

Argentina and Chile

11 nov - 15 dec 2004



Report compiled by Roger Ahlman

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*Front cover collage and all photos by Roger Ahlman,
except White-bellied Seedsnipe by Lorand Szucs*

General

This trip was organized by Jonas Nilsson with Roger Ahlman helping to gather information etc. Soon also Lorand Szucs (hereafter Lori) joined the group. Soon before departure Henrik Lind (hereafter Doc Lino) joined the second half of the trip from Mendoza and onwards.

From the begining we were ment to rent a car in Buenos Aires and drive all the way down to Ushuaia but that would have been very costly so after looking around in trip reports we finally opted for the schedule we actually did. I should say that doing this extensive trip in just 35 days is really a bit much in such a short time. There will be a lot of driving, on good roads though, and obviously a lot of time lost due to travelling with planes and busses.

We found both countries very easy and friendly to travel in. When asking for directions people took time to explain how to get somewhere, which is not always the case in south America. The roads are good and so is food and accomodation. By Swedish standards both countries are cheap, Argentina slightly cheaper than Chile. Both countries are big and a lot of time is spent in the car. We rented cars from different companies, both international and local. We had a few pre-bookings but often changed company at the airports as they didn't provide us with the car we wanted. Payment was by VISA cards. Make sure to have at least 3000\$ extra on your account as that will be looked as a deposite. We found car-rental to be fairly expensive and there is a big variation between different companies and different parts of the countries with southern Argentina being more expensive.

Around Buenos Aires we had a normal car which was enough. At Salta we had a pick-up which was good for the higher ground clearence, specially at Pozuelos. Around Cordoba we had a small jeep with 4WD which was also good. At Mendoza we had a normal car. In Chile we had a pick-up. At Trelew we had a small jeep which was good as a lot of driving is done on dirtroads. A normal car at Calafate was good enough for driving to Moreno Glacier NP. For the Hooded grebe-quest we had a pick-up and driver and finally in Ushuaia we again had a normal car.

Food is good and readily availble in both countries. If you are a vegetarian you will run into problems in Argentina as meat is the main source of energy here. Gasstations offers some light meals and a variety of snacks and a quick cup of coffee. Wine is just as common as water on the shelves in the stores and cheap and good. Beer is also available.

Participants

Roger Ahlman. Swedish but living in Lima, Peru (rahlman2002@yahoo.se)
Jonas Nilsson. Swedish but living in Quito, Ecuador (andeanbirding@yahoo.com)
Lorand Szucs. Hungarian but living in Sydney, Australia
Henrik Lind. Swedish - and living in Sweden!

Birding Information

This was a tricky part as there isn't any guidebook particular for Argentina, just Wheatley's "Where to Watch Birds in South America" which is useful but a bit out-of-date. Virtually all trip reports found on the internet are without any directions to the sites and everyone uses local guides in Argentina and thus not have to bother with how to get to the sites etc. For Chile there is a guide book "Where to Watch

Birds in Chile” which is reasonably good and should be brought on a trip to Chile. One trip report on the internet have got site info and that is “North-west Argentina 2003, Phil and Charlotte Benstead” also Andersson and Bergstöm have site descriptions and maps. The most useful report is Nick Gardners from 1990, which is still useful for many sites and the one we used most. We also got some brief info from Anders Jihmanner who did the same trip a year before. For the Hooded grebe etc to Rio Gallegos we used a driver with car provided by Santiago Imberti (imbertis@ar.inter.net) who is mentioned in many reports. We were highly satisfied with his arrangements. Otherwise we did everything without any guides. Hopefully this report will fill some gaps in terms of information so it will be easier for independent birders to do Argentina and Chile by themselves.

Itinery

11 nov - Jonas and Roger arrived in the morning from Quito. After checking in at a hotel in central Buenos Aires we took a taxi the short bit down to Costanera Sur and birded there in rather windy conditions from 10 to 16.30. A very good introduction to the Argentinan birds.

