



# Northern Peru 12 feb - 1 mar 2005



*Spectacular scenery and birding at Huazcaran National Park*

**Report by Roger Ahlman**



## General

This trip was organized by Kolibri Expeditions. Although during the rainy season we had mainly fair weather with some rain and fog. Birding was only disturbed by rain on a few occasions. More seriously was that the road between Leimebamba and Balsas was gone for 200 metres which caused us to take a detour of almost two days. The birdactivity was generally good. At some places we had local guides to help us, more for encourage them and have them earn some money then that we really needed them although a few extra pairs of eyes are useful.

Leader - Roger Ahlman and Gunnar Engblom/Kolibri Expeditions  
Participants - Phyllis and Bruno Becker  
Driver - Adriano

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## Itinery

**12 feb** - Roger arrived at Chiclayo and caught a transport from there to Abra Porculla where he met Gunnar, Phyllis and Bruno Becker. They had been working the site in poor weather and by lunchtime we were all on our way east. The weather was foggy and rainy around the pass but got progressively better further east. In late afternoon we arrived at Jaen and went just out of town to a site called Seminario. Here we got all our target species like Maranon cresentchest, 'Maranon' slaty-antshrike and Chinchipe spinetail. A Bicoloured hawk was a nice bonus. At dusk we drove to Bagua Chica and checked in at hotel Wilson.

**13 feb** - We started just out of town in the scrubby hills and soon got Little inca-finch while Adriano was preparing breakfast for us. During late morning and midday we walked a very muddy track by some rice fields and saw among other things Maranon thrush and lots of Black-and-white seedeaters. Afternoon was spent near Pomacochas where we met our local guide Santos who keeps track of the Marvelous spatuletails and we saw a female and an immature male, but you do want to see an adult male! Night in hotel Paraiso in Pomacochas.



*A typical breakfast on this trip. Adriano set up the table with yogurt, cereals, bread etc and cooked hot water while we birded the surroundings. After breakfast maestro Adriano cleaned and packed everything up and thus we could make the most out of the mornings.*

**14 feb** - A light drizzle in the morning but we went a few kilometres out of Pomacochas and walked up to a small forest patch where Santos said he use to see the Spatuletails. Within the next hours we all had excellent views of a male with it's long, strange tailstreamers. Also an Emerald-bellied puffleg put in a nice performance here. We drove to Abra Patricia and had a late breakfast at the restaurant near the pass and a new set of birds met us here. We made several stops along the road picking up endemics like Lulu's tody-tyrant and Royal sunangel for which we had stake-outs. In the afternoon we continued to Rioja in the savanna plateau and checked in at the hotel.

**15 feb** - We went to the very obvious mountain called Morro de Calzada and birded the secondary habitat at the foot and saw surprisingly lots of birds, Mishana tyrannulet was the best find. After breakfast we headed up the mountain but only came 10 metres before we saw a Fiery-capped manakin. As we walked higher up the forest looked better and we had great expectations but it was surprisingly quiet in the forest. We had lunch at a pic-nic area near the foot and it was starting to get hot by now. You have to do something during the midday hours so we drove south of the main road and birded the savanna looking for some birds that should be here. We didn't see much but found a Roraiman flycatcher which was very surprising. In the late afternoon we birded a road close to Rioja that had some wetlands and patches of savanna forest. Lots of birds. Russet-crowned crane was common and we also saw a male Black-billed seed-finch. Night in Rioja.



*You see a lot of orchids while birding. We found this nice one near Afluentes in the Abra Patricia area.*

sant cuckoo. By midday we went back to Tarapoto for an afternoon off. Gunnar flew back to Lima in the evening.

**16 feb** - Today we went to a Yacumama which also has savanna habitat but more forest. Very good birding with stuff like Buckley's forest-falcon (heard only), Cream-coloured woodpecker and Stripe-necked tody-tyrant and many others. After breakfast a rather long drive to Tarapoto and straight up to the Yurimaguas road where we had lunch at restaurant el Gato y el Mono (the cat and the monkey). Good view from the restaurant and some more species made their way into the list. Very nice forest but afternoon birding was rather slow. Night in Tarapoto.

