

## Ecuador 22.12.2004 - 19.1.2005

### General Information

The visit was NOT an exclusively-birding-trip, nevertheless birding was possible at several locations on several dates.

With around 1600 species, Ecuador is one of the countries with the highest bird diversity. This is due to its proximity to the equator in combination with a wide range of habitats from dry lowlands at the West coast to the cloud forests and the high Andes and the tropical varezas and terra firme forests in the eastern parts of the country, not to forget the Galapagos Islands.

**Overseas international airports** are in Quito (Andes), and Guayaquil (west coast).

**Getting around** can be done fairly easy by bus (all of the spots mentioned below were reached by bus, except for the places around Jipijapa, and the transport from Santa Rosa to Gareno Lodge), however bus drivers have their own philosophy of driving so you sometimes need to keep your nerve.

**Theft** is a possibility in Ecuador (one of our cameras got stolen in one of the busses), especially in the touristic areas of Quito and Guayaquil, but except for this one occasion we felt safe all the time (well, actually we felt safe while our camera was taken too, we noticed only a couple of hours later). My trip partner has lived in Ecuador for 1.5 years without experiencing dangerous situations.

We did not do any **pre-reservations** for overnight stays, except for Gareno-Lodge, which was mainly due to transport arrangements and Bellavista, where there is limited space. We usually found accommodation easily, only New Years Eve in Cuenca required a longer search.

**Sites visited** were

#### Cloud-forest, western Andes

Mindo (3 days, 123 species)  
Bellavista (3 days 87 species)

#### West coast

Cabo de San Francisco (3 days, 83 species)  
Jipijapa Area (4 days, 74 species)  
Isla de la Plata

#### High Andes

Las Cajas (2 days, 48 species)

#### Cloud-forest, eastern Andes

Podocarpus National Park (3 days, 100 species)  
entrance Cajanuma  
entrance Zamora

#### Tropical Rainforest (lowland)

Gareno Lodge (4 days, 118 species)

#### Galapagos Islands (4 days, 52 species)

## Mindo (22.12.-25.12.2004, 123 species)

### General Informations:

Small mountain village at an altitude of 1200 m mainly financed by tourism, especially birdwatchers. Many cheap rooms available. Guides are easily found but of varying quality. Dominating habitat is cloud forest. Around 450 species have been recorded so far with lots of special birds in the area.

### Access:

Easily reached from Quito by bus (e.g. with Reina de Camino, \$ 2.5). Other busses heading on (e.g. to Esmeraldas) drive past the junction to Mindo. This requires a walk of 8.5 km to reach the village. However, usually it is possible to hitchhike down to Mindo.

Another possibility is the Cooperativa Flor del Valle that is in the corner of Manuel Larrea and Asunción, a few blocks west of el Ejido Park. Telf: 2 527 495

If you have your own car, you can get to Mindo, driving 1 hour and 30 minutes after taking the Calacali Nanegalito road.

### Where to go:

- Privately owned primary forest via a track starting at the Plaza in Mindo. Follow the track to a yellow house, where you have to pay the entrance fee (\$5 for four days). Several tracks are marked on a map you receive (see appendix).

- Cascadas de Nambillo. Starting from the plaza, walk towards the Orchard Gardens and turn left on the track flanking Rio Mindo (or is it called Rio Nambillo?). Walk several kilometers and turn right when the casacadas are signposted. Check river for **Dipper**. **Torrent Duck** is possible at the waterfall, so is **Green-fronted Lancebill**. **Olive Finch** occurs in the thickets close to the entrance.

- Café Los Colibris. Expect at least 10 species of hummingbird. Expect them close. Signposted. On the bridge crossing Rio Mindo check for **Dipper** and **Fasciated Tiger-Heron**. The latter one is very rarely seen but it's better to keep an eye for this bird.

- Connection road to the Main Road (8 km). If you want to avoid a 16 km hike, take a bus to the main road

towards Quito and slowly walk down. Especially the first kilometer downhill was very productive. **Toucan Barbets** seem to feed there in the morning. **Crimson-rumped Toucanet** and **Chestnut-mandibled Toucan** are likely to be seen as well. Many Tanagers frequent the area. **Bay-headed**, **White-lined**, **Swallow**, **Palm** & **Golden-naped Tanagers** as well as **Blue-winged Mountain-Tanagers** are a few examples. **Club-winged Manakin** was seen building a nest just few metres above our heads.



Crimson-rumped Toucanet (connection road)



Green-crowned Brilliant at Los Colibris



Andean Cock-of-the-Rock

### Species:

Snowy Egret, Cattle Egret, Torrent Duck, Black Vulture, Swallow-tailed Kite, Gray-headed Kite, Barred Hawk, Gray Hawk, Roadside Hawk, Laughing Forest-Falcon, Spotted Sandpiper, Band-tailed Pigeon, Ruddy Pigeon, Maroon-tailed Parakeet, Red-billed Parrot, Squirrel Cuckoo, Little Cuckoo, Smooth-billed Ani, Common Potoo, White-collared Swift, White-whiskered Hermit,

Green-fronted Lancebill, Booted Racket-Tail, White-bellied Woodstar, White-necked Jacobin, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Green-crowned Brilliant, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Andean Emerald, Green-crowned Woodnymph, Violet-bellied Hummingbird, White-tailed Hillstar, Buff-winged Starfrontlet, Long-tailed Sylph, Violet-tailed Sylph, Masked Trogon, Golden-headed Quetzal, Ringed Kingfisher, Broad-billed Motmot, Rufous Motmot, Red-headed Barbet, Toucan Barbet, Barred Puffbird, Crimson-rumped Toucanet, Pale-mandibled Aracari, Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, Chocó Toucan, Lineated Woodpecker, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Smoky-brown Woodpecker, Plain-brown Woodcreeper, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Spotted Woodcreeper, Slaty Spinetail, Red-faced Spinetail, Scaly-throated Foliage-Gleaner, Buff-fronted Foliage-Gleaner, Pacific Hornero, Streak-capped Treehunter, Uniform Antshrike, Chestnut-backed Antbird, Ochre-breasted Antpitta, Rufous-breasted Antthrush, Yellow Tyrannulet, Yellow-olive Flatbill, Sierran Elaenia, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Scale-crested Pygmy-Tyrant, Ornate Flycatcher, Rufous-winged Tyrannulet, Smoke-colored Pewee, Bran-colored Flycatcher, Black Phoebe, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Social Flycatcher, One-colored Becard, Cinnamon Becard, Masked Tityra, Andean Cock-of-the-Rock, Golden-winged Manakin, Club-winged Manakin, Bay Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, White-capped Dipper, Andean Solitaire, Swainson's Thrush, Equadorian Thrush, Tropical Parula, Blackburnian Warbler, Slate-throated Whitestart, Three-striped Warbler, Yellow-collared Chlorophonia, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Thick-billed Euphonia, Swallow Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Golden Tanager, Silver-throated Tanager, Flame-faced Tanager, Golden-naped Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Black-chinned Mountain-Tanager, White-winged Tanager, Blue-Gray Tanager, Palm Tanager, Yellow-rumped Tanager, Ochre-breasted Tanager, Summer Tanager, White-lined Tanager, Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager, Dusky Bush-Tanager, Buff-throated Saltator, Black-winged Saltator, Variable Seedeater, Yellow-bellied Seedeater, Yellow-faced Grassquit, Lesser Seed-Finch, Tricolored Brush-Finch, Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, Olive Finch, Orange-billed Sparrow, Giant Cowbird

## Bellavista: (25.1. – 28.1.2004; 87 species)

### General information:

Privately owned cloud forest reserve (1600 – 2350 m) with a lot of sought after species. As there is only one lodge, "the dome", a simple but neat lodge owned by an Englishman, prices are comparably high (around \$40 pP/day). Food is available but expensive and guides can be booked. Raincoats (necessary) are available free of charge. However, there is two other accomodations in the area: An old research station (cheaper, no food) can be booked via the Bellavista lodge (for bookings and prices see homepage). Both, the lodge and the research station are in the middle of the cloud forest. Further down the road to Tandayapa lives an English-German couple that are well known in the area. They have various hummingbird-feeders in their garden that are attractive. Longstayers might try to contact them. They have a small hut that can be booked for minimum two weeks. They charge no or just little money but expect you to work in the garden for a couple of hours daily.

