



Trip Report: El Pauji, The Escalera and Rio Grande/Imataca (Estados Bolivar and Delta Amacuro), Venezuela

10th - 21st November 2007 (David Southall)

This report covers highlights (images, some contact details and a trip list) from a trip to south-eastern Venezuela ... a more detailed report will follow. The trip concluded with a personal total of some 303 confirmed species, including 54 "first time ever" species to add to my Venezuelan list. This included a total of 24 Hummingbird, 24 Antwren/Antbird/Antshrike, 13 Cotinga/Piha/Bellbird and 9 Manakin species. The number of Antwrens/Antbirds/Antshrikes was far more than I have ever seen or photographed on a single trip and a direct result of putting my newly acquired iPod into action for the first time.



Orange-bellied Manakin; Black-necked Araçari



Rufous-bellied Antwren; White-plumed Antbird



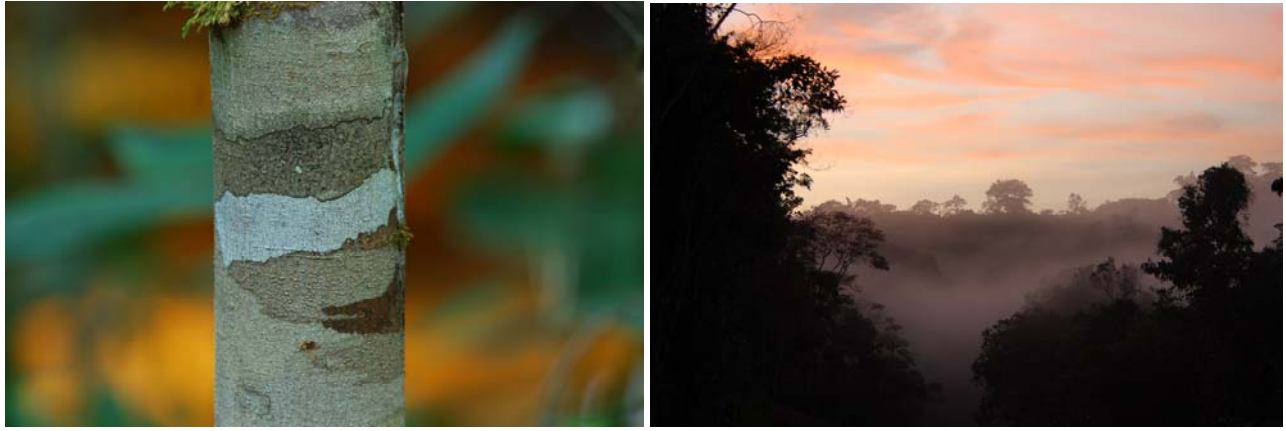
White-necked Jacobin; Black-throated Mango



Crimson Topaz (f) and Rufous-breasted Hermit; Velvet-browed Brilliant (collecting nesting material?)



Rufous-breasted Hermit; Gray-breasted Sabrewing



Tree and tannin-stained river, Cinco Ranchos, El Pauji; Dawn at Cinco Ranchos, El Pauji



Transparent mushrooms on Rio Grande trail, Imataca



Bat Falcon; Green Oropendola; Red-necked Woodpecker



Pompadour Cotinga; Black Nunbird; Channel-billed Toucan



Guianan Slaty-Antshrike (f); Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch



Tony leads David M-K and Tom through a 'conuco' near Uaiparú; David M-K and Tom at Kamá Meru



Morichal in the southern Gran Sabana



Gran Sabana panorama towards Wadakapiapué and Yuruaní Tepuis



Rufous-breasted Sabrewing; Black-headed Tanager



Tepui Whitestart; Tepui Brush-Finch



Paradise Jacamar; Brown Jacamar; Green-tailed Jacamar



Musician Wren; Warbling Antbird



Bearded Tachuri (f); Rose-collared Piha



Mouse-colored Antshrike; Rufous-throated Antbird



Golden-headed Manakin; Blue-crowned Manakin (imm.)



