

## Trip Report: Argentina – Buenos Aires



December 14<sup>th</sup> 2013

During this first opportunity to go birding in Argentina, I spent an enjoyable morning in the company of Mark Pearman (markpearman@speedy.com.ar), a guide who has been based in Buenos Aires for some 25 years and is in the process of finalizing a two-volume guide to the birds of Argentina and the Falkland Islands. Mark's local knowledge and familiarity with the bird calls was a great help as we racked up a very respectable total of 76 species (including 28 lifers seen by me) during short visits to two of the key birding sites that are readily accessible from downtown Buenos Aires. Having travelled without my DSLR I took no bird photos, just a few site shots with my point-and-shoot camera.

We started birding at dawn (~05:45) along a boundary wall overlooking some reed beds and ponds at the Reserva Ecológica Costanera Sur, adjacent to Puerto Madero and downtown Buenos Aires. From the wall we saw a surprisingly large number of species, including many water birds (lifers for me included grebe, swan, gallinule and multiple duck and coot species) but also lifer parakeets, woodpeckers, blackbirds, a woodcreeper, rushbird and warbling-finch in the reed beds, adjacent trees and open areas. When the gates to the reserve's walking trails opened at 08:00 we joined a few local runners and cyclists (plus several birders with cameras but no binoculars!) inside the reserve. This interior area delivered a variety of other lifers for me, including two cardinals, a thornbird, tyrant and thrush.

By mid-morning the temperature had risen considerably, so we retreated from the hot sun and limited tree-cover available at Costanera Sur, and headed some 20km north to the suburb of San Isidro. The Reserva Municipal Refugio Natural Educativo Ribera Norte is located there, right on the edge of the Río de la Plata delta. Along the shady trails that wind through the reserve's wetlands we found several additional species, including a lifer crane, rail, hummingbird and warbling finch as well as a few more binocular-less bird photographers marching the trails with their small DSLRs...



*Vegetation along the banks of the Río de la Plata [Ribera Norte, ~20km north of Buenos Aires]*

# 1. Bird Trip List<sup>1</sup>

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 seen in sequence of travel:

**BA** = Buenos Aires city streets and Retiro Park. (From December 9<sup>th</sup> through 14<sup>th</sup>).

**CS** = Reserva Ecológica Costanera Sur (“Costanera Sur”) adjacent to Puerto Madero and downtown Buenos Aires. (Early-morning of December 14<sup>th</sup>).

**RN** = Reserva Municipal Refugio Natural Educativo Ribera Norte (“Ribera Norte”) in the northern suburb of San Isidro, some 20km north of downtown Buenos Aires. (Late-morning of December 14<sup>th</sup>).

The weather during this early-summer visit to Buenos Aires was warm to hot and consistently sunny, with temperatures rising to around 30°C by lunchtime.

## PODICIPEDIDAE

**White-tufted Grebe** *Rollandia Rolland* [CS]: A pair and two juveniles on open water along the boundary wall.

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps* [CS]: One on open water along the boundary wall.

**Striated Heron** *Butorides striata* [RN]: One perched and fishing close to the trail.

**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* [CS; RN]: Several flying.

**Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* [RN]: Several flying.

**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* [CS]: Several flying.

**Black-crowned Night-Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* [CS]: One flying.

**Cocoi Heron** *Ardea cocoi* [CS; RN]: Several flying and at least two seen calling from perches at Ribera Norte.

**Rufescent Tiger-Heron** *Tigrisoma lineatum* [CS]: One flew in and perched on a low island near to the boundary wall.

## THRESKIORNITHIDAE

**Bare-faced Ibis** *Phimosus infuscatus* [CS; RN]: Small groups flying at Costanera Sur and a pair flying at Ribera Norte.