### Access:



Access is a little more complicated than Mindo, as no busses are going directly. Take a bus to Nanegalito from the Terminal Terrestre bus station in Quito- any bus bound for Pacto, Puerto Quito, San Miguel de los Bancos or Mindo passes through Nanegalito. Nanegalito (km 56) is the departure point for camionetas to Bellavista, - note line of pickups on left side (there is a small sign for "Bellavista transport") of road going up from bus drop off point up towards a small park, cost US\$15 (for the vehicle, not per person).

### Further Information:

Bellavista (Lodge): <http://www.bellavistacloudforest.com/index.html>

Tonys (email): [bbolz@hotmail.com](mailto:bbolz@hotmail.com)

### Where to go:

- Numerous tracks are around the accomodation. A map is available in the appendix. Heliconia Trail was especially rewarding. Handwritten abbreviations on the map mark: TF= **Tanager Finch**, WH= **Western Hemispungus**, SG= **Sickle-winged Guan**, BJ= **Beautiful Jay**, WQ= **Dark-backed Woodquail**, MT= **Plate-billed Mountain-Toucan**, PW= **Powerful Woodpecker**, PC= **Plushcap. White-faced Nunbird** can be seen in the vicinity of the WQ-spot, **Ocellated Tapaculo** was seen close to TF.
- Further down the road is Tonys place. Hummingbird lovers will enjoy sitting on the balcony, having a chat and watching up to 40 species of hummingbird. (Entrance fee ist something around \$5 p.P.) The couple also ownes some forest. Giant Antpitta is on their premises, however, there is no taping allowed!!!!

**Species:**

Roadside Hawk, American Kestrel, Sickle-winged Guan, Dark-backed Woodquail, Band-tailed Pigeon, Plumbeous Pigeon, White-fronted Quail-Dove, Red-billed Parrot, Squirrel Cuckoo, Common Potoo, Rufous-bellied Nighthawk, Chestnut-collared Swift, Tawny-bellied Hermit, Wedge-billed Hummingbird, Purple-bibbed Whitetip, Speckled Hummingbird, Booted Rackettail, White-bellied Woodstar, Purple-throated Woodstar, Green Violetear, Fawn-breasted Brilliant, Empress Brilliant, Andean Emerald, Western Emerald, Collared Inca, Violet-tailed Sylph, Buff-tailed Coronet, Gorgeted Sunangel, Beautiful Jay, Turquoise Jay, Masked Trogon, White-faced Nunbird, Plate-billed Mountain Toucan, Powerful Woodpecker, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Montane Woodcreeper, Pearled Treerunner, Azara's Spinetail, Streaked Tuftedcheek, Striped Treehunter, Giant Antpitta, Chestnut-crowned Antpitta, Spillmans Tapaculo, Ocellated Tapaculo, Streak-necked Flycatcher, Cinnamon Flycatcher, White-tailed Tyrannulet, Smoke-colored Pewee, Yellow-bellied Chat-Tyrant, Dusky-capped Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Golden-crowned Flycatcher, Barred Becard, Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Blue-and-white Swallow, Plain-tailed Wren, Mountain Wren, Gray-breasted Woodwren, Andean Solitaire, Slaty-backed Nightingale-Thrush, Great Thrush, Glossy-Black Thrush, Blackburnian Warbler, Slate-throated Whitestart, Spectacled Whitestart, Black-crested Warbler, Russet-crowned Warbler, Capped Conebill, Masked Flowerpiercer, White-sided Flowerpiercer, Golden-rumped Euphonia, Golden Tanager, Beryl-spangled Tanager, Blue-and-black Tanager, Blue-winged Mountain-Tanager, Grass-Green Tanager, Blue-capped Tanager, Southern Yellow Grosbeak, Dusky Bush-Tanager, Plushcap, Black-capped Hemispungus, Western Hemispungus, Rufous-naped Brush-Finch, White-winged Brushfinch, Chestnut-capped Brush-Finch, Tanager Finch, Rufous-collared Sparrow



Buff-tailed Coronet near a feeder at the Dome



Common Potoo

## Cabo de San Francisco (19.-21.12.2004; 83 species)

### General information:



San Francisco is a small village on the coast in Esmeraldas. Apart from a beautiful coastline, there is some agricultural areas and a quite good (secondary) rainforest in the vicinity that provides quite a few bird species. There is supposed to be a hotel, but I doubt that there is any tourism since access to the village is not easy. The Swiss Red Cross works in the area, information can be received via:

<http://www.cabosanfrancisco.ch/>

To see the rainforest, rubber boots are required. Before heading on to Cabo, we stayed one night in Same, part of the species-list refers to some birds seen here, but there is much overlap. The interesting birds seen in Same but not in Cabo were (along the main road to the south) Ochraeous Attila, Snail Kite and Bat Falcon.

**Access:** Take a bus to Atacames (e.g. with Esmeraldas, starts Quito Calle Santa Maria N26), from there you can head on to Same, a little more southbound. From Same there is rancheras going to Cabo three times a day. They have a schedule but feel free to change it for the short-term depending on their temper.

### Species:

Pied-billed Grebe, Little Heron, Great Egret, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Swallow-tailed Kite, Snail Kite, Roadside Hawk, Bat Falcon, American Kestrel, Sunbittern, Common Morhen, Whimbrel, Spotted Sandpiper, Franklins Gull, Laughing Gull, Elegant Tern Royal Tern, Sandwich Tern, Ruddy Dove, Pallid Dove, Ecuadorian Ground-Dove, White-tipped Dove, Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Pacific Parrotlet, Blue-headed Parrot, Little Cuckoo, Squirrel Cuckoo, Smooth-billed Ani, Groove-billed Ani, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Green Kingfisher, Ringed Kingfisher, Western White-tailed Trogon, Chocó Toucan, Olivaceous Piculet, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Guayaquil Woodpecker, Streak-headed Woodcreeper, Slaty Spinetail, Pacific Hornero, White-flanked Antwren, Common Tody-Flycatcher, Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant, Long-tailed Tyrant, Masked Water-Tyrant, Ochraeous Attila, Streaked Flycatcher, Tropical Kingbird, Social Flycatcher, White-bearded Manakin, Southern Rough-Winged Swallow, Bay Wren, Southern Nightingale-Wren, House Wren, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Red-eyed Vireo, Buff-rumped Warbler, Bananaquit, Yellow-tufted Dacnis, Blue Dacnis, Thick-billed Euphonia, White-shouldered Tanager, Swallow Tanager, Palm Tanager, Blue-Gray Tanager, Lemon-rumped Tanager, Highland Hepatic Tanager, Buff-throated Saltator, Blue-black Grassquit, Variable Seedeater, Crimson-breasted Finch, Orange-billed Sparrow, Black-striped Sparrow, House Sparrow, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Scarlet-rumped Cacique, Peruvian Meadowlark, Yellow-tailed Oriole, Shiny Cowbird, Great-tailed Grackle



Sunbittern in the secondary rainforest

## Las Cajas (2.1.2005 & 8.1.2005, 48 species)

### General Information:

Located west of Cuenca, Las Cajas is home to just approx. 150 species. However I found it the most rewarding visit during my stay in Ecuador. This is due to a wide range of specialities. Las Cajas was given status "National Park" in 1996 and is a paramo-dominated Park with altitudes ranging from 3100 to 4500 m. The altitude is a factor not only determining birdlife but also weather conditions. It is cold and often cloudy and rainy. Limited visibility may prevent the sighting of soaring birds such as the **Andean Condor** (Las Cajas is one of the strongholds for this species in Ecuador).