Blackish Nightjar



Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet; Rufous-browed Pepper-Shrike



Harpy Eagle

One footnote for distances along the Escalera Road: The former road signs along the Escalera Road (as referenced in e.g. my March 2006 trip report) have been replaced with signs giving the distance not from El Dorado but instead from Puerto La Cruz. Hence San Isidro (formerly marked as km 88) is now at km 713, the Piedra de la Virgen (formerly marked as km 98) is now at km 723 etc.

Logistics for the trip with David M-K and Tom to the Escalera and El Pauji were planned directly with the posadas; we travelled in David M-K's car. Tony and Rita Crease helped show us the many sites around El Pauji during our 4+ days there. My 3 night extension trip to Imataca/Rio Grande, including guiding by Javier, was arranged through David Ascanio (www.ascaniobirding.com). Useful contact details for arranging a similar trip are as follows:

Hotel Andrea, Upata: +58 (288) 221.3656 / 3618 / 2811

Yakoo, Santa Elena de Uairen: www.ya-koo.com +58 (289) 995.1742 / 995.1332

Tony & Rita Crease, El Pauji: tcrease@gmail.com

Maripak, El Pauji: Marielly Gil / Daniel Machado: maripaktepuy@hotmail.com +58-212-2343661

Barquilla de Fresa, Las Claritas: Henry & Magaly Cleve +58-288-808.8710/ 0426-991.9919

1. Trip Bird List^{1,2}

Confirmed personal sightings only for DJS – excludes birds heard only unless otherwise indicated [those confirmed on site by comparison with iPod playback]; in order of appearance on the plates of Hilty's 'Birds of Venezuela'. David McLachlan-Karr and Tom Cullinan saw a few additional species, as did Tony & Rita Crease in El Pauji and Henry Cleave on the Escalera.

Location where species seen: In order of travel: C= Rio Cuyuni and Highway-10 roadside between Upata and Las Claritas (ca. 200 to 300m altitude); B= Barquilla de Fresa (ca. 175m altitude), including own trails, adjacent lowlands to north and Capuchinbird Road to South; E= Escalera Road climbing Sierra de Lema between Piedra de la Virgen and Soldado Pionero (ca. 500 to 1400m altitude); G=Gran Sabana between Soldado Pionero and Santa Elena (ca. 1400 to 1000m altitude); P= El Pauji area (ca. 650-900m altitude), including access road to/from Santa Elena de Uairen and day trips in the El Pauji area along the Uaiparú Rd and at Amaribá, Cinco Ranchos and savannah/forest near to the Abismo; I= Imataca, El Palmar, Rio Grande (ca. 300-400m altitude) and access road from Highway-10 turn-off.