**17 feb** - Today we sat of at 5 am to a site that we hadn't visited before and the travel time was much longer than the information we had. We eventually arrived there at 7.30 and started to bird the good forest patch and soon found the *huallagae* race of Northern slaty-antshrike. Rather slow birding but we had gripping views of a Pheasant

**18 feb** - Another 5 o'clock start for the Yurimaguas road. The rather low mountains were covered with fog and while we had breakfast under the roof of the uppermost restaurant a heavy shower came. When it cleared up several good birds appeared like Moriche oriole and four species of parrots perched, among them the recently split Red-crowned parakeet. We went up to the other side of the tunnel and had great views of Chestnut-tipped toucanet and just when we hit a big flock the clouds came back and we saw nothing. Very frustrating! That was the wheather that we were going to have for the rest of the day with the addition of rain from lunchtime. Afternoon was a long drive back to the Abra Patricia area with a stop in Moyobamba for Phyllis to buy fresh roasted coffee. We got a very interesting insight in the making of coffee at a local factory. Night was spent on the restaurant floor at Aguas Verdes.



**19 feb** - Morningbirding along the road and a bit up the trail just opposite but it turned out to be a bit too muddy so we went up to Afluentes and walked the road back and forth and eventually hit a good flock which had Speckle-chested piculet, Gray-mantled wren and Yellow-breasted antwren among more common birds. In the afternoon we tried a couple of other trails lower down with good results. Another night on the floor.

**20 feb** - A pre-dawn start for higher altitudes. We stopped near the Garcia settlement and walked the trail before breakfast. Then came the rain and it stayed for the entire day. We had no choice but to put on raingear and keep birding. Yesterday Roger said that we'll see a lot of tanagers today but not one single species will be the same as yesterday. We did see a lot of tanagers including very good views of two flocks of White-capped tanagers, but not one species that we saw yesterday. In the late afternoon we decided to call it a day and went to Pomacochas and left Santos at his house and checked in at hotel Paraiso again.

**21 feb** - Rain when we left Pomacochas in the morning for Pedro Ruiz where we had breakfast and then a long drive to Leimebamba on a bad road. We made some roadside stops when the rain eased and picked up all of the birds we wanted. At Leimebamba came a major blow to the trip. We were told that the road to Balsas was gone for about 200 metres! Sic! Nothing to do but to turn around. We spent the night in Leimebamba.

**22 feb** - A very boring day. Long drive from Leimebamba to Olmos with just a few birding/leg-stretching stops. Night in Olmos.

**23 feb** - Another day in the car. We made a breakfast stop south of Olmos and picked up some nice birds like Tumbes hummingbird and Short-tailed woodstar before continuing the journey to Cajamarca where we arrived at 3 pm and picked up our local guide Wilson. Straight away to the nearby site for Gray-bellied comet which we saw very well, both male and female. Night in Cajamarca.

**24 feb** - A pre-dawn start for the trip south to San Marcos which is a known site for Great spinetail. Once at the valley we were busy with all the hummingbirds that roomed around there. The whole place was very birdy and we walked high up and found a Buff-bridled inca-finch but despite a lot of playback for the spinetail it refrained from showing up - Dip-of-the-trip!  
The rest of day was driving on bad roads to Chugay where we found a simple but nice hostel for the night.

**25 feb** - Early departure and two hours later we were at El Molino and we had only just started to bird the short trail when our main target showed up - a Purple-backed sunbeam. This is the only reliable site for this rare and extremely range-restricted species. On the way back we made some stops in the puna zone and picked up some high altitude species before the long drive to Huamachuco.