Altitude can also lead to quick exhaustion (it did in my case) or even altitude sickness, so no long hikes should be planned. One of the stars in the area is **Violet-throated Metaltail**, known only from the inter-Andean plateau west of Cuenca. Other specialties include **Tit-like Dacnis**, **Giant Conebill**, **Ecuadorian Hillstar**, **Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan**, **Mouse-colored Thistletail** or **Andean Gull**.

### Access:

Access is easy unless one wants to discover the remoter parts of the park. Both destinations highlighted below can be reached by dropping off any bus travelling between Cuenca and Guayaquil (if the driver is willing to stop). Details see below.

### Where to go:

There are many possibilities to bird the Park. Generally try birding at different altitudes and have close looks at the Polylepsis-forests. Recommendations (both highlighted in the map) are:

- Lag. Toreadora is at an altitude of around 3700 m. Starting from the small hut there is a fairly easy walk around the lake passing through paramo and polylepsis forests. The lake itself has **Andean Coot**, **Andean Gull**, **Andean Teal** and **Andean Ruddy Duck**. Both **Bar-winged** and **Stout-billed Cinclodes** are common around the lake. **Andean Tit-Spinetail**, **Many-striped Castanero**, **Plumbeous Sierra-Finch** and **Hooded Siskin** are other species likely to be encountered. More patience is required birding the forested areas: **Tit-like Dacnis**, **Mouse-coloured Thistletail**, **Giant Conebill**



Stout-billed Cinclodes at Lad. Toreadora

or **Pearled Treerunner** are possible. Further down the road is a restaurant, where Giant Conebill was observed by other birders. Hummingbirds of the area **Ecuadorian Hillstar**, **Sapphire-vented Puffleg**, **Blue-mantled** & **Rainbow-bearded Thornbill** and **Mountain Velvetbreast**.

A good suggestion is to drop off the bus before reaching the shelter marked on the map and walk along the main road to the lake. This is also quite productive and was the only occasion I saw **Violet-throated Metaltail**.

- Lag. Llaviucu is another good birding spot. It is located at lower altitudes and provides a different set of birds. The lagoon is reached by taking any overland bus from Cuenca to Guyaquil and drop off en route. However not every bus driver is willing to stop at the junction leading to the lagoon, so make sure he does so before entering the bus. As Lag. Llaviucu is used as a recreation area or fishing spot by many people of Cuenca, it is well known and smaller busses go there as well. They changed time schedule and busstation, so better ask in Cuenca for detail informations.

The lagoon is not signposted, but the place to get off the bus (see map!) is marked by a sign on the left hand of the street showing the painting of a cow and the words "El Pedernal". From there follow the track for around 2.5 km until you reach the park entrance. On your way have a look for **Dipper** especially in the first km of the track. **Green-tailed Trainbearers** and **Sword-billed Hummingbird** are other birds encountered on the way up. Birdlife starts to get more abundant after passing the entrance. Other hummingbirds in the area are **Mountain Velvetbreast**, **Shining Sunbeam** and **Thyrian Metaltail**. The forests surrounding the lake have **Rufous & Tawny Antpitta**. This is also the place to look for **Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan**. Tanagers such as **Blue & black Tanager** or **Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanager** add colour to the scenery.



Grey-breasted Mountain-Toucan at Lag. Llaviucu

### Species:

Andean Ruddy Duck, Andean Teal, Variable Hawk, Carunculated Caracara, Aplomado Falcon, Andean Coot, Sparkling Violetear, Ecuadorian Hillstar, Shining Sunbeam, Great Sapphirewing, Sword-billed Hummingbird, Black-tailed Trainbearer, Green-tailed Trainbearer, Mountain Velvetbreast, Sapphire-vented Puffleg, Violet-throated Metaltail, Thyrian Metaltail, Blue-mantled Thornbill, Rainbow-bearded Thornbill, Turquoise Jay, Gray-breasted Mountain-Toucan, Azara's Spinetail, Andean Tit-Spinetail, Many-striped Castanero, Mouse-colored Thistletail, Pearled Treerunner, Stout-billed Cinclodes, Bar-winged Cinclodes, Rufous Antpitta, Tawny Antpitta, Uniform Tapaculo, White-banded Tyrannulet, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant, Brown-bellied Swallow, Grass Wren, White-capped Dipper, Great Thrush, Spectacled Whitestart, Giant Conebill, Tit-like Dacnis, Masked Flowerpiercer, Black Flowerpiercer, Blue-and-Black Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Hooded Siskin, Plain-colored Seedeater, Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, Rufous-naped Brush-Finch



## Podocarpus National Park (4.-6.1.2005; 100 species)

### General information:

Ranging from 900 – 3700 m, Podocarpus offers a wide variety of habitats and birds. The park was named after a tree species commonly known as "Romerillo" (*Podocarpus montanus*) and is located in the provinces Loja & Zamora Chinchipe. Around 600 species have been recorded but the size of this park implies travelling and a longer stay to cover a satisfying percentage. Entrance fee is \$10 for 4 days. The western park entrance (Cajanuma Rangerstation) is located 11 km south of Loja, other entrances are located near Zamora (Bombuscara, Romerillos). Both cities are suitable bases for day trips and offer cheap accomodations. Cajanuma Rangerstation also offers accomodation within the park, however reservations seem to be necessary, as it was closed during my visit. Those planning to go there need to bring their own sleeping bags and food. Wheather is often crap at Cajanuma. Lot's of rain. Be prepared for it whether it's a day trip or a longer stay.

### Access:

Cajanuma: From Loja take a bus to Vilcabamba and drop off after 10-11 km. Podocarpus is signposted there. However, you'll have to walk 8.5 more km uphill to reach the park entrance. Birdlife is rather uninteresting until the forested areas start approx. 1.5 km before reaching the station. If you don't stay there remember that you'll have to walk down again.

We hired a taxi to take us to the park entrance. We paid \$12, possibly it can be cheaper. Make sure the taxi takes you up to the entrance, respectively the beginning of the forest. To get there early, we hired the taxi the evening previous to our visit.

Bombuscara: Reached from Zamora on foot or by taxi (6 km). Unlike Cajanuma, the road there can be very rewarding. Having reached the station, there is lots of well-marked tracks that can be used. Maps are available at the sation. There is also the possibility to put up a tent in this area. Again, you need to bring your own food.

### Where to go:

Cajanuma: Good spot for Tanagers and hummingbirds. Especially the area from the forest entrance to the station was productive, maybe because weather was still OK when we passed these spots. However this seems to be THE place to see **Bearded Guan**. Obviously nobody misses this great species in this area. We had a nervous adult watching its chick that quietly sat in a tree just 20 m beside the road. Another highlight was the sighting of a **Piura Hemispungus** just beside the road 150 m below the station. Keep a eye open for this bird as it is not (yet?) known to occur here. **Black-capped Hemispungus** is quite common and superficially resembles Piura, so have close looks!