Little Tinamou (P, B) (heard only)	Scaled Pigeon (P)
Variiegated Tinamou (P) (heard only)	Ruddy Pigeon (P; I)
Crested Bobwhite (I)	Ruddy Ground-Dove (P; I)
Marbled Wood-Quail (P) (heard only)	Blue Ground-Dove (B)
Anhinga (I)	Red-and-green Macaw (P; E)
Black-bellied Whistling-Duck (I)	Red-shouldered Macaw (C; P)
Great Egret (G; I)	Red-bellied Macaw (P)
Cattle Egret (I)	Blue-headed Parrot (P; B; E; I) *
Capped Heron (I) *	Red-fan Parrot (P) * # (Amaribá forest @ 750m)
Whistling Heron (I) *	Orange-winged Parrot (P; I)
Yellow Headed Caracara (C; P; I)	Yellow-crowned Parrot (C; P)
Plumbeous Kite (P) *	Mealy Parrot (B; I)
Turkey Vulture (C; P; B; E)	Brown-throated Parakeet (G)
Greater Yellow-headed Vulture (I) *	Painted Parakeet (I) *
Gray Hawk (I) *	Fiery-shouldered Parakeet (P)
Hook-billed Kite (P)	Golden-winged Parakeet (I)
Savanna Hawk (I)	Black-headed Parrot (P; I)
Bat Falcon (C; P; I) *	Striped Cuckoo (P) (heard only)
Aplomado Falcon (P)	Little Cuckoo (P) * # (Uaiparú trail @ 650m)
American Kestrel (G; C; I)	Squirrel Cuckoo (P; E; I) *
Pearl Kite (C) *	Smooth-billed Ani (C; G; P; B; I)
Roadside Hawk (C; P; B; I)	Cayenne Jay (P; B)
Lined Forest-Falcon (I)	Great Potoo (I) *
Osprey (I)	Nacunda Nighthawk (P)
Black Vulture (C; P; B; I)	Blackish Nightjar (P; E) *
King Vulture (P)	White-tailed Nightjar (P)
Northern Crested Caracara (C; I)	Pauraque Nightjar (P)
Black Caracara (I)	White-collared Swift (P; E)
Red-throated Caracara (I) (heard only)	Neotropical Palm-Swift (G)
White-tailed Hawk (P) *	Tufted Coquette (P)
White Hawk (P)	Racket-tailed Coquette (I) *
Harpy Eagle (I) *	Amethyst Woodstar (P)
Little Chachalaca (P; I)	Glittering-throated Emerald (P)
Gray-winged Trumpeter (I)	
Ash-throated Crake (P) (heard only)	
Russet-crowned Crake (P)	
Wattled Jacana (P; I) *	
Solitary Sandpiper (P; I) *	

¹ First sighting ever for DJS; * = photo available from trip; # = apparent range extension versus Hilty maps/altitude

² See Mary Lou Goodwin's "Birding in Venezuela" for location descriptions

Copper-tailed Hummingbird (P)
 Fork-tailed Woodnymph (P; B; E) *
 Rufous-throated Sapphire (P)
 White-chinned Sapphire (P)
 Tepui Goldenthrout (G)
 Velvet-browed Brilliant (E) *
 Blue-fronted Lancebill (E)
 Brown Violetear (P; E) *
 Sparkling Violetear (E)
 Black-throated Mango (P; B) *
 Long-billed Starthroat (P; B) *
 Gray-breasted Sabrewing (P; B) *
 Rufous-breasted Sabrewing (E) *
 Crimson Topaz (P; B; I) *
 White-necked Jacobin (P; B; I) *
 Black-eared Fairy (P; E)
 Sooty-capped Hermit (P)
 Eastern Long-tailed Hermit (P; B; I) *
 Reddish Hermit (P)
 Rufous-breasted Hermit (B) *

Amazonian White-tailed Trogon (P; I)
 Amazonian Violaceous Trogon (P)
 Collared Trogon (P)

Swallow-winged Puffbird (P; B) *
 White-necked Puffbird (B) *
 Pied Puffbird (P) *
 Russet-throated Puffbird (I)
 Spotted Puffbird (P) * # (Abismo trail @ 850m)
 Brown Jacamar (P) *
 Green-tailed Jacamar (P; I) *
 Paradise Jacamar (P) *

Amazon Kingfisher (I) *
 Green Kingfisher (I)
 American Pygmy Kingfisher (I)
 Ringed Kingfisher (I) *

Blue-crowned Motmot (P) (heard only)
 Black Nunbird (P; I) *
 Gilded Barbet (P)
 White-throated Toucan (P; I) *
 Channel-billed Toucan (P; I) *
 Green Araçari (P; I) *
 Ivory-billed Araçari (P) *
 Black-necked Araçari (B; I) *
 Many-banded Araçari (P)

Golden-olive Woodpecker (P)
 Golden-collared Woodpecker (P)
 Red-crowned Woodpecker (C; I)
 Yellow-tufted Woodpecker (P; I)
 Lineated Woodpecker (P; B)
 Crimson-crested Woodpecker (P; I)
 Red-necked Woodpecker (P) *

