los Flamencos NP with the Santa Marta Mountains in the background.**



**Soaking up those Thick-knees.**



**A roadside Pearl Kite.**





**Tocuyo Sparrow celebrations.**



**Our trusty tour Bus.**





**Our lodge near Tayrona (Sally Evans).**



**Wood Stork, Great Egret and Little Blue Heron – roadside.**



As Tayrona National Park was closed we spent our final morning visiting some nearby forest which had similar habitat and held similar birds. The morning was very birdy and we managed to add a number of interesting species including good looks at Lance-tailed Manakin, White-bellied Antbird, Brown-capped Tyrannulet, Striped Cuckoo, Slate-headed and Black-headed Tody-Flycatchers, Yellow-olive Flycatcher, Scrub Greenlet, Black-striped Sparrow, Tropical Parula, Magnolia Warbler and Yellow-rumped Cacique.

In the afternoon we made a few stops in the marshes near Barranquilla which added Large-billed and Caspian Terns, White-winged Swallow and Yellow-hooded Blackbird, before returning to our Hotel for a final celebratory dinner. We had time for the final dinner and a chance to mull over the fantastic birding and scenery highlights from what had proved to be a great week.