Hummingbirds of the area were **Glowing Puffleg**, **Shining Sunbeam**, **Rainbow Starfrontlet**, **Collared Inca** & **Neblina Metaltail**. **Sword-billed Hummingbird** is known to occur.

Near the station starts the "Antpitta Walk" which is famous for its Antpittas, surprise! Others have had **Rufous**, **Undulated** and **Scaled Antpitta** on this 1 km circuit. I had just one Rufous Antpitta, but heard Undulated further down the road to Loja. **White-capped Parrot** was another good species on this short track.

We saw only 36 species due to horrible weather conditions (rain AND fog) and an upcoming cystitis, there is definitely much more to discover. Especially those staying in the station should walk up to the paramo region (**Noble Snipe!**) if weather allows it. The track to the upper regions of the park is about 16 km, tenting is allowed.



Bearded Guan at Cajanuma

### Species (36):

Bearded Guan, Band-tailed Pigeon, White-capped Parrot, Masked Trogon, Turquoise Jay, Smooth-billed Ani, Glowing Puffleg, Shining Sunbeam, Rainbow Starfrontlet, Collared Inca, Crimson-mantled Woodpecker, Pearled Treerunner, Rufous Antpitta, Undulated Antpitta, Uniform Tapaculo, Cinnamon Flycatcher, Rufous-headed Pygmy-Tyrant, White-banded Tyrannulet, Blue-and-white Swallow, Plain-tailed Wren, Glossy Black Thrush, Russet-crowned Warbler, Spectacled Whitestart, Capped Conebill, Blue-backed Conebill, Masked Flowerpiercer, Blue-and-Black Tanager, Grass-Green Tanager, Rufous-chested Tanager, Gray-headed Bush-Tanager, Lacrimose Mountain-Tanager, Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager, Hooded Mountain-Tanager, Piura Hemispungus, Black-capped Hemispungus, Rufous-naped Brush-Finch

Bombuscara: Around 5 or 6 km long track from Zamora to the park entrance (forest and scrub to your right, river to your left) and another 2 km or so to the station through forest. Good spot with a variety of target species. **Coppery-chested Jacamar**, **Black-streaked Puffbird** and **White-breasted Parakeet** can all be seen on the way to the park entrance. The Parakeets can sometimes be seen flying across the river, while the other two were seen in the thickets bordering the waterfalls (No. 2 & 3 coming from the park entrance). Obviously the waterfalls are good spots to look for **Amazonian Umbrellabird**. On your way through the forest to the station you pass a mirador with a small information board. This is where I had my only Umbrellabird and the Parakeets. A group of four **Crimson-bellied Woodpeckers** (I didn't expect them to travel in groups) were other highlights of this mirador.

#### **Species (64):**

Turkey Vulture, Roadside Hawk, Sickle-winged Guan, Blackish Rail, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Gray-fronted Dove, White-breasted Parakeet, Smooth-billed Ani, Squirrel Cuckoo, Chestnut-collared Swift, Green Hermit, White-bellied Woodstar, Wire-crested Thorntail, White-necked jacobin, Crimson-bellied Woodpecker, Ringed Kingfisher, Amazon Green Kingfisher, Highland Motmot, Coppery-chested Jacamar, Black-streaked Puffbird, Ash-browed Spinetail, Lined Foliage-Gleaner, Lined Antshrike, Black-faced Antthrush, Marble-faced Bristle-Tyrant, Ornate Flycatcher, Common Tody Flycatcher, Torrent Tyrannulet, Black Phoebe, Tropical Kingbird, Mottle-backed Elaenia, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, Amazonian Umbrellabird, Blue-and-white Swallow, White-banded Swallow, House Wren, White-breasted Wood-Wren, Black-billed Thrush, Swainson's Thrush, Slate-colored Whitestart, Canada Warbler, Bananaquit, Thick-billed Euphonia, Orange-bellied Euphonia, Golden Tanager, Spotted Tanager, Swallow Tanager, Bay-headed Tanager, Blue-necked Tanager, Paradise Tanager, Blue-gray Tanager, Silver-beaked Tanager, Green-and-Gold Tanager, Magpie Tanager, Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager, Grayish Saltator, Blue-black Grassquit, Yellow-bellied Seedeater, Variable Seedeater, Chestnut-bellied Seedeater, Lesser Seedeater, Orange-billed Sparrow, Yellow-browed Sparrow, House Sparrow, Crested Oropendola

## Gareno Lodge (15.1.-19.1.2005; 118 species)

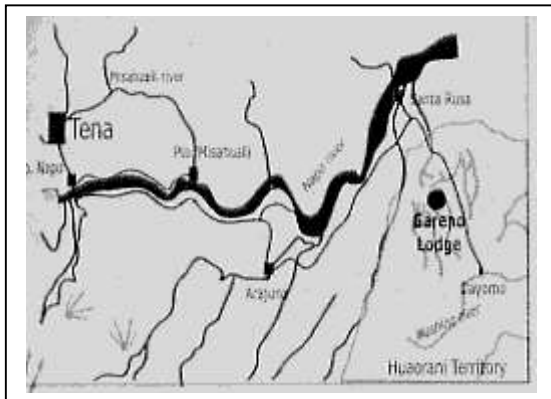
### General Information:

For those wanting to see species of primary lowland rainforest but don't want to take all the way to Coca, Gareno Lodge is a good alternative. It is located just 77 km east of Tena in the territory of Huarani-indians. There is vareza and terra firme forests in the area. The lodge is kept simple but very charming. There is no electricity. Cost is (was) \$50 pP/day; this includes (very good) food and a guide. The guide we were given was of rather poor quality, as he had started birding / guiding just three month earlier. Nevertheless he knew lots of voices (but not to wich bird they belong) and had very good eyes. Usually he discovered the birds (I would have never seen without him) and I had to identify them. By now, I suppose he must be very good, as he really is good with voices and learned quick. They have other (more experienced) guides, make shure you get a birdwatchers guide.

The stars of the area are all known to the guides. Around 600 species have been recorded, but birdlife (and other wildlife) is not as prolific as deep in the rainforests further east.

Reservations are essential. Contact: [info@guaponi.com](mailto:info@guaponi.com), Homepage: [www.guaponi.com](http://www.guaponi.com)

### Access:



Transport has to be arranged. However it gets cheaper the closer you approach the lodge. Both owners live in Quito, many of the guides in Tena. From both places pickup is possible. There is only few other possibilities. As a permission is required to enter the reserve, we had a transport (including the permission) arranged from Santa Rossa to Gareno. There are busses going to Santa Rossa from Tena.

Remember to arrange transport for your way back.

It is best to ask for possibilities when you make a reservation. Both owners are very relaxed and friendly people.

### Where to go:

There are not many possibilities in the vicinity of the lodge. However, this is not necessary as many birds can be seen from the lodge itself. For special birds ask the guides. We arranged the Nushino River Trip (see below) just because I asked for Hoatzin. Several other small tours can be arranged.