Golden-spangled Piculet (I)
 Wedge-billed Woodcreeper (P; B; I) *
 Plain-brown Woodcreeper (B)

Streak-headed Woodcreeper (P)
 Buff-throated Woodcreeper (P; I)
 Strong-billed Woodcreeper (P)
 Red-billed Scythebill (I) *

Tepui Spinetail (E)
 Plain Xenops (P; I)
 Rufous-tailed Xenops (P)
 Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner (P)

Great Antshrike (I) *
 Fasciated Antshrike (P)
 Black-crested Antshrike (C)
 Roraiman Antwren (E)
 Pygmy Antwren (P) *
 Guianan Streaked-Antwren (I) *
 Rufous-bellied Antwren (B) *
 Brown-bellied Antwren (I)
 White-flanked Antwren (B) *
 Northern White-fringed Antwren (C)
 Warbling Antbird (P) *
 Guianan Slaty-Antshrike (P; I) *
 Mouse-colored Antshrike (P; B) *
 Roraiman Antbird (P) [Spot-winged Antbird³split] *
 Dusky Antbird (P; I)
 Scale-backed Antbird (P)
 Black-chinned Antbird (P) (heard only)
 Cinerous Antshrike (P; I)
 Black-throated Antbird (P)
 Ferruginous-backed Antbird (I) *
 Gray Antbird (P)
 Tepui Antpitta (E) (heard only)
 Rufous-throated Antbird (I) *
 Spot-backed Antbird (P)
 White-plumed Antbird (I) *

White-bearded Manakin (P)
 White-crowned Manakin (P; B) *
 Golden-headed Manakin (P; E; B; I) *
 Scarlet-horned Manakin (E)
 Orange-bellied Manakin (E) *
 Blue-crowned Manakin (P) *
 White-throated Manakin (I)
 Striped Manakin (P) *
 Wing-barred Piprites (P; I)

Whiskered Flycatcher (P) *
 Vermilion Flycatcher (I)
 Yellow-olive Flatbill (P)
 Gray-crowned Flatbill (C; I) *
 Forest Elaenia (C) *
 Gray Elaenia (P) # (Cinco Ranchos @ 800m)
 Amazonian Royal-Flycatcher (I) *
 Yellow-bellied Elaenia (P)
 Cinnamon-crested Spadebill (I) *
 Common Tody-Flycatcher (C)

³ Plate 166 of Birds of Northern South America and confirmed by Miguel Lentino after viewing photos and specimens in Phelps Collection Nov 23rd.

Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant (P)
Helmeted Pygmy-Tyrant (P) (heard only)
Bearded Tachuri (G) *
Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet (C) *
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher (P)
Cliff Flycatcher (E)
Cattle Tyrant (I)
Tropical Kingbird (C; P; B; I)
Yellow-throated Flycatcher (B) *
Social Flycatcher (C; P; I) *
Rusty-Margined Flycatcher (P; B; I)
Boat-billed Flycatcher (P; B; I)
Great Kiskadee (I)
Piratic Flycatcher (P)
Variegated Flycatcher (P) *
Smoke-colored Pewee (E) *
Long-tailed Tyrant (P; I) *
Plain-crested Elaenia (P) *
McConnell's Flycatcher (P)
Fork-tailed Flycatcher (G; I)
Tropical Mockingbird (C; I)

Black-tailed Tityra (P; B) *
Black-capped Becard (C)
Chestnut-crowned Becard (P)
Pink-throated Becard (I)
Dusky Purpletuft (P)

Pompadour Cotinga (B; P) *
Purple-breasted Cotinga (B)
Spangled Cotinga (P) *
Cinereous Mourner (P) # (@ 800m, Cinco Ranchos trail)
Grayish Mourner (P)
Screaming Piha (P; I) *
Rose-collared Piha (E) *
Bearded Bellbird (E) *
White Bellbird (E) (heard only)
Red-banded Fruiteater (E)
Guianan Cock-of-the-rock (E)
Capuchinbird (B) (heard only)
Purple-throated Fruitcrow (I)