**26 feb** - Departure at 5.30 and driving towards Sincicap. We made a stop at some lakes at high altitude but found nothing of interest, however, this is a mining area and others found us very interesting and later we were stopped and they called for police that checked that the telescopes were not cameras and wondered what we were doing there. After a while they were convinced that we were not spies and we could continue. At the last good-looking scrub, before the farmland, we stopped for a late breakfast and this turned out to be a good spot with good views of Stripe-headed antpittas, Giant hummingbird, Green-headed hillstar and Roger saw a brush-finch that looked just like Pale-headed but that species is not supposed to be here so it is more likely that it was the *baroni* race of Cloud-forest brush-finch. After breakfast we continued to Sincicap where we arrived at 15.30 and checked in at the very basic and only hostel. It was just two rooms in a house up a side street, but it was OK. The whole place was wrapped in fog and we saw very little, Black-necked woodpecker being the best. We came here for the Koepke's screech-owl and we waited along the road above the village for darkness when a truck full of people passed us. Five minutes later that truck was stopped and robbed! We were told and went back to the village instead of risking anything.



**27 feb** - Up at 4 am and we had arranged to bring an armed police to join us. At 5.15 the Koepke's screech-owls started to call and Roger got a good recording. We only had a brief view of one and as the dawn chorus started the owls stopped. We did some birding in the small ravines around the village but saw very little so we started the long drive south to Caraz in the Cordillera Blanca where we arrived after dark.

**28 feb** - A predawn start and the weather looked all but good. When we came up to the visitorcentre at Huazcaran NP there was a gap in the clouds so we birded there and had breakfast. Surprisingly it cleared up in the valley higher up so we drove over the pass and down to the polylepis on the other side. Tit-like dacnises were everywhere and soon we found a group of three White-cheeked cotingas which was the main target here. Nice birding in a spectacular setting. After lunch we went back to the west side and birded the lake and the afternoon was spent around the visitorcentre which has some trails. Here we found a group of three Giant conebills that gave smashing views down to three metres. That ended a day that turned out much better than we expected considering the weather.

**1 mar** - We started at nearby Pueblo Libre and soon got the Pale-tailed canastero of an unnamed (sub)species. Then started the long drive back to Lima. At lake Conococha we made a stop as it looked good and the lake was full of Giant coots and other waterbirds. We arrived Lima at rush-hour and ended a good trip.



*Pic-nic lunch in the polylepis forest at Huazcaran National Park.*

# List of species by site

## Abra Porculla

Green-tailed trainbearer 1 f, Three-banded warbler 2, Rusty flowerpiercer 1.

## Seminario (Jaen)

Bicoloured hawk 1, Lesser nighthawk 2, Spot-throated hummingbird 1, Chinchipe spinetail 5, Rufous-fronted thornbird 5, Northern slaty-antshrike 1 f of the race *leucogaster*, sometimes considered a separate species. Maranon crestentchest 2, Tumbes tyrannulet 1 ssp *maranonica*, Tawny-crowned pygmy-tyrant 1, Purple-throated euphonia 5, Black-and-white seedeater 4, Drab seedeater 2, Streaked saltator 15.

## Bagua Chica

Scarlet-fronted parakeet 28, Tropical gnatcatcher 4 ssp *maior* sometimes considered a separate species the maranon gnatcatcher. Tawny-crowned pygmy-tyrant 10, Brown-crested flycatcher 1, Dullcoloured grassquit 2 nestbuilding, Drab seedeater 10, Little inca-finch 2, Golden-bellied grosbeak 2, Streaked saltator 3, Spot-throated hummingbird 5, Red-pilated finch 1.

## Pomacochas

Marvelous spatuletail 1 ad male+1 f+1 im male, Emerald-bellied puffleg 1, Green-tailed trainbearer 1 f, Emerald toucanet 1 sometimes split as Andean toucanet, Silver-backed tanager 4, Buff-bellied tanager 2, Russet-crowned warbler 7, Citrine warbler 1, Inca jay 5.

