



Field Guides Tour Report

Northwestern Argentina 2012: Rincon del Socorro extension

Oct 14, 2012 to Oct 18, 2012

Dave Stejskal

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The unique and wonderful Strange-tailed Tyrant is one of the main target species that this extension was designed for, and once again we had fantastic studies of this local and declining species. (Photo by guide Dave Stejskal)

This was our second run at the lovely Rincon del Socorro located in the rich Ibera Wetlands region of Corrientes Province. Needless to say, it was another overwhelming success enjoyed by all who attended this extension just prior to the start of our Northwestern Argentina tour!

Getting there on that first day was quite a bit more adventurous than our arrival day last year, with our vehicles having to negotiate heavy rains and the ensuing deep mud on the roads between the ranch and the airport in Posadas. But, we made it to our lodging just as the rain was winding down late in the afternoon, never seeing another drop of rain from that point onward. I'm still amazed at how quickly those roads dried out!

Our remaining time at Rincon del Socorro was filled with birds and birding, all while enjoying the fabulous hospitality and service at this lovely ranch. We tracked down our most coveted quarries, the bizarre Strange-tailed Tyrant and the stunning Yellow Cardinal, again with ease this year, and the rest of our time was highlighted with the likes of Greater Rhea, Pinnated Bittern, Giant Wood-Rail, Firewood-Gatherer, Lark-like Brushrunner, Bearded Tachuri, Crested Doradito, White-browed Warbler, seven species of colorful seedeaters, Lesser Grass-Finch, Scarlet-headed Blackbird, and both species of marshbirds. Native mammals were a big part of our days there as well, with confiding Capybaras being the most prevalent. Others included the strange Plains Viscacha, both Pampas and Crab-eating fox, the local Marsh Deer, and the diminutive Brown Brocket Deer.

It was a little sad to leave this lovely place, but the birding soon to follow on the main tour quickly re-focused our attention and our enthusiasm. I'm looking forward already to heading back there for another visit in 2013! Thanks to all of you who joined me this year!

--Dave

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Rheidae (Rheas)

GREATER RHEA (*Rhea americana*) – I can think of no better place in the world to enjoy this one. Incredibly common and amazingly vocal!

Tinamidae (Tinamous)

RED-WINGED TINAMOU (*Rhynchotus rufescens*) – Most folks got a decent view of this big tinamou crossing the road at some time during our stay.

SPOTTED NOTHURA (*Nothura maculosa*) – Remarkable looks at this one along the side of the road.

Anhimidae (Screamers)

SOUTHERN SCREAMER (*Chauna torquata*) – Not as many as on my other visits here, but still conspicuous and as weird as ever.

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

WHITE-FACED WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna viduata*)

MUSCOVY DUCK (*Cairina moschata*) – A single flyby one morning.

BRAZILIAN TEAL (*Amazonetta brasiliensis*) – There are surprisingly few ducks here, but this seems to be the most widespread.

Ciconiidae (Storks)

MAGUARI STORK (*Ciconia maguari*) – Throughout the marshes and fields here.

JABIRU (*Jabiru mycteria*) – We saw the first arrivals high overhead.

Phalacrocoracidae (Cormorants and Shags)

NEOTROPIC CORMORANT (*Phalacrocorax brasilianus*)

Anhingidae (Anhingas)

ANHINGA (*Anhinga anhinga*)

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

PINNATED BITTERN (*Botaurus pinnatus*) – One of the vehicles got a great look at one along the roadside, and the one that we flushed on the last afternoon was fantastic!

LEAST BITTERN (*Ixobrychus exilis*) – The Lagunas del Ibera are a great place for this one in S. America.

RUFESCENT TIGER-HERON (*Tigrisoma lineatum*)

COCOI HERON (*Ardea cocoi*)

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*)

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*)

STRIATED HERON (*Butorides striata*)

WHISTLING HERON (*Syrigma sibilatrix*) – One of the prettiest herons in the New World.

BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nycticorax nycticorax*)

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

BARE-FACED IBIS (*Phimosus infuscatus*) – Nesting right in front of the main compound.

PLUMBEOUS IBIS (*Theristicus caerulescens*) – This one looks to be from another age.