White-thighed Swallow (P)
Blue-and-white Swallow (E)
Barn Swallow (G)
Tawny-headed Swallow (G)
Southern Rough-winged Swallow (P)
White-winged Swallow (I)
Brown-chested Martin (C)
Gray-breasted Martin (P)

Coraya Wren (P)
White-breasted Wood-Wren (I)
House Wren (P; B)
Musician Wren (I) *
Long-billed Gnatwren (P)
Tropical Gnatcatcher (C)

Rufous-brown Solitaire (E) *
Yellow-legged Thrush (E)

Black-billed Thrush (P)
Pale-breasted Thrush (G)
Rufous-browed Peppershrike (C; I) *

Blackpoll Warbler (P)
Roraiman Warbler (E)
Yellow Warbler (C)
Tropical Parula (E)
American Redstart (P; B)
Tepui Whitestart (E) *
Summer Tanager (P)
Red-legged Honeycreeper (P)
Purple Honeycreeper (B; P; I)
Short-billed Honeycreeper (P)
Green Honeycreeper (B; P; I)
Blue Dacnis (B; P; I)
Black-faced Dacnis (P)
Bananaquit (P; B; E; I)
Guira Tanager (P)
Yellow-backed Tanager (P; E; I)
Swallow Tanager (P, I)
Burnished-buff Tanager (P)
Black-headed Tanager (E) *
Bay-headed Tanager (P; I)
Turquoise Tanager (P; I)
Spotted Tanager (B; I)
Green-and-gold Tanager (P)
Masked Tanager (P)
Yellow-bellied Tanager (E)
Paradise Tanager (P; E; I)
Opal-rumped Tanager (B; I)

Violaceous Euphonia (P; I)
White-vented Euphonia (P)
Trinidad Euphonia (C)
Purple-throated Euphonia (E)
Orange-bellied Euphonia (P)
Rufous-bellied Euphonia (P) *
Plumbeous Euphonia (P)
White-lored Euphonia (P)
Palm Tanager (C; P; E; B; I)
Blue-gray Tanager (C; P; B; I)
Silver-beaked Tanager (G; P; B; I)
White-lined Tanager (P)
Red-shouldered Tanager (P)
Fulvous-crested Tanager (P; I) *
Flame-crested Tanager (B)
White-shouldered Tanager (C; I)
Olive-backed Tanager (E)
Black-faced Tanager (P) *

Buff-throated Saltator (P; B; I)
Slate-colored Grosbeak (P; I)
Yellow-green Grosbeak (P; I)
Pectoral Sparrow (P)
Tepui Brush-Finch (E) *
Lesser Seedfinch (P)
Blue-black Grosbeak (P) *
Blue-black Grassquit (I)
Yellow-bellied Seedeater (P)

Ruddy-breasted Seedeater (P)
Rufous-collared Sparrow (P; E)
Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch (G; P) *
Saffron Finch (C)
Yellow Oriole (C)
Morange Oriole (P; E)
Golden-tufted Mountain-Grackle (E) *

Giant Cowbird (P)
Olive Oropendola (P) *
Green Oropendola (P; B; I)
Crested Oropendola (P; B)
Red-rumped Cacique (P; B; I)
Yellow-rumped Cacique (I)
Yellow-hooded Blackbird (I)

Combined total: 303 confirmed species for trip, including 54 “first time ever” species for DJS ...

In addition, we saw a Giant Anteater (*Myrmecophaga tridactyla*) crossing the Santa Elena-El Pauji road prior to dawn (close to the end of the asphalted section); an agouti (*Dasyprocta leporina*) and Tayra (*Eira barbara*) on the side road we birded on our way to El Pauji; another Tayra crossing the Escalera road prior to dawn; and several agouties on the Rio Grande trails.