## Abra patricia high part

Torrent duck 1 pair, Emerald-bellied puffleg 1, Long-tailed sylph 1, Green-fronted lancebill 1, Speckled hummingbird 2, Bronzy inca 1, Chestnut-breasted coronet 1, Royal sunangel 1 male, Golden-headed quetzal 2 heard, Emerald toucanet 2, Strong-billed woodcreeper 1, Rusty-tinged antpitta 1 heard, Rusty-bellied antpitta 1 heard ssp *leimebambae*, Rufous-vented tapaculo 3 heard, Green-and-black fruiteater 2, Sierran elaenia 1, Streak-necked flycatcher 2, Plumbeous-crowned tyrannulet 1, Golden-faced tyrannulet 1, Lulu's tody-tyrant 5+1, Cliff flycatcher 3, White-eared solitaire 1 seen and 3 heard, Andean solitaire 2 heard, Blackburnian warbler 1 male, White-capped tanager 7+3, Yellow-throated tanager 3, Yellow-scarfed tanager 1, Gray-hooded bush-tanager 5, Metallic-green tanager 2, Blue-black tanager 2, White-sided flowerpiercer 1.



*Female Torrent Duck at Abra Patricia.*

## Abra Patricia Afluntes/Agua Verdes part

Torrent duck 1 pair, Band-bellied owl 1 heard, Lyre-tailed nightjar 1 heard, Ecuadorian piedtail 2, Black-eared fairy 1, Fork-tailed woodnymph 1, Wire-crested thornbill 1 f, Black-mandibled toucan 1 heard, Masked trogon 1 f, Gilded barbet 1 m, Lemon-throated barbet 1 m, Speckle-chested piculet 2, Crimson-crested woodpecker 1, Crimson-bellied woodpecker 1, Dark-breasted spinetail 3, Olive-backed woodcreeper 1, Yellow-breasted antwren 1, White-crowned tapaculo 3 heard, andean Cock-of-the-Rock 1 female seen and males heard, Sierran elaenia 1, Slaty-capped flycatcher 1, Golden-faced tyrannulet 1, Olive-sided flycatcher 3, Long-tailed tyrant 1, Masked tityra 1, White-eared solitaire 1, Grey-mantled wren 1, Olivaceous siskin 3, Canada warbler 5, Yellow-crested tanager 2, Orange-eared tanager 2, Green-and-gold tanager 5, Golden-collared honeycreeper 1, Black-faced dacnis 1 m, Grayish saltator 1, Crested oropendola 6.

### Morro de Calzada

Little tinamou 2 heard, Speckled chachalaca 5, Russet-crowned crane 2 heard, Cobalt-winged parakeet 6, Glittering-throated emerald 1, Gilded barbet 3, Blue-crowned trogon 1 f, Channel-billed toucan 2, Red-stained woodpecker 1, Olivaceous woodcreeper 1, Barred antshrike 3, Warbling antbird 5, Scale-backed antbird 1 pair, Fiery-capped manakin 1, Striped manakin 1 heard, White-lored tyrannulet 1, Mishana tyrannulet 2, Ochre-bellied flycatcher 1, Streaked flycatcher 2, Piratic flycatcher 10, Short-crested flycatcher 1, Wing-banded piprites 2 heard, Scaly-breasted wren 2 heard, Pale-breasted thrush 1, Black-faced tanager 10, White-lined tanager 1, Huallaga tanager 1, Red-legged honeycreeper 1, Purple honeycreeper 5, Green honeycreeper 2, Swallow tanager 2.



*Savanna Hawk. 1 pair seen between Perdo Ruiz and Bagua Chica.*

### South of Calzada

Roraiman flycatcher 1, White-crested ealania 2

### Near Rioja

Tataupa tinamou 1 heard, Plumbeous kite 2, Russet-crowned crane 1 seen and 10 heard, Plain-breasted ground-dove 2, Blue ground-dove 2, Short-tailed swift 6, Blue-tailed emerald 1, Glittering-throated emerald 1, Gilded barbet 2, Chestnut-eared aracari 7, Spot-breasted woodpecker 2, Rufous-fronted thornbird 10, Southern beardless tyrannulet 1, Boat-billed flycatcher 3, Black-faced tanager 5, White-lined tanager 1, Huallaga tanager 4, Lesser seedfinch 1, Black-billed seedfinch 1 m, Troupial 1.