ROSEATE SPOONBILL (*Platalea ajaja*)

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*)

LESSER YELLOW-HEADED VULTURE (*Cathartes burrovianus*)

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

SNAIL KITE (*Rostrhamus sociabilis*)

BLACK-COLLARED HAWK (*Busarellus nigricollis*) – The one we saw on the boat trip was my first for the area - it's gotta be very close to the southern limit for the species.

LONG-WINGED HARRIER (*Circus buffoni*) – Great looks at these beautiful raptors daily.

SAVANNA HAWK (*Buteogallus meridionalis*)

ROADSIDE HAWK (*Buteo magnirostris*)

WHITE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albicaudatus*) – On the drive back to Posadas.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

SOUTHERN CARACARA (*Caracara plancus*)

YELLOW-HEADED CARACARA (*Milvago chimachima*) – Very much outnumbered by the similar Chimango Caracara.

CHIMANGO CARACARA (*Milvago chimango*)

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*)

APLOMADO FALCON (*Falco femoralis*) – Some great views of this gorgeous falcon.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*)

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

RUFOUS-SIDED CRAKE (*Laterallus melanophaius*) – Excellent views of a couple of birds at the edge of the aquatic vegetation while we were in the boat.

GIANT WOOD-RAIL (*Aramides ypecaha*) – These big things were just about everywhere along the roadsides.

ASH-THROATED CRAKE (*Porzana albicollis*) – Mostly heard, but a lucky few saw one fly across a section of grassy marsh.

PLUMBEOUS RAIL (*Pardirallus sanguinolentus*) – Nicely on our first afternoon in B.A.

PURPLE GALLINULE (*Porphyrio martinica*)

Aramidae (Limpkin)

LIMPKIN (Aramus guarauna)

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

SOUTHERN LAPWING (NORTHERN) (Vanellus chilensis cayennensis)

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

WATTLED JACANA (Jacana jacana)

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

SOLITARY SANDPIPER (Tringa solitaria)

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (Tringa flavipes)

UPLAND SANDPIPER (Bartramia longicauda) – The two distant birds we saw on our drive to the lodge were likely setting up to winter there.

SOUTH AMERICAN SNIPE (SOUTH AMERICAN) (Gallinago paraguaiiae paraguaiiae) – Quite a few of these displaying over the marshes next to the road.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LARGE-BILLED TERN (Phaetusa simplex) – A single bird on the boat trip.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (Columba livia) [I]

PICAZURO PIGEON (Patagioenas picazuro) – Surely the heaviest of the New World pigeons.

SPOT-WINGED PIGEON (Patagioenas maculosa) – A pair of these were nesting right above my door at the lodge and I'd flush it every time I came & went from my room.

EARED DOVE (Zenaida auriculata)

RUDDY GROUND-DOVE (Columbina talpacoti)

PICUI GROUND-DOVE (Columbina picui) – Not nearly as common here as in other parts of the country we would soon visit.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (Leptotila verreauxi)

Psittacidae (Parrots)

NANDAY PARAKEET (Nandayus nenday) – Very numerous now at the Costanera Reserve in B.A. The population there is introduced, but birds in Corrientes are naturally occurring.

MONK PARAKEET (Myiopsitta monachus)

BLUE-CROWNED PARAKEET (Aratinga acuticaudata) – Not common at all at Rincon del Socorro - far outnumbered by the Monk Parakeet.

SCALY-HEADED PARROT (Pionus maximiliani) – A couple of these were seen by some as we drove back to Posadas for our flight back to B.A.

BLUE-FRONTED PARROT (Amazona aestiva) – One pair only for some on our first full day. These parrots are highly prized by the pet trade and are rapidly being trapped out in Argentina.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SQUIRREL CUCKOO (Piaya cayana)

GUIRA CUCKOO (Guira guira)

STRIPED CUCKOO (Tapera naevia) – Of the four species of cuckoos that we saw, this was the only brood parasite of the bunch.

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (Crotophaga ani)

Strigidae (Owls)

GREAT HORNED OWL (Bubo virginianus) [*]

BURROWING OWL (Athene cunicularia) – Nearly every day, but not at all common.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

GLITTERING-BELLIED EMERALD (Chlorostilbon aureoventris) – Hummers were scarce at Rincon this trip, but this one was the most common.