- Many birds are within walking distance of the lodge. The connecting road between Santa Rossa and Gareno village produces new species daily. THE bird of the area is probably **Rufous Potoo**. A breeding pair was discovered just a few hundred meters away from the entrance track to the lodge. Other birds around the lodge to ask the guides for are **Great Potoo**, **Crested Owl**, **Pavonine Quetzal**, **Marbled Wood-Quail** and **Chestnut-headed Crake**. As a speciality (that I missed) there is one **Fiery Topaz** turning up almost every morning at seven 'o clock for just 5 minutes. **Warbling Antbirds** are common but the much rarer **Yellow-browed Antbird** is in the area as well and sounds identical. The Santa Rossa-Gareno village road is very productive: **King Vulture**, **Ornate Hawk-Eagle**, **Black & Red-throated Caracara**, **Pied Puffbird**, **Reddish Bare-Eye**, all species of parrot and Toucan(et) mentioned below and much more was observed here.

- A trip to Nushino River was arranged. This meant transport by car to the river and a logboat-ride downstream. The river is save as there is "almost no piranhas, just watch the rays!" The two

Indian boys dropped us off and paddled back upstream, while we walked a small track back (around 12 km) through vareza and terra firme forests bordering a bayou. Extremely beautiful scenery and an adventurous boat trip!!! Species like **Speckled Chachalaca**, **Swallow-winged Puffbird**, **Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher**, **Drab Water-Tyrant**, **Masked Crimson Tanager** were all seen while swimming downstream. The bayou had **Black-capped Donacobius** and **Hoatzin**. The walk back was thrilling. Both **Great** and **White-throated Tinamou** flew up just a few meters in front of us. Watch for soldier ants, if you see them, look for birds in the area. There is usually a bunch of Antbirds and –shrikes around. We had very good looks of **Lunulated Antbird**, which is rare and was not yet known in the area. There was another Antbird that we could observe quite a long time. It looked like a female Esmeraldas Antbird with a brown mantle and a white-scaled throat. This is of course most unlikely but we couldn't figure out what it was.

- In 2003, a **Harpy Eagle's** nest was discovered around 8 km away from the lodge. The nest is now (temporarily?) deserted, but the birds are still in that area and rarely seen. A group visiting the nest was surprised to see **Crested Eagle** in that area. Even without Harpy or Crested Eagle the walk is productive. We had **Golden-headed**, **Blue-crowned**, **Blue-backed** and **Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin**, **Great Jacamar**, **Cream-colored** & **Scale-breasted Woodpecker**. A special bird was **Collared Puffbird** that seems to have a favourite tree along the track. **Screaming Piha** is common.

### Species:

Great Tinamou, White-throated Tinamou, Striated Heron, Little Blue Heron, White-winged Trumpeter, Yellow-headed Vulture, King Vulture, Ornate Hawk-Eagle, Swallow-tailed Kite, Roadside Hawk, White Hawk, Black Caracara, Red-throated Caracara, Speckled Chachalaca, Marbled Wood-Quail, Chestnut-headed Crake, Spotted Sandpiper, Sapphire Quail-Dove, Chestnut-fronted Macaw, Cobalt-winged Parrot, Black-headed Parrot, Blue-headed Parrot, Maroon-tailed Parakeet, Mealy Amazon, Squirrel Cuckoo, Great Ani, Hoatzin, Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl, Crested Owl, Great Potoo, Rufous Potoo, Short-tailed Swift, Collared Swift, Great-billed Hermit, Straight-billed Hermit, Buff-tailed Sicklebill, Black-throated Brilliant, Golden-tailed Sapphire, White-necked Jacobin, White-tailed Trogon, Blue-crowned Trogon, Amazon Violaceous Trogon, Pavonine Quetzal, Ringed Kingfisher, Green Kingfisher, Green-and-Rufous Kingfisher, Rufous Motmot, Violaceous Jay, Great Jacamar, Lemon-throated Barbet,



Rufous Potoo at Garenno Lodge

White-chested Puffbird, Pied Puffbird, Swallow-winged Puffbird, Collared Puffbird, Black-fronted Nunbird, Yellow-billed Nunbird, Golden-collared Toucanet, Ivory-billed Toucanet, White-throated Toucan, Many-banded Aracari, Yellow-tufted Woodpecker, Crimson-crested Woodpecker, Chestnut Woodpecker, Scale-breasted Woodpecker, Cream-colored Woodpecker, Lineated Woodpecker, Strong-billed Woodcreeper, Buff-breasted Woodcreeper, Olive-backed Foliage-Gleaner, Plain Xenops, Plain-winged Antshrike, Undulated Antshrike, Gray Antbird, Warbling Antbird, Yellow-browed Antbird, Lunulated Antbird, Reddish Bare-Eye, Thrush-like Antpitta, Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant, Short-crested Flycatcher, Dusky-chested Flycatcher, Screaming Piha, Drab Water-Tyrant, Piratic Flycatcher, Great Kiskadee, Gray-capped Flycatcher, Black-tailed Tityra, Plum-throated Cotinga, Spangled Cotinga, Golden-headed Manakin, Blue-crowned Manakin, Blue-backed Manakin, Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin, White-banded Swallow, Gray-breasted Martin, White-thighed Swallow, Black-capped Donacobius, Lawrence's Thrush, Hauxwell's Thrush, Black-faced Dacnis, Purple Honeycreeper, Yellow-bellied Tanager, Palm Tanager, Swallow Tanager, Opal-crowned Tanager, Green-and-Gold Tanager, Blue-and-gray Tanager, Paradise Tanager, Silver-beaked Tanager, Magpie Tanager, Masked Crimson Tanager, Crested Oropendola, Olive Oropendola, Green Oropendola, Russet-backed Oropendola, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Solitary Cacique, Moriche Oriole

## The Jipijapa area ( 27.-30.12.2004; 74 species)

### General information:

Jipijapa is a small town in Manabi Province. If you have read "The Panama Hat Trail" by Tom Miller you might remember that the author calls Jipijapa South Americas ugliest town. He might be true with that. We had to stay in this 30.000 people village due to work for a PHD thesis. We drove around in the area with the project car and worked a bit on various coffee plantations where most of my observations were made. There is of course no possibility to enter these as they are private property but there still is lots to watch in the surroundings. The area is part of Ecuadors driest country. Jipijapa is a suitable base to explore the area and there is quite a few species around. I was surprised that many (22) of them were endemic to the Tumbes / Choco-region. A few basic hotels are available.

### Where to go:

- Lots of small confusing roads and no map made it hard to remember the best places. There is a small village called "América" a few kilometers away that had quite a few fairly good species: **Orange-fronted Barbet**, **Speckle-breasted Wren**, **Scarlet-backed Woodpecker**, **Ecuadorian Ground Dove** or **Plumbeous-backed Thrush** to name a few. Just drive through the village and follow the small path to the right just when the village ends.

- Another rewarding spot was along the road towards the coast. If you drive to Puerto Cayo you'll have several bends on your descend where the usual dry country is interrupted by patches of green. Look for an area of extensive bamboo thicket. If you travel by bus, you might get off here and try to catch the next possibility (busses go hourly). The best bird in this area is **Rufous-headed Chachalaca** but some other species such as **Plumbeous Kite** (rare in the west), **Black-ored Yellowthroat**, **Gray-and-Gold Warbler**, **Little Woodstar** or **Gray-cheeked Parakeet** were observed here.