## ANATIDAE

**Coscoroba Swan** *Coscoroba coscoroba*: [CS]: Pair flying and on open water along the boundary wall.

**Silver Teal** *Anas versicolor* [CS]: Several pairs on open water along the boundary wall.

**Brazilian Teal** *Amazonetta brasiliensis* [CS]: Pair sleeping adjacent to open water along the boundary wall.

**Rosy-billed Pochard** *Netta peposaca* [CS]: Female and juveniles on open water along the boundary wall.

## ACCIPITRIDAE

**Harris’s Hawk** *Parabuteo unicinctus* [CS]: Pair flying across open water along the boundary wall.

**Roadside Hawk** *Buteo magnirostris* [CS]: Juvenile seen calling from a perch inside the park.

## FALCONIDAE

**Southern Caracara** *Caracara plancus* [BA]: Fly-by across Retiro park seen from hotel window.

## RALLIDAE

**Rufous-sided Crake** *Laterallus melanophaius* [RN]: One seen calling in reeds adjacent to trail.

**Gray-necked Wood-Rail** *Aramides cajanea* [CS]: One seen calling in under-storey adjacent to trail.

**White-winged Coot** *Fulica leucoptera* [CS]: Many on open water along the boundary wall.

**Red-fronted Coot** *Fulica rufifrons* [CS]: Many on open water along the boundary wall.

**Red-gartered Coot** *Fulica armillata* [CS]: Many on open water along the boundary wall.

**Plumbeous Rail** *Pardirallus sanguinolentus* [RN]: One seen calling in reeds adjacent to trail.

**Common Moorhen (Gallinule)** *Gallinula chloropus galeata* [CS]: Several on vegetation along the boundary wall

**Spot-flanked Gallinule** *Gallinula melanops* [CS]: Several walking on vegetation in reeds along the boundary wall.

**Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinica* [RN]: One as it retreated into reeds adjacent to trail.

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<sup>1</sup> First sighting ever for DJS; **E** = Argentina endemic species; \* = photo available

## JACANIDAE

**Wattled Jacana** *Jacana jacana* [CS]: Several walking on vegetation along the boundary wall.

## COLUMBIDAE

**Rock Pigeon** *Columba livia* [BA; CS]: Numerous in parks and scavenging along the boundary wall at Costanera Sur.

**Picazuro Pigeon** *Patagioenas picazuro* [CS; RN]: Several flying and perched in tree tops.

**Eared Dove** *Zenaida auriculata* [BA; CS; RN]: Numerous.

**White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi* **heard only** [RN]: Several calling.

## PSITTACIDAE

**Monk Parakeet** *Myiopsitta monachus* [CS]: Fly-bys by small flocks, plus close-ups when scavenging on the ground along boundary wall.

**Nanday Parakeet** *Nandayus nenday* [CS]: Fly-bys by small flocks.

## CUCULIDAE

**Guira Cuckoo** *Guira guira* [CS]: Several on the ground, including scavenging along boundary wall.

## TROCHILIDAE

**Gilded Hummingbird** *Hylocharis chrysura* [RN]: Several heard and a few seen perched and gleaning.

## PICIDAE

**Checkered Woodpecker** *Veniliornis mixtus* [CS; RN]: At least four in trees along boundary wall.

**Campo Flicker** *Colaptes campestris* [RN]: One seen calling with its head protruding from a nest hole.

**Green-barred Woodpecker** *Colaptes melanochloros* [RN]: One seen at very close range seemingly pulling ants from a crevice in the boundary wall, plus a couple of fly-bys.

## EMBERIZIDAE

**Rufous-collared Sparrow** *Zonotrichia capensis* [CS]: Numerous, including scavenging along the boundary wall.

## FRINGILLIDAE

**Hooded Siskin** *Spinus magellanicus* [CS]: Several in trees along the boundary wall.

## FURNARIIDAE

**Narrow-billed Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes angustirostris* [CS]: Four in one tree and on the ground along the boundary wall.

**Sulphur-throated Spinetail** *Cranioleuca sulphurifera* **heard only** [CS; RN]: Heard several times at close range in reeds but did not show.

**Freckle-breasted Thornbird** *Phacellodomus striaticollis* [CS]: One seen in low trees along trail.

**Rufous Hornero** *Furnarius rufus* [CS]: Numerous, including scavenging along the boundary wall. National bird of Argentina!