*Cliff Flycatcher at Yurimaguas road.*

### Yacumama

Greater yellow-headed vulture 1, Black caracara 1, Buckley's forest-falcon 1 heard, Scaled pigeon 2, Blackish nightjar 1, Glittering-throated emerald 1, Bluish-fronted jacamar 1, gilded barbet 2, Cream-coloured woodpecker 2, Spot-breasted woodpecker 2, Lineated woodpecker 2, Dark-breasted spinetail 3, Rufous-fronted thornbird 2, Cinnamon-throated woodcreeper 1 heard, Barred antshrike 1 heard, Fiery-capped manakin 1 heard, Southern beardless tyrannulet 1, Mouse-coloured tyrannulet 1, Small-billed elaenia 1, Yellow tyrannulet 3, Stripe-necked tody-tyrant 1, White-winged becard 1 m, Thrush-like wren 2 heard, Huallaga tanager 10, Chestnut-bellied seedeater 1 m.



*A pair of the rare Chestnut-tipped Toucanet was seen at the Yurimaguas road near Tarapoto.*

### Yurimaguas road

Broad-winged hawk 1 im, Cobalt-winged parakeet 15, Red-crowned parakeet 15 ssp *roseifrons* split from painted parakeet, Blue-headed parrot 3, Green-fronted lancebill 1, Green hermit 1, thorn-tail sp 1 f, Violet-headed hummingbird 1, Fork-tailed woodnymph 1 m, Gilded barbet 2, Chestnut-tipped

toucanet 2, Red-stained woodpecker 1, Buff-fronted foliage-gleener 1, Blackich antbird 1 f, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock 3 seen + heard, White-lored tyrannulet 2, marble-faced bristle-tyrant 1, Golden-faced tyrannulet 1, Cliff flycatcher 3, Woodpewee sp 1, Sulphur-bellied flycatcher 1, Bright-rumped attila 1 heard, Yellow-breasted flycatcher 1, Rufous-tailed tyrant 4, Dusky-chested flycatcher 2, Swainson's thrush 1, Slaty-capped shrike-vireo 1, Olive tanager 1, Scarlet tanager 1 m, Highland hepatic tanager 2, White-winged tanager 1 m, Black-faced dacnis 1 m, Thick-billed euphonia 1 pair, Rufous-bellied euphonia 1 m, Swallow tanager 4, Bay-headed tanager 2 with nest-materials, Masked tanager 4, Lesser seed-finch 3, Moriche oriole 1.



*Red-crowned Parakeet at the Yurimaguas road. The race roseifrons was recently split from the Painted Parakeet.*

### Quebrada Upaquihua

Tataupa tinamou 1 heard, Pheasant cuckoo 1, Bluish-fronted jacamar 1 heard, Plain-crowned spine-tail 5, Olivaceous woodcreeper 2, Barred antshrike 1 m, Northern slaty-antshrike ssp *huallagae* 6, Stripe-chested antwren 1 heard, Black-faced ant-thrush 1 heard, Tawny-crowned pygmy-tyrant 1, Johannes's tody-tyrant 1, White-banded swallow 2, Rufous-browed pepper-shrike 1, Slate-coloured grosbeak 1, Oriole blackbird 4.



*Male Gray-bellied Comet. A rare and range-restricted Peruvian endemic.*

### Utcubamba valley; Perdo Ruiz to Leimebamba

Spotted sandpiper 5, Mitred parakeet ssp *alticola* 50, Spot-throated hummingbird 10, Purple-throated sunangel 2, White-bellied hummingbird 3, Smoky-brown woodpecker 1, Chestnut-crowned antpitta 3 heard, Tropical gnatcatcher 5 ssp *maior*, Golden-rumped euphonia 1 pair, Streaked saltator 10, Maranon thrush 3, Dull-coloured grassquit 4, Golden-bellied grosbeak 15.

### Pedro Ruiz to Bagua Chica

Savanna hawk 2, Red-backed hawk 1, Blue ground-dove 5, Striped cuckoo 1, Greater ani 3, Maranon thrush 1, Black-and-white seedeater 100.