12 nov - Roger birded the Costanera Sur in the morning trying to get in there before 8 am but no way! Even though there was someone inside the gate with a key he wouldn't let me in at 7.20, but birding can be done in the canal just outside the gates from early morning. Jonas went to the airport and picked up Lori and they both came to Costanera Sur later in the morning. During midday we picked up the rented car and started to drive to San Clemente and Punta Rasa arriving in time for some late afternoon birding. We had to do a few stops along the way in the pampas which is very birdy.

13 nov - Punta Rasa in the morning picking up Olrog's gull and lots of waders etc. Then a visit to Campo del Tuyu about 10kms west of San Clemente. Rest of the day drive to Buenos Aires where we tried in vain to find the way to Ribera Norte so we continued to Campana a bit north of BA and the closest place to Otamendi.

14 nov - Rain during the morning but we tried to bird the Otamendi area anyway but we gave up at 8 am and drove north to the Entre Rios district hoping for better wheather. We birded a few random places and in the afternoon we came to Gualayachu and found our way down to Nandubaysal and Puerto Boca, two places known for many of the seedeaters etc. We didn't find any of those but had some good birding anyway. In the evening 5 Nacunda nighthawks put in a nice show at Puerto Boca turn-off.

15 nov -We started at the marshes at Puerto Boca walking a bit further to the river and camping site. Slight fog in the morning. Later we drove road 135 eastwards and just turned onto a dirttrack and soon found a couple of Dark-throated seedeaters. A little while further up Roger spotted a Saffron-cowled blackbird and we saw a total of 30 of this rare bird. Black-and-white monjitas often travels together with the blackbirds but we only found a Grey monjita. It started to rain around noon and the road turned into mud and soon the wheels were completely covered in mud and we had to spent an hour digging the wheels clean and get out of there. Too bad as this area looked promising for the rarer seedeaters which we had to leave. In the afternoon we drove back to Otamendi and Roger was hot today and found a pair of the rare Straight-billed reedhaunters. Night in Campana.

16 nov - A couple of hours birding at Otamendi before driving to BA, returning the car and boarding the flight to Salta. We hired a car, a pickup, and drove north to Jujuy making only a few short stops in the rather nice yungas forest en route.

17 nov - Morning birding at Yala NP 13 kms north of Jujuy until 9 am then a long drive with a few stops all the way up to Yavi in the very north of Argentina and birding around there in the afternoon.

18 nov - Early departure without breakfast which we thought we could have somewhere but no. So we turned off towards lago Pozuelos and birded around there until noon. Most of the lake was dried out but all three flamingoes were there and a flock of 17 Puna Rheas and some waders. The nice park guard joined us here. At 2 pm we had a late lunch, not a good tactic for a days birding. We then drove on to Yala

and got good views of the Rufous-throated dipper. Rest of the afternoon was driving to San Martin which is the best base for birding the Calilegua NP nearby.

19 nov - A full day in the national park. A very nice park with forest all along the road through the park but we felt birding was a bit slow although birds were singing. Jonas and Roger are used to birding the subtropics in Ecuador and Peru which have a lot more activity with flocks and diversity. Anyway, we pickup some good birds including Slender-tailed woodstars. We mainly birded the higher parts of the road and in the evening we drove up past the pass and had good views of Hoy's screech-owl.

20 nov - Morning at Calilegua but now birding the lower parts around the guard station with good activity and some good birds like Giant antshrike, Golden-collared macaw and Plumbeous ibis. During the midday we drove to Joaquin V Gonzales in the chaco and birding around there in the afternoon.

21 nov - Birding the track just out of JVG in the morning until it got too hot picking up some chaco species. Rest of the day driving to Tucuman and birding our way up to the nice Tafi del Valle. En route up there we had good views of the Dipper and also saw our only Yellow-striped brush-finches.