GILDED HUMMINGBIRD (Hylocharis chrysura) – A couple of territorial birds in the ceibo trees on the main compound.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

RINGED KINGFISHER (Megaceryle torquata)

GREEN KINGFISHER (Chloroceryle americana) – I remember one particularly gorgeous male on the lagoon.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

WHITE WOODPECKER (Melanerpes candidus) – From the boat near the causeway. Widespread in central S. America, but always a lot of fun to see!

CHECKERED WOODPECKER (Veniliornis mixtus) – I'm having a tough time embracing the move of this one from Picoides to Veniliornis.

GREEN-BARRED WOODPECKER (Colaptes melanochloros melanolaemus) – I think all of the birds we saw were the old "Golden-breasted" Woodpecker.

CAMPO FLICKER (Colaptes campestris)

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

RUFOUS HORNERO (Furnarius rufus)

CHOTOY SPINETAIL (Schoeniophylax phryganophilus) [*]

SOOTY-FRONTED SPINETAIL (Synallaxis frontalis) – This one was surprisingly confiding.

SULPHUR-THROATED SPINETAIL (Craniolaema sulphurifera) – It took some work, but we all got a good look in B.A. on our first afternoon.

STRIPE-CROWNED SPINETAIL (*Cranioleuca pyrrhophia*) – Really a gorgeous bird if you see it well.
YELLOW-CHINNED SPINETAIL (*Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*) – Formerly known as the Yellow-throated Spinetail.
FRECKLE-BREASTED THORNBIRD (*Phacellodomus striaticollis*) – Another prize on our first afternoon in B.A.
GREATER THORNBIRD (*Phacellodomus ruber*) – Great views of one climbing around in its stick nest.
FIREWOOD-GATHERER (*Anumbius annumbi*) – The impressive diversity of furnariids right on the main grounds of Rincon del Socorro included this one...
LARK-LIKE BRUSHRUNNER (*Coryphistera alaudina*) – ...and this one. Nesting right outside the main building
BROWN CACHOLOTE (*Pseudoseisura lophotes*) – This big furnariid was a distraction as we were stalking the Yellow Cardinal that first full morning.
NARROW-BILLED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes angustirostris*)

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

SOUTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANNULET (*Camptostoma obsoletum*)
SUIRIRI FLYCATCHER (*Suiriri suiriri*) – That pair we saw were of the gray subspecies formerly known as Chaco Suiriri.
BEARDED TACHURI (*Polystictus pectoralis*) – YESSS!!!! That little side road near Rincon paid off again this year with nice views of this widespread, but little-known, tyrannid. This is turning out to be a great place for this little guy!
CRESTED DORADITO (*Pseudocolaptes sclateri*) – We scored on this scarce little tyrannid again here this year, along the same road again, but our looks were fleeting at best. I really wonder how many of these are out there?
WARBLING DORADITO (*Pseudocolaptes flaviventris*) – Nice looks from our boat on the lagoon.
LARGE ELAENIA (*Elaenia spectabilis*) – The most prevalent elaenia in the area this year.
SMALL-BILLED ELAENIA (*Elaenia parvirostris*)
SOOTY TYRANNULET (*Serpophaga nigricans*) – Never far from water in this part of the world.
WHITE-CRESTED TYRANNULET (*Serpophaga subcristata*) – Supposedly related to the above, but sometimes I wonder.
SOUTHERN SCRUB-FLYCATCHER (*Sublegatus modestus*) – Apparently new to the property list.
PEARLY-VENTED TODY-TYRANT (*Hemitriccus margaritaceiventer*)
BRAN-COLORED FLYCATCHER (*Myiophobus fasciatus*)
VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)
SPECTACLED TYRANT (*Hymenops perspicillatus*) – No shortage of these on the property.
YELLOW-BROWED TYRANT (*Satrapa icterophrys*) – Like most of my looks at this one, it was brief. They always seem to be on the move.
GRAY MONJITA (*Xolmis cinereus*) – Tough getting a look in the wind that first afternoon!
WHITE MONJITA (*Xolmis irupero*) – Maybe not as fanciful as a male Vermilion Flycatcher, but pretty close!
WHITE-HEADED MARSH TYRANT (*Arundinicola leucocephala*) – Incredible looks from the boat!
STRANGE-TAILED TYRANT (*Alectrurus risora*) – WOWWWW!!!! That's one of the birds this little extension was built around, and it didn't disappoint! Once we found our first, they were no trouble to spot, and it was particularly thrilling to watch that adult male displaying over the tall grass on our last afternoon of the extension. UNBELIEVABLE!!
CATTLE TYRANT (*Machetornis rixosa*)
SWAINSON'S FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus swainsoni swainsoni*)
GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)
STREAKED FLYCATCHER (SOLITARIUS) (*Myiodynastes maculatus solitarius*)
CROWNED SLATY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonomus aurantioatrocristatus*)
TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*)
FORK-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus savana*)