### South of Olmos

Harris hawk 1, Tumbes hummingbird 1, Short-tailed woodstar 1, Baird's flycatcher 2.

### Rio Chonta, Cajamarca

Black-chested buzzard-eagle 1, Andean swift 5, Green-tailed trainbearer 2, Black metaltail 2, Gray-bellied comet 2 m+f, White-winged cinclodes 1, Yellow-billed tit-tyrant 1.

### San marcos

Black-chested buzzard-eagle 1, Spot-throated hummingbird 10, Amazilia hummingbird 10, Purple-collared woodstar 10, Tawny-crowned pygmy-tyrant



*Buff-bridled Inca-finch, another Peruvian endemic.*





10, White-winged black-tyrant 1 f, Bran-coloured flycatcher 1, Tropical gnatcatcher 10 ssp *maior*, Hooded siskin 10, Black-lored yellowthroat 15, Buff-bridled inca-finch 1. Andean flicker 1 near Cajabamba.

### El Molino

Purple-backed sunbeam 10, Smoky-brown woodpecker 2, Unicoloured tapaculo 1 seen + 1 heard, Red-crested cotinga 1, Black-crested tit-tyrant 1, Black-crested warbler 2, Black-throated flowerpiercer 1.

### El Molino to Chugay

Mountain caracara 10, Mountain velvet-breast 1, Andean flicker 1, Streak-throated canastero 1, Many-striped canastero 7, black-billed shrike-tyrant 1, paramo pipit 10, Bright-rumped yellow-finch 5.

### West of Huamachuco

Andean lapwing 2, Olivaceous thornbill 1 nest-building.

### 113 km east of Trujillo

Mountain caracara 3, Plumbeous rail 1, Andean lapwing 5, Green-headed hillstar 2, Giant hummingbird 1, Blue-mantled thornbill 2, Streak-throated canastero 5, Many-striped canastero 2, Stripe-headed antpitta 2, Brown-backed chat-tyrant 2, Pufous-webbed tyrant 1, Paramo ground-tyrant 5, Peruvian sierra-finch 5, Plain-coloured seedeater 5, Brush-finch sp 1, Golden-billed saltator 2 nest-building.

The brush-finch was seen very well and looked just like Pale-naped which is only in northernmost Peru. maybe the *baroni*-race of cloud-forest brush-finch?

### Sincicap

Andean tinamou 2, Andean/Mountain parakeet 20 in the fog, Koepke's screech-owl 3 heard and recorded and 1 seen briefly, Purple-collared woodstar 5, Black-necked woodpecker 1, Elegant crescentchest 5, Unicoloured tapaculo 2 heard, White-crested elaenia 1, Lesser goldfinch 1.

### Huazcaran NP

Torrent duck 1 f, Mountain caracara 2, Andean gull 1, Shining sunbeam 5, Giant hummingbird 1, Blue-mantled thornbill 10, Andean flicker 10, Rusty-crowned tit-spinetail 1, Baron's spinetail 2, Streak-throated canastero 2, Striated earthcreeper 1, Stripe-headed antpitta 1 seen + heard, White-cheeked cotinga 3, D'Orbigny's chat-tyrant 2, Black-billed shrike-tyrant 1, Rufous-webbed tyrant 1, Black-crested tit-tyrant 1, Thick-billed siskin 4, Giant conebill 3, Tit-like dacnis 50, White-winged diuca-finch 1, Black-throated flowerpiercer 5, Rufous-eared brush-finch 7.

### Pueblo Libre

'Ancash' Pale-tailed canastero 2 undescribed (sub)species, Short-tailed field-tyrant 5, Greenish yellow-finch 10, Drab seedeater 5.

### Lago Conococha

Silvery grebe 5, White-cheeked pintail 4, Puna ibis 4, Giant coot 1000, Andean coot 200+, Andean negrito 5.

### Barranca

Peregrine falcon 1 hunting pigeons between the cars!

*Purple-backed Sunbeam at El Molino. A loooong drive on bad roads to get this extremely local Peruvian endemic.*