**Wren-like Rushbird** *Phleocryptes melanops* [CS]: Several seen in vegetation and reeds near to boundary wall.

## HIRUNDINIDAE

**White-rumped Swallow** *Tachycineta leucorrhoa* [CS]: Several seen flying and perched.

**Brown-chested Martin** *Progne tapera* [CS]: A few seen flying and perched.

## ICTERIDAE

**Solitary Black Cacique** *Cacicus solitarius* **heard only** [CS]: One heard calling in trees away from the trail.

**Bay-winged Cowbird** *Agelaioides badius* [CS]: Small flocks in reeds and scavenging along the boundary wall.

**Shiny Cowbird** *Molothrus bonariensis* [CS]: Small numbers scavenging along the boundary wall.

**Yellow-winged Blackbird** *Agelasticus thilius* [CS]: One perched and then flying near to the boundary wall.

**Chestnut-capped Blackbird** *Chrysomus ruficapillus* [CS]: Several perched in reeds along the boundary wall.

**Unicolored Blackbird** *Agelasticus cyanopus* [CS]: A female seen perched in reeds along the boundary wall.

## MIMIDAE

**Chalk-browed Mockingbird** *Mimus saturninus* [CS]: Several scavenging along the boundary wall.

## PARULIDAE

**Masked Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis aequinoctialis* [CS]: One coaxed out of the reeds along a trail. Others heard.

**Golden-crowned Warbler** *Basileuterus culicivorus* [CS; RN]: Several seen at both locations.

## POLIOPTILIDAE

**Masked Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila dumicola* [CS]: Several in trees along the boundary wall.

## STURNIDAE

**European Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* [CS]: Several scavenging along the boundary wall.

## THRAUPIDAE

**Red-crested Cardinal** *Paroaria coronata* [CS]: One along the boundary wall and another alongside a trail.

**Yellow-billed Cardinal** *Paroaria capitata* [CS]: One feeding in low trees alongside a trail.

**Double-collared Seedeater** *Sporophila caerulescens* [CS]: Many females, fewer males in low trees around the reserve.

**Saffron Finch** *Sicalis flaveola* [CS]: A pair visiting an earth wall near to the boundary wall – possibly a nest site.

**Gray-throated Warbling-Finch** *Poospiza cabanisi* [RN]: One seen singing from a mid-storey perch.

**Black-and-rufous Warbling-Finch** *Poospiza nigrorufa* [CS: RN]: Several, including singing from a reed top perch along the boundary wall.

**Grayish Saltator** *Saltator coerulescens*: [CS: RN]: One seen in trees at each site.

## TROGLODYTIDAE

**House Wren** *Troglodytes aedon* [CS: RN]: Numerous at both sites.

## TURDIDAE

**Creamy-bellied Thrush** *Turdus amaurochalinus* [CS: RN]: Several seen, although much less numerous than Rufous-bellied Thrush.

**Rufous-bellied Thrush** *Turdus rufiventris* [BA: CS: RN]: Numerous.

## TYRANNIDAE

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus* [CS: RN]: Several.

**Streaked Flycatcher** *Myiodynastes maculatus* [RN]: One perched along the trail.

**Small-billed Elaenia** *Elaenia parvirostris* [CS: RN]: Several seen calling as they foraged in small trees.

**Bran-colored Flycatcher** *Myiophobus fasciatus* [RN]: Several along the trail.

**Spectacled Tyrant** *Hymenops perspicillatus* [CS]: One flew in and perched on a low treetop alongside a trail.

**Sooty Tyrannulet** *Serpophaga nigricans* [RN]: Several foraging on floating vegetation.

**Yellow-browed Tyrant** *Satrapa icterophrys* [RN]: A pair alongside a trail, apparently bringing food to a nest.

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus* [RN]: Several.

Total 76 confirmed species for the trip (including 3 heard only), of which 30 were 'lifers' for DJS (including 2 heard only). None of these species are considered endemic to Argentina.