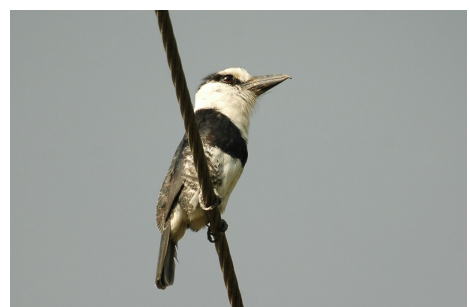
### Species:

Cattle Egret, Snowy Egret, Black Vulture, Turkey Vulture, Plumbeous Kite, Savannah Hawk, Barred Forest-Falcon, Rufous-headed Chachalaca, Wattled Jacana, Common Morhen, Ruddy Pigeon, Eared Dove, Croaking Ground Dove, Ecuadorian Ground Dove, Pallid Dove, Pacific Parrotlet, Gray-cheeked Parakeet, Red-masked Parakeet, Bronze-winged Parrot, Smooth-billed Ani, Pacific Pygmy-Owl, Tumbes Swift, Baron's Hermit, Stripe-throated Hermit, Little Woodstar, White-necked Jacobin, Rufous-tailed Hummingbird, Amazilia Hummingbird, Northern Violaceous Trogon, Lineated Woodpecker, Guyaquil Woodpecker, Scarlet-backed Woodpecker, Black-cheeked Woodpecker, Golden-olive Woodpecker, Blue-crowned Motmot, Orange-fronted Barbet, White-necked Puffbird, Chestnut-mandibled Toucan, Olivaceous Woodcreeper, Blackish-headed Spinetail, Pacific Hornero, Great Antshrike, Plain

Antvireo, Masked Water-Tyrant, Sooty-crowned Flycatcher, Streaked Flycatcher, Masked Tityra, Blue-and-white Swallow, Southern Rough-Winged Swallow, Fasciated Wren, House Wren, Gray-breasted Wood-Wren, Speckle-breasted Wren, Long-tailed Mockingbird, Tropical Gnatcatcher, Rufous-browed Peppershrike, Red-eyed Vireo, Plumbeous-backed Thrush, Tropical Parula, Spectacled Whitestart, Black-ored Yellowthroat, Gray-and-Gold Warbler, Orange-crowned Euphonia, Blue-Gray



Black-cheeked Woodpecker



White-necked Puffbird

Tanager, Yellow-rumped Tanager, Buff-throated Saltator, Southern Yellow-Grosbeak, Saffron Finch, Black-capped Sparrow, Collared Warbling-Finch, Yellow-rumped Cacique, Peruvian Meadowlark, White-edged Oriole, Scrub Blackbird,

### Isla de la Plata ( 29.12.2004)

#### General Information:

Isla de la Plata is part of the Machalilla National Park and is sometimes called "poor man's Galapagos". Well, it is an island and it has birds. But there's no endemism. Nevertheless going there is fun and you get the chance to see lots of seabirds, take a sunbath and go snorkelling. If you go between April and October you might see **Waved Albatross**. Isla de la Plata is one of two Islands in the world where this species breeds. Be prepared for a very hot trip. Access is allowed only with guides or rangers, so there is only the opportunity to book an arranged, guided boat-trip. Park entrance is \$15-20, the boat trip of course is additional.

There is no accommodation on the island but quite a few cheap hostels in Puerto López.

#### Access:

Boat trips can be booked in Puerto López from where the tours usually start. To get there just take one of the busses going from Jipijapa to Puerto López.

#### Where to go:

There is just two loop trails on the island. (3.5 and 5 km), the longer one has **Waved Albatross**. We took the shorter route (The Albatross had already left the island). There is not much variety, but seeing breeding colonies of **Blue-footed**, **Red-footed** and **Nazca Booby** is guaranteed. So is colonies of **Magnificent Frigatebird**. **Red-billed Tropicbirds** frequently fly over the island.

There is not many non-seabirds on the island, **Collared Warbling-Finch** however is common around the ranger station. The only hummingbird I could observe long enough to identify was **Short-tailed Woodstar**.



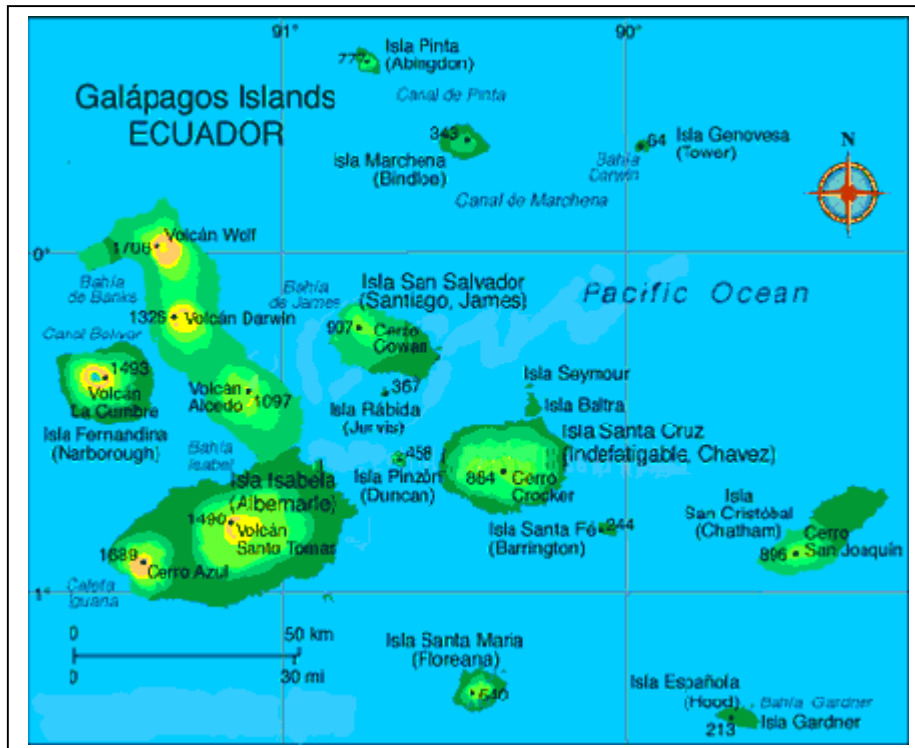
Red-billed Tropicbird



Blue-footed Booby

## Galapagos ( 21.1. – 24.1.2005; 52 species)

### General information:



Well known islands with only 61 resident species. Of these 28 are endemic and another 16 occur in an endemic subspecies. Some of the endemics occur only on one or two islands. Therefore it is quite difficult to cover all of them. It is possible to arrange individual trips once you're on Santa Cruz (main island) but this is quite costly. There are lots of tours, usually 5 days, bookable in Quito or

Guyaquil and probably elsewhere. All of them include the boat, food and a guide. The cheaper it is the worse get the guides, so if you have trouble separating the finches you need to invest. Those looking for **Flightless Cormorant** and **Mangrove Finch** need to book a longer trip (usually 10 - 14 days). Carefully check the route of the trip offered and if it suits your needs. We took the southern route: Baltra -> Plazas -> Santa Fe -> Floreana -> Española -> Santa Cruz.

### Access:

By plane (Airport is on Baltra) or by boat. The latter way takes quite some time but possibly delivers Seabirds.

### Where to go:

In order to make satisfying plans, I have listed the birds restricted to few islands: **Flightless Cormorant**: Isabela & Fernandia, **Galapagos Penguin**: Isabela, Fernandia, Floreana, **Waved Albatross**: Española (possibly offshore elsewhere), **Chatham Mockingbird**: San Cristobal, **Charles Mockingbird**: satellite islands off Floreana, **Hood Mockingbird**: Española, **Sharp-beaked Ground-Finch**: Fernandia, Pinta, Genovesa, Darwin, Wolf, **Large Cactus-Finch**: Española, Darwin, Wolf, Genovesa, **Medium Tree-Finch**: Floreana, **Mangrove Finch**: Isabela, Fernandia.



