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# Albatross

*Birding and Nature Tours*



Birding Around Santiago

9<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> of May 2016

**Leader:** Paola Soubllette

**Participants:** Catherine and Alec Gillespie

Albatross Birding and Nature Tours

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[www.albatross-birding.com](http://www.albatross-birding.com)

I picked up Catherine and Alec Gillespie from the hotel Best Western Premier Marina in Santiago at 7:30 am. The first day we went to Farellones, a ski center in the mountains above Santiago. We crossed a series of habitats during the trip, from scrubland, Matorral and Schlerophilous forest in the foothills to the High Andean Steppe in the high altitude area.

Although it was autumn we had a very successful birding day. Maybe the most outstanding sighting of the day was an endemic Chilean Tinamou which we could see in detail and for a long while as it walked foraging among the bushes.

Before arriving in Farellones we saw along the way: the endemic Dusky-tailed Canastero, Tufted Tit-tyrant, Black bird, Long-tailed Meadow-lark, Chilean Mockingbird, Plain-mantled Tit-spinetail, Austral Thrush, Black-chested Buzzard-eagle, House Wren, Gray-hooded Sierra Finch, Common Diuca Finch and Eared Dove.

Once in Farellones we were very lucky....after looking for the endemic Moustached Turca all along the way, surprisingly we found two of them perching on a big boulder!! After a while the Andean Condors began to appear, many of them, juveniles, females and males soaring just above our heads with the stunning scenery of the beautiful mountains behind them.

As we continued going over Farellones and La Parva (another ski center nearby) we saw Rufous-banded Miner, Mourning Sierra-finch, Plumbeous Sierra-finch, White-browed Ground-tyrant, a female and male of Variable Hawk perching together and finally the icing of the cake....a spectacular Magellanic Horned Owl.

The second day we visited the National Reserve Río Los Cipreses located in the heart of the Andes range of the sixth region of Chile. We were going in search of the Burrowing Parakeet and this place was supposed to be the one where we could find it.



Moustached Turca

After picking up the Gillespies at 6:30 am we drove for about two hours to get there. Luckily along the way the beautiful foothills covered with forest and Matorral provided us with a couple of Chilean Flickers and an Austral Pigmy Owl. As we continued we saw Chilean Mockingbird, Austral Thrush, Black Bird, Long-tailed Meadow-lark, Chimango Caracara, Southern Lapwing and Eared Dove.

We were delighted when we were just about to arrive to the reserve and a beautiful Striped Woodpecker perched on a pole just in front of us making possible to Alec to make many good shots of the bird.

After this we continued our journey to find Burrowing Parakeet. Suddenly as we were driving we saw a group of these big and noisy birds perching on an old and big walnut tree. This was interesting. We stopped and got out of the car, took our binoculars and..... yes!! They were there!!

Just a little bit before the entrance to the reserve were these big Macaw like parakeets feeding upon walnuts in the front yard of a house. We couldn't help staying a long while there amused watching them trying to open the nutshells.

Finally inside the park we went to the area where the colonies of Burrowing Parrots are and we found hundreds of them, again the Gillespies were delighted. The birds and the landscape made it a very special moment.

After we left we saw Patagonian Tyrant, Fired-eyed Diucon and Chilean Pigeon and made our way back to Santiago after 2 excellent days birding.



Burrowing Parakeet