Vireonidae (Vireos)

RUFOUS-BROWED PEPPERSHRIKE (*Cyclarhis gujanensis*) [*]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

PLUSH-CRESTED JAY (*Cyanocorax chrysops*) – Gaudy beasts!

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

SOUTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*)
GRAY-BREASTED MARTIN (*Progne chalybea*)
BROWN-CHESTED MARTIN (FUSCA) (*Progne tapera fusca*)
WHITE-RUMPED SWALLOW (*Tachycineta leucorrhoa*)
BANK SWALLOW (*Riparia riparia*)
BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*)

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

HOUSE WREN (SOUTHERN) (*Troglodytes aedon bonariae*)

Poliophtilidae (Gnatcatchers)

MASKED GNATCATCHER (*Poliophtila dumicola dumicola*) – In B.A. only on our first afternoon.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RUFOUS-BELLIED THRUSH (*Turdus rufiventris*)

CREAMY-BELLIED THRUSH (*Turdus amaurochalinus*)

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

CHALK-BROWED MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus saturninus*)

Sturnidae (Starlings)

EUROPEAN STARLING (*Sturnus vulgaris*) [I]

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

MASKED YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis aequinoctialis*)

TROPICAL PARULA (*Setophaga pitayumi*)

WHITE-BROWED WARBLER (*Myiothlypis leucoblepharus*) – This little guy was singing his head off near the lodge and obliged our group quite nicely - it can be a pain to try and see.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

SAYACA TANAGER (*Thraupis sayaca*)

BLUE-AND-YELLOW TANAGER (*Thraupis bonariensis bonariensis*) – This southern race is really quite something, no?

GRAYISH SALTATOR (*Saltator coerulescens*)

GREEN-WINGED SALTATOR (*Saltator similis*) – Like the above White-browed Warbler, this is more of an Atlantic Forest (i.e. - s.e. Brazil) species and it was interesting to see them both in the same little patch of woods.

GOLDEN-BILLED SALTATOR (*Saltator aurantirostris*)

Emberizidae (Buntings, Sparrows and Allies)

BLACK-AND-RUFous WARBLING-FINCH (*Poospiza nigrorufa*) – Another lovely species on our first afternoon in B.A.

BLACK-CAPPED WARBLING-FINCH (*Poospiza melanoleuca*) – More of a dry forest species than the above.

BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT (*Volatinia jacarina*)

RUSTY-COLLARED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila collaris*) – That adult male that we saw from the boat was a real stunner!

DOUBLE-COLLARED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila caerulescens*)

TAWNY-BELLIED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila hypoxantha*) – This was the most common of the grassland *Sporophila* species that we saw this year, as was expected.

DARK-THROATED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila ruficollis*) – We ended up seeing a few males on the roadside, but all were actively molting into adult plumage, and some looked quite dull.

MARSH SEEDEATER (*Sporophila palustris*) – This was one of the more satisfying finds on this short extension as it was still on the early side for this one to show up from the wintering grounds in s.w. Brazil.

RUFous-RUMPED SEEDEATER (*Sporophila hypochroma*) – This was surely one of the scarcest of the *Sporophilas* that we tracked down, and it offered a fantastic comparison to the rather similar Tawny-breasted. This one's a bird that I've only seen a handful of times in the past.

CHESTNUT SEEDEATER (*Sporophila cinnamomea*) – This was the first of the 'better' *Sporophilas* that we found along the main road that afternoon, and that first male was really something! All in all, seven species of *Sporophila* isn't bad!