Lava Gull on Santa Cruz

### Species:

Brown Pelican, Galapagos Penguin, Waved Albatross, Audubon's Shearwater, Dark-rumped Petrel, Wedge-rumped Storm-Petrel, Madeiran Storm-Petrel, Elliot's Storm-Petrel, Magnificent

Frigatebird, Great Frigatebird, Red-footed Booby, Nazca Booby, Blue-footed Booby, Laughing Gull, Franklins Gull, Swallow-tailed Gull, Lava Gull, Red-billed Tropicbird, Common Noddy, White-cheeked Pintail, Greater Flamingo, Great Blue Heron, Cattle Egret, Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, Striated Heron, Lava Heron, Ruddy Turnstone, American Oystercatcher, Semipalmated Plover, Whimbrel, Sanderling, Wandering Tattler, Least Sandpiper, Red Phalarope, Red-necked Phalarope, Galápagos Hawk, Galápagos Dove, Smooth-billed Ani, Galápagos Flycatcher, Yellow Warbler, Galápagos Mockingbird, Hood Mockingbird, Small Ground Finch, Medium Ground Finch, Large Ground Finch, Small Tree Finch, Medium Tree Finch, Large Tree Finch, Cactus Finch, Large Cactus Finch, Vegetarian Finch, Warbler Finch



Hood Mockingbird on Espanola



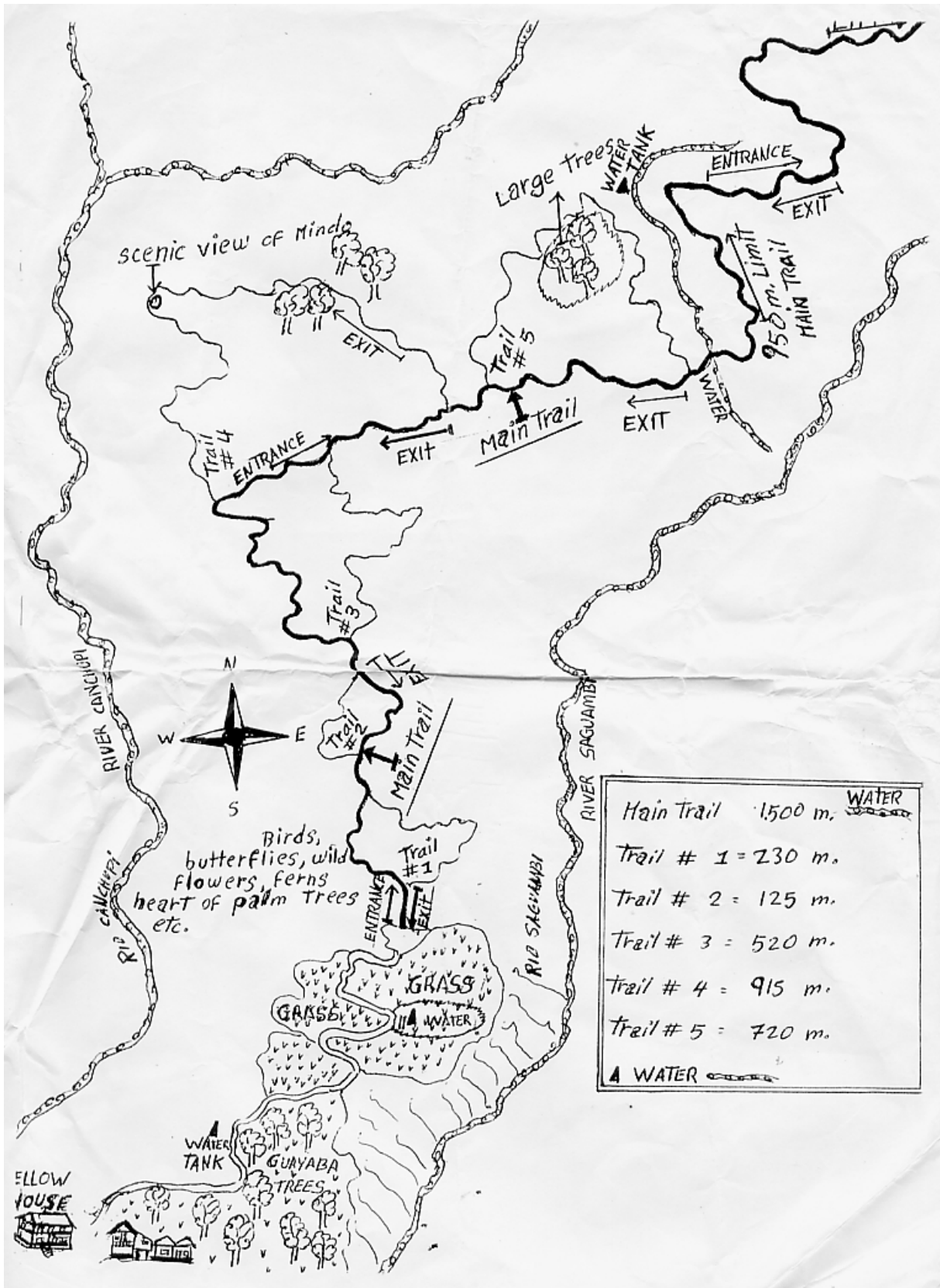
Dark-rumped Petrel on Espanola



Yellow-crowned Night-Heron on Floreana



Appendix: Maps of the areas



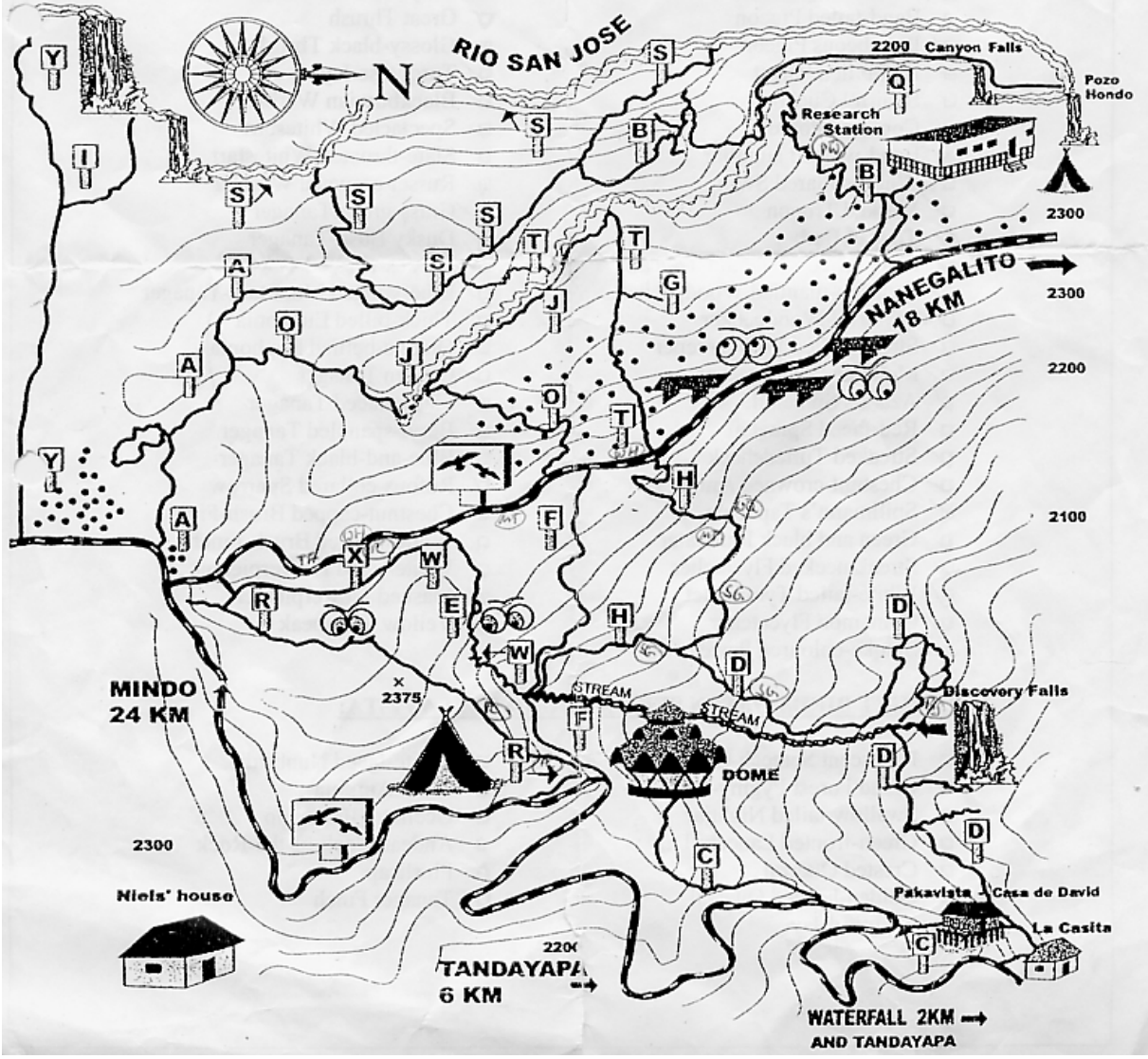
Map 1: Tracks in the privately owned primary forest.

