

Trip Report: Argentina (November 27th – December 23rd 2014)
Buenos Aires, plus Río Negro, Salta and Entre Ríos Provinces

On previous trips to Buenos Aires I have seen many good birds during my early-morning and early-evening walks, binoculars in hand, along the Reserva Ecológica Costanera Sur boundary wall, but rarely had the opportunity to actually enter the reserve that is only open from 8am to 7pm. On this extended trip I was able to spend a couple of weekend mornings along the tree and reed bed lined trails inside the reserve, where a highlight was seeing a lifer Striped Owl. Meanwhile, along the boundary wall, recent reed clearing has created more open water and several duck species were therefore more numerous than during my previous visits. Multiple White-faced and Fulvous Whistling-Duck and Rosy-billed Pochard families were present, allowing for close-up viewing of their ducklings resting on the mats of extracted reeds. Of 52 species seen around Costanera Sur, two were lifers.

I also organized my first ever trips away from Buenos Aires, spending weekends in three other provinces – Río Negro (in northern Patagonia), Salta (in the northwest), and Entre Ríos (just to the north of Buenos Aires, between the Río Paraná and Río Uruguay).



Burrowing Parakeets [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]

My first weekend trip was to the Monte Desert near to General Roca in Río Negro province. This area is home to several species that are endemic to Argentina and the specialties and birding sites are described in a very helpful Neotropical Birding article (see Neotropical Birding 11, Spring 2011, <http://nachoareta.files.wordpress.com/2011/06/areta-et-al-2011-birds-of-sand-nb.pdf>). During a late-November morning, in the knowledgeable company of local residents Jaime (a co-author of the above article) and Cristina, I visited Monte Desert scrub habitat at Paso Córdova and adjacent riverine habitat along the Río Negro. Highlights included seeing the endemic Patagonian Canastero and White-throated Cacholote, an American Kestrel hunting Southern Martins near to a nest in the side of a *barda* (cliff), and some 20 pairs of

Burrowing Parakeets nesting in the wall of a dry creek bed. It was also an interesting opportunity to learn more about the desert ecology, including the chañar tree (*Geoffroea decorticans*) with its green, photosynthesising bark. Of the 36 bird species identified during the morning, 18 were lifers. I also saw one additional lifer (Black-necked Swan, over a hundred in total) whilst travelling past a dam on the Río Neuquén.



Striped Owl [Costanera Sur, Buenos Aires]

My next weekend visit was to the privately managed Reserva de Huaico in San Lorenzo, a suburb of the city of Salta. This reserve protects an area of Yungas forest on the lower flanks of the Andes and Maurizio from Clark Expeditions (see <http://www.clarkexpediciones.com>) provided me with transport and access to the reserve. Nicolás, a mechanic and driver who is rapidly gaining experience as a guide, accompanied me on three walks along the reserve's lower trails from approximately 1400m to 1600m ASL. Highlights included nesting Cream-backed Woodpeckers, a confiding Black-backed Grosbeak (known locally as 'El Rey del Bosque' because of his fine voice), many hyperactive Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch and Brown-capped Redstarts, both Sclater's and Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulets, perched pairs of Scaly-headed Parrots and several very smart looking Rufous-headed Brush-Finch. An evening of spotlighting delivered a flypast of a Montane Forest (Hoy's) Screech-Owl silhouetted against a bright, moonlit sky and good views of Little Nightjars. Of the 82 species identified during two days of birding, 19 were lifers.

On my final weekend in Argentina I spent a full day in the vicinity of the small village of Ceibas in southern Entre Ríos province, where there is high quality birding in Espinal woodland and marshland habitats. This area is readily accessible from Buenos Aires city as a long day trip. During almost 12 hours of birding along the local dirt roads and hikes around two private farms that are members of a regional conservation organization I was accompanied by excellent local guide Marcelo (see <http://www.birdingbuenosaires.com>). Highlights included many Southern Screamers (one pair complete with three small golden chicks in tow), Maguari Stork, Giant Woodrail (walking in the open and calling from fence posts!), Chotoy, Stripe-crowned and Tufted Tit-Spinetails (amongst many funarids), White-naped Xenopsaris (which I had failed to see in likely habitat in Venezuela) and White and White-fronted Woodpeckers (amongst five species of woodpecker). Of the 103 species identified during the day without any use of playback, 21 were lifers.

