

Albatross

Birding and Nature Tours



Two days birding around Santiago: Mountains & Coast

September 2016

Guide: Rodrigo Silva

Participant: Brian and Lyn Reid

Albatross Birding & Nature Tours

www.albatross-birding.com

OVERVIEW

This is the report of the private tour we made with Brian and Lyn Reid, two Australians in their seventies – but as healthy as you would like!- who visited Chile during early September after spending the previous days at a Conference in the neighbouring country, Argentina. They were interested in discovering Chilean birds and taking some photos ...birders not listers !

We arranged 2 days which gave them the chance to see some contrasts in the landscape of Central Chile, starting in the Andean hills just above Santiago and then continuing to the coast where we birded in the estuary of one the most important rivers in the area and also in one of the well preserved ravines in the middle of the most people pressured places in Chile.

Overall we managed to spot 85 species and to enjoy some of the best birding places in the Santiago area.



White-throated Tapaculo. Photo by Rodrigo Silva

ITINERARY

Day 1

We met at 06:45 and headed straight out to the east of the city up to reach the beginning of Farellones Road, the 32 km paved road which connects the capital city with the major ski resort area of the country. Still in the winter, daybreak was around 8 o'clock, so we had the chance to look for some night-birds and had success with some Austral Pygmy-Owls.

With the first sunlight we walked through the brushland looking for the first endemics, Moustached Turca and Chilean Tinamou. In this cold and foggy day the first attempt was not as good as usual, and just gave us some "heard" records. By way of compensation the landscape was stunning with some dense clouds entering through the valley, obscuring some of the hairpin-curves of the road that was at our feet.

Then we birded at Yerba Loca Park, where we spotted the endemic Moustached Turca and White-throated Tapaculo and other good birds such as Long-tailed Meadowlark plus two rodent species: the guinea pig-looking Degu and an all black burrowing rodent called Cururo, both endemics of the country.

After a homemade picnic lunch we came back to the main road and kept driving up to Farellones area at 2200 mts over above sea level where we found one of the targets of the day, the Andean Condor, and some other good birds; Plumbeous Sierra-Finch, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant, Gray-flanked Cinclodes and Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant.

On our way down we made our last stop for a successful search for the endemic Crag Chilia. After this we followed the road back to Santiago to reach the Hotel at 5:30 in the afternoon.



Farellones Road. Photo by Rodrigo Silva

Day 2

We started at same time as first day but this time we headed southwest of the city to the harbour of San Antonio. Some kilometers from there we birded at Maipo estuary, one of the main river mouths in the central area and recognized as one the best birding destinations into the country.

The place was even better than usual and we had a great morning there, enjoying 3 hours of first class birding. We were able to spot some early spring visitors as Black-bellied Plover, Black Skimmer and Willet, and other good birds such as 2 endemics, the Dusky Tapaculo and the Seaside Cinclodes, the desert-nesting Gray Gull and the jewel like Many-colored Rush-Tyrant.

At mid-morning we visited Cartagena Lagoon where we got Black-necked and Coscoroba Swan, and then visited a valley which holds a remnant of native vegetation where the birding was excellent adding birds as Green-backed Firecrown, Giant Hummingbird, Des-Mur's Wiretail, Dusky-tailed Canastero, Thorn-tailed Rayadito, Patagonian Tyrant and Rufous-tailed Plantcutter.

After a pleasurable birding day we came back Santiago around 5:30 and said good bye each other and see you next time.



Maipo Estuary. Photo by Rodrigo Silva



Quebrada de Córdova. Photo by Rodrigo Silva

BIRD LIST (85 species)

Taxonomic order and notes follows South American Classification Committee

<http://www.museum.lsu.edu/~Remsen/SACCBaseline.html>

Detailed birdlist available at eBird

<http://www.ebird.org>

TINAMOUS

Chilean Tinamou - *Nothoprocta perdicaria* (just heard at Farellones road)

DUCKS

Black-necked Swan - *Cygnus melancoryphus*

Coscoroba Swan - *Coscoroba coscoroba*

Chiloe Wigeon - *Anas sibilatrix*

Cinnamon Teal - *Anas cyanoptera*

Red Shoveler - *Anas platalea*

Yellow-billed Pintail - *Anas georgica*

Yellow-billed Teal - *Anas flavirostris*

Lake Duck - *Oxyura vittata*

QUAILS

California Quail - *Callipepla californica*

GREBES

White-tufted Grebe - *Rollandia rolland*

Pied-billed Grebe - *Podilymbus podiceps*

Great Grebe - *Podiceps major*

CORMORANTS

Neotropic Cormorant - *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*

PELICANS

Peruvian Pelican - *Pelecanus thagus*

EGRETS

Great Egret - *Ardea alba*

Snowy Egret - *Egretta thula*

Black-crowned Night-Heron - *Nycticorax nycticorax*

NEW-WORLD VULTURES

Black Vulture - *Coragyps atratus*

Turkey Vulture - *Cathartes aura*

Andean Condor - *Vultur gryphus*

HAWKS

Variable Hawk - *Geranoaetus polyosoma*

Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle - *Geranoaetus melanoleucus* (A bird briefly seen at Yerba Loca Park)