		YOUNGER		MORE MATURE				YOUNGER		MORE MATURE				
A.	700M	ANTIPITTA TRAIL	"E"	"E"	J.	300M	JOINING TRAIL	"M"	"D"	Q.	400M	QUELLATED TAPACULO	"M/D"	"D"
B.	650M	THE BESTIARY	"D"	"D"	K.	400M	QUO VADIS TRAIL	"S"	"SS"	R.	600M	RIDGE TRAIL	"M"	"M/D"
C.	550M	CHAQUIÑAN TRAIL	"M"	"M/D"	L.	1000M	DISCOVERY FALLS	"S"	"SD"	S.	1000M	STREAM TRAIL	"D"	"SS"
D.	1000M	DISCOVERY FALLS	"S"	"SD"	M.	500M	TARZAN'S FOLLY	"M"	"M/D"	T.	500M	TARZAN'S FOLLY	"M"	"M/D"
E.	100M	EWALD'S LOOP	"E"	"M"	W.	300M	WATER TRAIL	"M/S"	"M/P"	X.	400M	EXTREMELY EASY	"E"	"M/E"
F.	400M	FIELD TRAIL	"E"	"M"	Y.	600M	YUMBO TRAIL	"M"	"M/D"					
G.	100M	GROTTO TRAIL	"D"	"D"										
H.	700M	HELICONIA TRAIL	"M"	"D"										
I.	300M	IMMERSION TRAIL	"D"	"D"										
J.	300M	JOINING TRAIL	"M"	"D"										

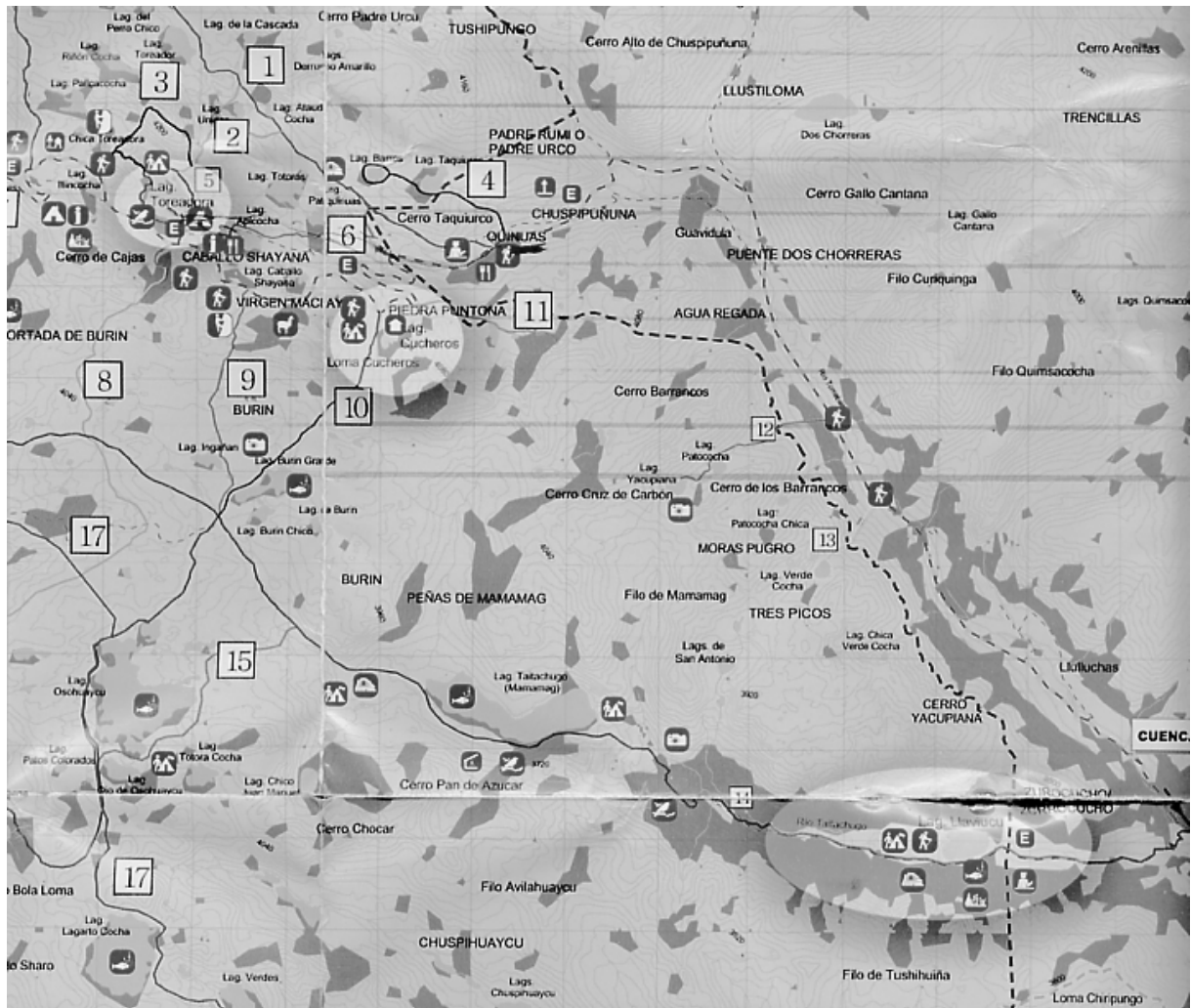
  

	BOOTS
	ROAD
	PATH
	RIVER
	STREAM
	FIELDS
	VIEW POINT
	BIRDWATCHING
	CAMPING

"E" EASY "M" MODERATE "D" DIFFICULT "S" SLIPPERY "SD" SLIPPERY/DIFFICULT "SS" SLIPPERY/SUICIDAL



Map 2: Tracks around Bellavista



Map 3: Las Cajas