Overall, my short birding walks around Costanera Sur plus the total of approximately 4 days spent birding in Rio Negro, Salta and Entre Ríos provinces delivered a grand total of 181 species, including 61 lifers. A combined trip list is included at the end of this report.



White-faced Whistling-Ducks and one hassled parent [Costanera Sur, Buenos Aires]



White-faced Whistling-Duck (possibly the parent above, now finally relaxing?) [Costanera Sur, Buenos Aires]



Rosy-billed Pochard [Costanera Sur, Buenos Aires]



Silver Teal [Costanera Sur, Buenos Aires]



Tufted Tit-Tyrant [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]



Patagonian wind paintings... [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]



Jaime inspecting an old White-throated Cacholote nest in a chañar; A barda [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]



With Jaime and Cristina at the Burrowing Parakeet nest site [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]



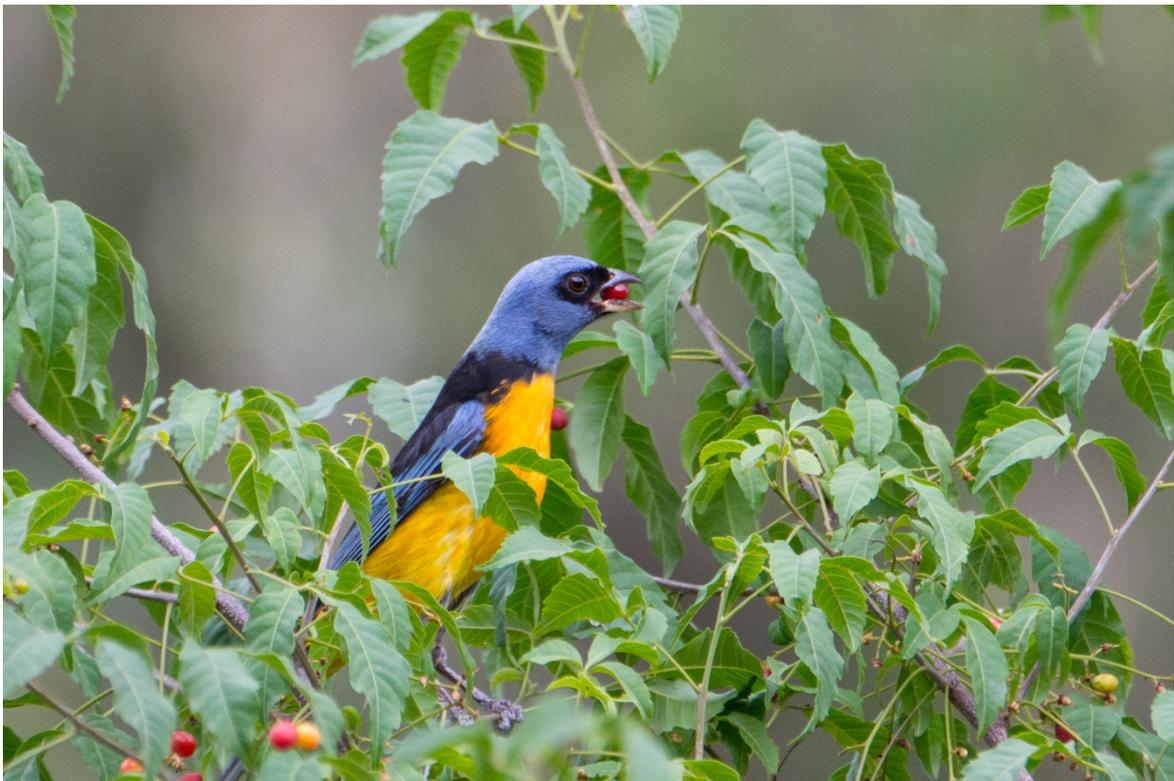
Burrowing Parakeets [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]



Burrowing Parakeets [Paso Córdova, Río Negro]