22 nov - We drove up the short way to Infiernillo which didn't meet our expectations in terms of habitat and we actually drove past the gullies at km 78 and 80 as there are very few bushes there but that is the site. At km 80 most of the vegetation had recently been burned on the uphill side of the road and we concentrated on the two nearby gullies at km 78. As soon as we stepped out of the car we found a Tucuman mt-finch in one of the small roadside bushes. A couple of hours here produced good views of all things so we drove on stopping at a valley with some tobacco plants along the road some 10 kms further up the road. These plants attracted lots of hummers including Andean hillstar, Red-tailed comet and Giant hummingbird. We also saw our only positively identified Buff-breasted earthcreepers here. A stop a few kms further on in the stony desert with some cactus gave good views of Rusty-vented canastero. Lunch at Quilmes and then a very fruitless try for birds around the ruins during the hot afternoon. We then drove on to Cafayate and tried for Sandy gallito 7 kms out of town and surprisingly we had good views of this charismatic little bird in the quite afternoon heat.



A stunning Blue-and-yellow Tanager in tobacco plants at Infiernillo

23 nov - We started with additional views and recordings of the Gallitos. A little further up the road we stopped for Burrowing parrots and saw three Black-crowned monjitas. At km 27 we saw Rufous-banded miner and White-throated Cachalote and the landscape started to look more like in Middle east. At km 30.5 it looked good for Steinbach's canastero so we made a stop here and had our first White-tipped plantcutters. We soon heard canasteros calling and we played Rusty-vented and two Steinbach's came in and gave excellent views. A nice drive through a spectacular landscape towards Salta. We made a detour up to Cuesta del Obispo as we had recent information that people had seen Zimmer's tapaculo there and we saw a tapaculo coming out of hole but it looked to us as a White-browed tapaculo. We played the tapes of both species but no response. Drive down to Salta and leaving the car.

24 nov - Morningbus 4 hours to Tucuman and flight from there to Cordoba and picking up a Suzuki jeep from Avis. We drove to Ichu Cruz and birded there until dark. We had rather scant info and there is a maze of small roads in degraded chaco habitat. We picked up a few birds that we didn't see at other sites but overall it was rather disappointing.

25 nov - We drove the rather short stretch to Pampa Anchala picking up Olrog's cinclodes en route. Cordoba cinclodes and Puna (Cordoba) canastero was easily found. As we missed many chaco birds and had very scant info about the sites north of Cordoba, we decided to try for Chancani NP further west so we sat for that site, calling the HQ from a city. En route there we saw quite a few birds, best being the immature Crowned eagle that Roger spotted while driving. As you drive there you have the impression of driving in the lowland plain but after passing through the four tunnels you are rewarded with a grand view of the true lowland plain 800 meters below. You actually think you are viewing the Rift Valley in east Africa! We drove down and called in at the park HQ and pinched our tents there. After some searching we managed to get lunch in Chancani village and also bought food for tomorrow. Afternoon birding was rewarding with Black-crested finch and White-naped xenopsaris. The park staffs have a good knowledge about birds and told us where to drive during the night. We had many Scissor-tailed nightjars and smashing views of a pair of the rare Chaco owl.

26 nov - Morning birding at Chancani with Black-legged seriema walking around our tents. On the way out we had good views of Spot-winged falconet. Rest of the day was spent in the car driving up to Salinas Grande only to find out that it had been raining for two days and the whole area around the lake was flooded and this was how we dipped Salinas monjita. Disappointed we drove to Miramar by the Mar Chiquita instead.

27 nov - Birded the site mentioned in Wheatley for Doraditos and we found a few but they were definitely Subtropicals and not the hoped-for Dinelli's or Crested mentioned for this site in the guide book. Fairly good birding anyway with Ruddy-breasted seedeater being a bonus. Then drive to Cordoba and an early evening.

28 nov - Flight to Mendoza and here we faced a set-back to the planning as we couldn't travel by bus the same day to Santiago, Chile. While we waited at the bus terminal someone almost managed to steal a lap-top but Lori was quick on his feet and stopped him. As we couldn't get to Chile as planned we had to change the schedule a bit so we rented a car and after picking up Henrik Lind who is a doctor and as his surname was written Lino on a ticket he became Doc Lino for the rest of the trip. We drove out of Mendoza and up to Aconcagua NP picking up another Steinbach's canastero for Doc Lino on a random stop in suitable habitat. In late afternoon we birded the trail a short bit up towards the mountain picking up Creamy-rumped miner which was the bird we went here for. Good views of Gray-breasted seedsnipes and others made the afternoon rather nice. Night at the hosteria at Puente de Inca nearby.