COOTS

Red-gartered Coot - *Fulica armillata*

Red-fronted Coot - *Fulica rufifrons*

White-winged Coot - *Fulica leucoptera*

STILTS & OYSTERCATCHERS

Black-necked Stilt - *Himantopus mexicanus*

American Oystercatcher - *Haematopus palliatus*

PLOVERS

Black-bellied Plover - *Pluvialis squatarola* (A spoilt breeding-plumage bird)

Southern Lapwing - *Vanellus chilensis*

Collared Plover - *Charadrius collaris*

SANDPIPERS

Whimbrel - *Numenius phaeopus*

Willet - *Tringa semipalmata*

GULLS

Brown-hooded Gull - *Chroicocephalus maculipennis*

Gray Gull - *Leucophaeus modestus*

Kelp Gull - *Larus dominicanus*

South American Tern - *Sterna hirundinacea*

Elegant Tern - *Thalasseus elegans*

SKIMMERS

Black Skimmer - *Rynchops niger* (First record of the season for Rodrigo!)

DOVES

Picui Ground-Dove - *Columbina picui*

Eared Dove - *Zenaida auriculata*

OWLS

Austral Pygmy-Owl - *Glaucidium nana*

HUMMINGBIRDS

Green-backed Firecrown - *Sephanoides sephaniodes*

Giant Hummingbird - *Patagona gigas* (Great views of this guy!)

WOODPECKERS

Striped Woodpecker - *Veniliornis lignarius* (Just heard)

Chilean Flicker - *Colaptes pitius*

FALCONS

Chimango Caracara - *Milvago chimango*

TAPACULOS

Moustached Turca - *Pterotochos megapodius*

White-throated Tapaculo - *Scelorchilus albicollis*

Dusky Tapaculo - *Scytalopus fuscus* (Well seen at Maipo estuary, which is not easy at all with this small and secretive tapaculo)

OVENBIRDS

Crag Chilia - *Ochetorhynchus melanurus*

Wren-like Rushbird - *Phleocryptes melanops* (Just heard)

Buff-winged Cinclodes - *Cinclodes fuscus*

Gray-flanked Cinclodes - *Cinclodes oustaleti*

Seaside Cinclodes - *Cinclodes nigrofumosus*

Thorn-tailed Rayadito - *Aphrastura spinicauda*

Des Murs's Wiretail - *Sylviorthorhynchus desmursii* (Good views of this guy!)

Plain-mantled Tit-Spintail - *Leptasthenura aegithaloides*

Dusky-tailed Canastero - *Pseudasthenes humicola*

TYRANTS

Tufted Tit-Tyrant - *Anairetes parulus*

Many-colored Rush Tyrant - *Tachuris rubrigastra* (Excellent views of this nice looking bird)

Austral Negrito - *Lessonia rufa*

Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant - *Muscisaxicola maclovianus*

Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant - *Agriornis montanus*

Fire-eyed Diucon - *Xolmis pyrope*

Patagonian Tyrant - *Colorhamphus parvirostris*

COTINGAS

Rufous-tailed Plantcutter - *Phytotoma rara*

SWALLOWS

Blue-and-white Swallow - *Pygochelidon cyanoleuca*

Chilean Swallow - *Tachycineta meyeni*

WRENS

House Wren - *Troglodytes aedon*

Sedge Wren - *Cistothorus platensis*

THRUSHES

Austral Thrush - *Turdus falcklandii*

MOCKINGBIRDS

Chilean Mockingbird - *Mimus thenca*

FINCHES & SPARROWS

Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch - *Phrygilus gayi*

Mourning Sierra-Finch - *Phrygilus fruticeti*

Plumbeous Sierra-Finch - *Phrygilus unicolor*

Common Diuca-Finch - *Diuca diuca*

Grassland Yellow-Finch - *Sicalis luteola* (Very active in breeding displays)

Rufous-collared Sparrow - *Zonotrichia capensis*

Black-chinned Siskin - *Spinus barbatus*

House Sparrow - *Passer domesticus*

BLACKBIRDS

Long-tailed Meadowlark - *Sturnella loyca*

Austral Blackbird - *Curaeus curaeus*

Yellow-winged Blackbird - *Agelasticus thilius*

Shiny Cowbird - *Molothrus bonariensis*