Sayaca Tanager [Hotel Selva Montana, Salta]



Blue-and-yellow Tanager [Hotel Selva Montana, Salta]



Rusty-browed Warbling-Finch [Reserva del Huaico, Salta]



Sclater's Tyrannulet [Reserva del Huaico, Salta]



Black-backed Grosbeak [Reserva del Huaico, Salta]



Brown-capped Redstart [Reserva del Huaico, Salta]



Common Bush-Tanager [Reserva del Huaico, Salta]



Yungas forest on the mountains above San Lorenzo, with dry desert below; Orchid [Reserva del Huaico, Salta]



Fork-tailed Flycatcher [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Fork-tailed Flycatcher [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Ringed Teal [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



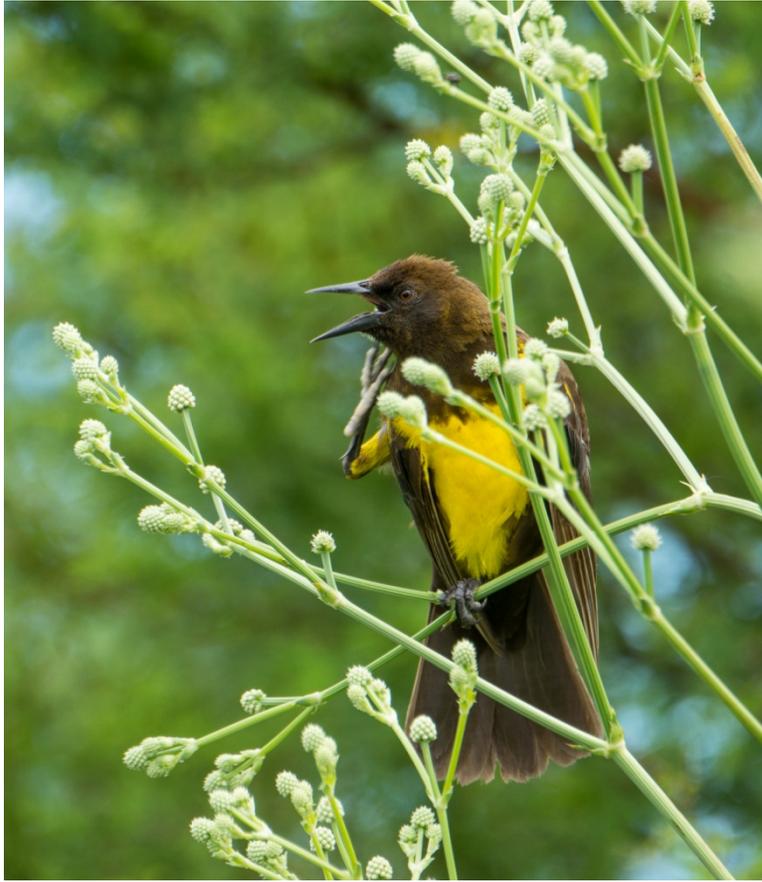
Monk Parakeet eating a cactus flower [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Checkered Woodpecker [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Green-barred Woodpecker [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Brown-and-yellow Marshbird with an itch to scratch [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Spectacled Tyrant [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Great Pampa-Finch [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Marcelo birding the wetlands [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



View across a wetland towards a patch of Espinal woodland [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Argentina's national flower – the Ceibo [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]



Swarm of golden-winged Dragonflies [Ceibas, Entre Ríos]

1. Bird Trip List¹

Confirmed personal sightings only for DJS – excludes birds heard only unless otherwise indicated. As field guide I used [‘Birds of Southern South America and Antarctica’ by Martín de la Peña and Maurice Rumboll \(Princeton University Press, 1998\)](#). Some names have been updated since this guide was published, so birds in the trip list are identified as per ‘The Clements Checklist of Birds of the World’, Cornell, 2007 with updates through December 2010 (online version 6.5).