SAFFRON FINCH (*Sicalis flaveola*)

GRASSLAND YELLOW-FINCH (GRASSLAND) (*Sicalis luteola luteiventris*)

LESSER GRASS-FINCH (*Emberizoides ypiranganus*) – Really similar to the Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch, but that voice is very distinctive. Great looks!

GREAT PAMPA-FINCH (*Embernagra platensis platensis*) – All of our birds were this eastern lowlands race, which should probably be re-split from the interior form.

YELLOW CARDINAL (*Gubernatrix cristata*) – YESSSS!!!! This is the other one that this extension was built around - talk about cooperative! While it's fantastic to see this one in the wild, it's sobering to think that it's nearly extinct in the wild due to the bird trade. Long live the Gubernatrix!

RED-CRESTED CARDINAL (*Paroaria coronata*)

YELLOW-BILLED CARDINAL (*Paroaria capitata*) – Surprisingly local here.

GRASSLAND SPARROW (*Ammodramus humeralis*)

RUFous-COLLARED SPARROW (*Zonotrichia capensis*) – For those who took all of our Argentina offerings this year, Oct. 14th was the first day of 37 straight days of this delightful species!

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (LOWLAND) (*Piranga flava flava*) – There's been little recent talk of splitting the three distinctive forms of this widespread species.

ULTRAMARINE GROSBEAK (*Cyanocompsa brissonii*) – Very similar to the Blue-black Grosbeak, but much more visible than that species.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

SCARLET-HEADED BLACKBIRD (*Amblyramphus holosericeus*) – Whoa! That singing male at the lagoon sure was an eye-full!

UNICOLORED BLACKBIRD (*Agelasticus cyanopus*) – Surprisingly scarce this year.

YELLOW-WINGED BLACKBIRD (*Agelasticus thilius*)

CHESTNUT-CAPPED BLACKBIRD (*Chrysomus ruficapillus*) – Ditto with this bird - only one subadult male.

YELLOW-RUMPED MARSHBIRD (*Pseudoleistes guirahuro*) – Great, close studies of both marshbirds right next to the road at Rincon.

BROWN-AND-YELLOW MARSHBIRD (*Pseudoleistes virescens*)

BAY-WINGED COWBIRD (*Agelaioides badius*) – You'll note that this one is no longer in the same genus as the other cowbirds - 'cuz it's not a cowbird!

SCREAMING COWBIRD (*Molothrus rufoaxillaris*) – Kind of a dumb name.

SHINY COWBIRD (*Molothrus bonariensis*)

VARIABLE ORIOLE (*Icterus pyrrhopterus*) – This one is a very recent split from the similar Epaulet Oriole to the north.

SOLITARY BLACK CACIQUE (*Cacicus solitarius*) – These put on a very nice show for us - they can be very difficult to see well.

Fringillidae (Siskins, Crossbills, and Allies)

HOODED SISKIN (*Spinus magellanicus*)

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) **[1]**

MAMMALS

NINE-BANDED ARMADILLO (*Dasypus novemcinctus*)

CAPYBARA (*Hydrochaeris hydrochaeris*) – Absolutely everywhere on the property where there was water.

PLAINS VISCACHA (*Lagostomus maximus*) – Probably one of the strangest critters that you've ever seen in S. America. Night brings 'em out in impressive numbers on the ranch

PAMPAS FOX (*Pseudalopex gymnocercus*) – This was the common 'Gray' Fox that we saw on the property.

CRAB-EATING FOX (*Cerdocyon thous*) – Those black feet and tail-tip i.d. this one.

CRAB-EATING RACCOON (*Procyon cancrivorus*) – That may have been the first Crab-eating Raccoon that I've ever seen in Argentina!

MARSH DEER (*Blastocerus dichotomus*) – We had very healthy numbers of this special deer throughout the property. With the development of marshes throughout the range of this one, it's becoming quite scarce and local.

PAMPAS DEER (*Ozotoceros bezoarticus*) – This grassland species is in more trouble than the above species, but there's a reintroduction program underway to repopulate this region of Argentina with this small species.

BROWN BROCKET DEER (*Mazama gouazoubira*) – Surprisingly common in the light woodland on the property - wait 'til they reintroduce Jaguar, though!

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 172 bird taxa and 9 mammal taxa