Locations where species were seen, in order of travel:

BA = Buenos Aires, principally the Reserva Ecológica Costanera Sur (“Costanera Sur”) adjacent to Puerto Madero and downtown Buenos Aires. (Various early-mornings and late-afternoons between November 27th and December 23rd). The spring and early summer weather in Buenos Aires was variable, with the summer heat not yet having set in – predominantly sunny days with mild mornings and maximum temperatures reaching between 25 to 30°C, but also several days with heavy rain storms and maximum daily temperatures around 20°C. Altitude ~ 0 to 5m ASL.

RN = Río Negro province, principally scrub habitat in the Monte Desert at Paso Córdova and riverine habitat on the southern bank of the Río Negro near to General Roca (morning of November 30th), plus also views from a dam wall along the Río Neuquén near to the Bodega Familia Schroeder (excellent wine and restaurant!) in adjacent Neuquén province (morning of November 29th). Weather was dry and sunny, with a cool morning giving way to afternoon temperatures above 30°C. Altitude ~ 200m ASL.

S = Salta province, principally the grounds of the Hotel Selva Montana in San Lorenzo (see <http://www.hostal-selvamontana.com.ar/esp/index.html>) and the nearby trails through the Yungas forest within the Reserva de Huaico (see <http://www.reservadelhuaico.org.ar>) (afternoon and evening of December 6th and mornings of December 7th and 8th), plus a short visit to the Represa Campo Alegre north of the city of Salta (afternoon of December 7th). There are some excellent and moderately priced restaurants in San Lorenzo within walking distance of the Hotel Selva Montana. The empanadas at Restaurante “A lo de Gonzalo” are the best that I have ever eaten and were a perfect accompaniment for an eponymous Salta beer! Initially the weather was dry and sunny, with afternoon temperatures well above 30°C. Overnight rain persisted until after dawn on December 8th, almost washing out my pre-departure early-morning birding. Altitude ~ 1400 to 1600m ASL.

ER = Entre Ríos province, including roadsides and two private ranches in the vicinity of Ceibas (full day December 21st). Altitude ~ 0 to 20m ASL.

CHACHALACAS, GUANS AND CURASSOWS: Cracidae

Dusky-legged Guan *Penelope obscura* [**S**]:

SCREAMERS Anhimidae

Southern Screamer *Chauna torquata* [**ER**] *:

DUCKS, GEESE & SWANS Anatidae

White-faced Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna viduata* [**BA; S; ER**] *:

Fulvous Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna bicolor* [**BA; ER**] *:

Coscoroba Swan *Coscoroba coscoroba* [**BA; ER**] *:

Black-necked Swan *Cygnus melanocoryphus* [**RN; ER**]:

Brazilian Teal *Amazonetta brasiliensis* [**BA; ER**]:

Ringed Teal *Callonetta leucophrys* [**BA; ER**] *:

Chiloe Wigeon *Anas sibilatrix* [**RN**] *:

Yellow-billed Teal *Anas flavirostris* [**RN; ER**] *:

Yellow-billed Pintail *Anas georgica* [**RN; S**] *:

Silver Teal *Anas versicolor* [**BA**] *:

Rosy-billed Pochard *Netta peposaca* [**BA; ER**] *:

GREBES Podicipedidae

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* [**BA; S**]:

Great Grebe *Podiceps major* [**S**]:

¹ First sighting ever for DJS; **E** = Argentina endemic species; * = photo available

FLAMINGOS Phoenicopteridae

Chilean Flamingo *Phoenicopeterus chilensis* [RN]:

STORKS Ciconiidae

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana* [S; ER]:

Maguari Stork *Ciconia maguari* [ER]:

IBISES, SPOONBILLS Threskiornithidae

Buff-necked Ibis *Theristicus caudatus* [S]:

Black-faced Ibis *Theristicus melanopis* [RN] *:

Bare-faced Ibis *Phimosus infuscatus* [ER]:

White-faced Ibis *Plegadis chihi* [S; ER]:

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja* [S; ER]:

HERONS, BITTERNES Ardeidae

Rufescent Tiger Heron *Tigrisoma lineatum* [BA; ER]:

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* [BA; ER]:

Striated Heron *Butorides striata* [ER]:

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* [S; ER]:

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi* [BA; ER]:

Great Egret *Ardea alba* [BA; RN; ER]:

Whistling Heron *Syrigma sibilatrix* [ER]:

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* [S; ER]:

CORMORANTS, SHAGS Phalacrocoracidae

Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* [S; ER]:

ANHINGAS, DARTERS Anhingidae

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* [ER]:

NEW WORLD VULTURES Cathartidae

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* [RN]:

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus* [S; ER]:

KITES, HAWKS & EAGLES Accipitridae

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus* [S]:

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis* [ER] *:

Long-winged Harrier *Circus buffoni* [ER] *:

Savanna Hawk *Buteogallus meridionalis* [S; ER]:

Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris* [S; ER]:

CARACARAS, FALCONS Falconidae

Southern [Crested] Caracara *Caracara plancus* [RN; BA; S; ER]:

Chimango Caracara *Milvago chimango* [RN; ER] *:

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* [RN]:

RAILS, CRAKES & COOTS Rallidae

Gray-necked Wood Rail *Aramides cajanea* [BA]:

Giant Wood Rail *Aramides ypecaha* [ER]:

Plumbeous Rail *Pardirallus sanguinolentus* [BA]:

Common Moorhen *Gallinula chloropus* [BA; ER]:

Spot-flanked Gallinule *Gallinula melanops* [RN] *:

White-winged Coot *Fulica leucoptera* [BA; S]:

Red-gartered Coot *Fulica armillata* [BA]:

LIMPKIN Aramidae

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna* [BA; ER] *:

STILTS, AVOCETS Recurvirostridae

Black-necked (White-backed) Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus melanurus* [S; ER]:

PLOVERS Charadriidae

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis* [RN; ER] *:

JACANAS Jacanidae

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana* [BA; S; ER]:

SANDPIPERS, SNIPES Scolopacidae

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* [S; ER]:

Pectoral Sandpiper *Calidris melanotos* [ER]:

PIGEONS, DOVES Columbidae

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia* [BA]:

Picazuro Pigeon *Patagioenas picazuro* [BA; RN; S; ER] *:

Spot-winged Pigeon *Patagioenas maculosa* [ER]:

Eared Dove *Zenaida auriculata* [BA; ER] *:

Picui Ground Dove *Columbina picui* [RN]:

Large-tailed Dove *Leptotila megalura* [S]:

PARROTS Psittacidae

Nanday Parakeet *Nandayus nenday* [BA]:

Burrowing Parakeet *Cyanoliseus patagonus* [RN] *:

Monk Parakeet *Myiopsitta monachus* [BA; ER] *:

Scaly-headed Parrot *Pionus maximiliani* [S]:

CUCKOOS Cuculidae

Guira Cuckoo *Guira guira* [BA; ER]:

Dark-billed Cuckoo *Coccyzus melacoryphus* [ER]:

OWLS Strigidae

Tropical Screech-Owl *Megascops choliba* **beard only** [S]:

Montane Forest (Hoy's) Screech-Owl *Megascops hoyi* [S]:

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* [S]:

Striped Owl *Pseudoscops clamator* [BA] *:

NIGHTJARS Caprimulgidae

Little Nightjar *Caprimulgus parvulus* [S]:

HUMMINGBIRDS Trochilidae

Glittering-bellied Emerald *Chlorostilbon aureoventris* [BA; ER]:

White-bellied Hummingbird *Amazilia chionogaster* [S] *:

Gilded Hummingbird (Sapphire) *Hylocharis chrysura* [BA]:

WOODPECKERS Picidae

White Woodpecker *Melanerpes candidus* [ER]:

White-fronted Woodpecker *Melanerpes cactorum* [ER] *:

Checkered Woodpecker *Veniliornis mixtus* [BA; ER] *:

Dot-fronted Woodpecker *Veniliornis frontalis* [S] *:

Green-barred Woodpecker *Colaptes melanochloros* [BA; S; ER] *:

Campo Flicker *Colaptes campestris* [U; ER] *:

Cream-backed Woodpecker *Campephilus leucopogon* [S] *:

OVENBIRDS AND WOODCREEPERS Furnariidae

Rufous-banded Miner *Geositta rufipennis* [RN]:

Rufous Hornero *Furnarius rufus* [BA; RN; S; ER]:

Tufted Tit-Spinetail *Leptasthenura platensis* [ER]:

Plain-mantled Tit-Spintail *Leptasthenura aegithaloides berlepschi* [RN]:
Chotoy Spintail *Schoeniophylax phryganophilus* [ER]:
Azara's Spintail *Synallaxis azarae* [S]:
Pale-breasted Spintail *Synallaxis albescens* **heard only** [ER]:
Stripe-crowned Spintail *Cranioleuca pyrrhophia* [ER] *:
Yellow-chinned Spintail *Certhiaxis cinnamomea* [ER]:
Short-billed Canastero *Asthenes baeri* [ER]:
Patagonian Canastero *Asthenes patagonica* **E** [RN] *:
Little Thornbird *Phacellodomus sibilatrix* [ER] *:
Freckle-breasted Thornbird *Phacellodomus striaticollis* [ER]:
White-throated Cacholote *Pseudoseisura gutturalis* **E** [RN] *:
Buff-browed Foliage-gleaner *Syndactyla rufosuperciliata* [S] *:
Narrow-billed Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes angustirostris* [BA; ER] *:

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS Tyrannidae

Small-billed Elaenia *Elaenia parvirostris* [ER] *:
Southern Beardless Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum* [S] *:
Suiriri Flycatcher *Suiriri suiriri* [ER]:
White-throated Tyrannulet *Mecocerculus leucophrys leucophrys* [S]:
Tufted Tit-Tyrant *Anairetes parulus* [RN] *:
Sooty Tyrannulet *Serpophaga nigricans* [ER]:
White-crested Tyrannulet *Serpophaga subcristata* [ER] *:
White-bellied Tyrannulet *Serpophaga munda* [RN] *:
Mottle-cheeked Tyrannulet *Phylloscartes ventralis* [S] *:
Sclater's Tyrannulet *Phyllomyias sclateri* [S] *:
Euler's Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus eulerei argentinus* [S] *:
Black Phoebe *Sayornis nigricans* [S] *:
Vermilion Flycatcher *Pyrocephalus rubinus* [RN; S; ER]:
White-winged Black-Tyrant *Knipolegus aterrimus* [RN]:
Spectacled Tyrant *Hymenops perspicillatus* [ER] *:
Yellow-browed Tyrant *Satrapa icterophrys* [S; ER] *:
White Monjita *Xolmis irupero* [S; ER]:
Black-backed Water Tyrant *Fluvicola albiventer* [ER]:
Cattle Tyrant *Machetornis rixosa* [ER]:
Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer* [S] *:
Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus* [BA; RN; S; ER]:
Variiegated Flycatcher *Empidonomus varius* [S]:
Crowned Slaty Flycatcher *Empidonomus aurantioatrocristatus* [ER] *:
Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus* [RN; S; ER]:
Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savanna* [S; ER] *:

TITYRAS, BECARDS Tityridae

Crested Becard *Pachyramphus validus* [S]:
White-Naped Xenopsaris *Xenopsaris albinucha* [ER] *:

VIREOS, GREENLETS Vireonidae

Rufous-browed Peppershrike *Cyclarhis gujanensis* [S]:
Red-eyed Vireo *Vireo olivaceus* [S]:

CROWS, JAYS Corvidae

Plush-crested Jay *Cyanocorax chrysops* [S] *:

SWALLOWS, MARTINS Hirundinidae

White-rumped Swallow *Tachycineta leucorrhoa* [S; ER]:
Southern Martin *Progne elegans* [RN]:
Brown-chested Martin *Progne tapera* [ER]:
Chilean Swallow *Tachycineta meyeni* [RN] *:
Blue-and-white Swallow *Notiochelidon cyanoleuca* [S]:
Cliff Swallow *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* [ER]:

WRENS Troglodytidae

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon* [BA; RN; S; ER] *:

Mountain Wren *Troglodytes solstitialis* [S] *:

GNATCATCHERS Polioptilidae

Masked Gnatcatcher *Polioptila dumicola* [BA; S; ER] *:

MOCKINGBIRDS, THRASHERS Mimidae

Chalk-browed Mockingbird *Mimus saturninus* [BA; RN; ER]:

STARLINGS Sturnidae

European Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* [BA]:

THRUSHES Turdidae

Swainson's Thrush *Catharus ustulatus* [S]:

Chiguanco Thrush *Turdus chiguanco* [S]:

Rufous-bellied Thrush *Turdus rufiventris* [BA; S; ER]:

Austral Thrush *Turdus falcklandii* [RN]:

Creamy-bellied Thrush *Turdus amaurochalinus* [BA; S; ER] *:

Slaty Thrush *Turdus nigriceps nigriceps* [S]:

OLD WORLD SPARROWS Passeridae

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* [BA; ER]:

FINCHES Fringillidae

Hooded Siskin *Carduelis magellanica* [BA; S; ER]:

NEW WORLD WARBLERS Parulidae

Masked Yellowthroat *Geothlypis aequinoctialis* [S] *:

Brown-capped Redstart *Myioborus bruniceps* [S] *:

TANAGERS & ALLIES Thraupidae

Sayaca Tanager *Thraupis sayaca* [BA; S; ER] *:

Blue-and-yellow Tanager *Thraupis bonariensis* [S] *:

Fawn-breasted Tanager *Pipraeidea melanonota* [S] *:

Rusty-browed Warbling Finch *Poospiza erythrophrys* [S] *:

Black-and-rufous Warbling Finch *Poospiza nigrorufa* [BA; ER]:

Black-capped Warbling Finch *Poospiza melanoleuca* [ER]:

Saffron Finch *Sicalis flaveola* [RN; S; ER] *:

Grassland Yellow Finch *Sicalis luteola* [RN; ER]:

Great Pampa Finch *Embernagra platensis* [ER] *:

Red-crested Cardinal *Paroaria coronata* [BA; ER] *:

Double-collared Seedeater *Sporophila caerulescens* [BA; S; ER] *:

Greyish Saltator *Saltator coerulescens* [ER] *:

Golden-billed Saltator *Saltator aurantiirostris* [BA; S; ER] *:

BUNTINGS, NEW WORLD SPARROWS & ALLIES Emberizidae

Saffron-billed Sparrow *Arremon flavirostris dorbignii* [S]:

Stripe-headed (White-browed) Brush-Finch *Arremon torquatus* [S]:

Fulvous-headed Brush-Finch *Atlapetes fulviceps* [S] *:

Rufous-collared Sparrow *Zonotrichia capensis* [BA; S; ER]:

Common Bush Tanager *Chlorospingus ophthalmicus* [S] *:

CARDINALS & ALLIES Cardinalidae

Black-backed Grosbeak *Pheucticus aureoventris* [S] *:

Ultramarine Grosbeak *Cyanocompsa brissonii* [S] *:

OROPENDOLAS, ORIOLES & BLACKBIRDS Icteridae

Scarlet-headed Blackbird *Amblyramphus holosericeus* [ER]:

Yellow-winged Blackbird *Agelasticus thilius* [BA; RN; ER]:

Chestnut-capped Blackbird *Chrysomus ruficapillus* [ER]:

Brown-and-yellow Marshbird *Pseudoleistes virescens* [ER] *:

Baywing Cowbird *Agelaioides badius* [BA; S] *:

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* [BA; RN; S; ER]:

Solitary Black Cacique *Cacicus solitarius* [BA]:

Golden-winged Cacique *Cacicus chrysopterus* [S]:

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus* [S]:

Variable Oriole *Icterus cayanensis* [ER]:

Unicolored Blackbird *Agelasticus cyanopus* [BA]:

Total 181 confirmed species for the trip (including 2 Argentina endemics as per <http://avibase.bsc-eoc.org> and 2 heard only), of which 61 were 'lifers' for DJS.

2. Mammal Trip List

South American Grey Fox *Pseudalopex griseus* [RN] *:

Coypu *Myopotamus coypus bonariensis* [ER]:

Pampas Cavy *Cavia aperea* [BA] *:



Christmas tree outside the Casa Rosada presidential palace [Plaza de Mayo, Buenos Aires]