29 nov - Nice morning birding along the stream at Puente de Vacas about 10 kms towards Mendoza from the hosteria. Jonas and Lori took the bus to Santiago from Puente del Inca to arrive ahead of the rest arranging for a car in Chile. Roger and Doc Lino drove back to Mendoza returning the car and boarded the bus. We arrived in Santiago at 8 pm and an hour later Jonas and Lori came with a pickup and we drove out of Santiago to Ulmue about 150 kms northwest and checked in at a hotel there soon after midnight.

30 nov - Rather boring birding at la Campana NP nearby with good views of Moustached turca and White-throated tapaculo. Nice forest but very quiet and very few birds seen. Afternoon at coastal Quintero where we arranged for a pelagic. Unfortunately we couldn't go the next day so we drove back to Santiago and on to San Jose de Maipo where we arrived 01.30 at crashed out for a few hours in a small hotel.

1 dec - Up to el Yeso where we did very poor dipping both Crag Chilia and Diademed sandpiper-plover. The area was very beautiful but we didn't come here for the scenery. A long drive back to la Campana with a stop at Estacion Colina which have some wetland and here we saw some South american Painted-snipes which was a very welcome consolidation. Heard Rufous-legged owl at la Campana before driving up to Quintero.

2 dec - We boarded the rather big boat at 5.45 am and went out on a good pelagic until 11.30. The cumming brought in many birds close and highlights included Buller's albatross and both Stejneger's and Masatierra petrels. After a rest we birded nearby Punta Liles picking up Chilean seaside cinclodes and our first Rufous-tailed plantcutters easily. Then a long drive down to Chillan.

3 dec - Good birding in the nothofagus forest up to Termas de Chillan with the main target Chestnut-throated huet-huet and also a female Magellanic woodpecker that Lori found. Then another long drive to Osorno north of Puerto Montt.

4 dec - Very poor birding at PN Puyehue in light drizzle. Poor views of Black-throated huet-huet and better views of Chucao tapaculos but otherwise very quiet. Jonas found a Patagonian tyrannulet and our only Austral pygmy-owl. We had planned to stay here another day but as it was so poor we drove down to Chiloé island and got some seabirds on the short ferry-crossing. We drove down to Custo which is near the national park where Jonas had been a few months before and seen most things.

5 dec - Early departure and birding the Chiloé NP. We soon got Ochre-flanked tapaculo and good views of Chucao tapaculo but we were still missing the maintarget - Slender-billed parakeet. We tried another valley where we finally had good views of a group of ten. We were short of time and rushed back to Puerto Montt and left the car and almost missed the bus to Barrilocke in Argentina (Puh!) It was a very scenic road the six hours to Barrilocke, especially the middle part.

6 dec - A day off in Barrilocke after the rather tough week in Chile before the afternoon flight to Trelew. We soon got our rented car and drove north for 300 kms to San Antonio de Oeste. Rusty-backed monjita en route was the only bird of note and some flocks of the southern race of Burrowing parrot.

7 dec - Excellent morning birding at km 1110 about 35 kms east of San Antonio de Oeste towards Viedma. Just as we got out of the car Roger spotted a couple of Yellow cardinals and we soon picked up other good birds including Carbonated sierra-finch. We then drove on a bit to Laguna Monte which was rather disappointing so we headed back and went to Las Grutas where we birded in the afternoon and one small patch produced some birds with Patagonian canastero being the best. Then a long drive to Valdez peninsula where we birded the "Isla de los Pajaros" (Bird island) before we drove to Puerto Pyramides.

8 dec - Morning birding for Band-tailed earthcreeper which we didn't see but Roger was on the toes for obvious reasons and found a group of Lesser Rheas which turned out to be species number 5000! Wow! We did a short boatripe in the bay having close views of Southern Right whales which was impressing and mammals was going to be the theme of the day. Rest of the day was driving on the peninsula to Punta Delgada with their Sea elephants and on to Caleta Valdez with Sea lions and here two Killer whales put in a show to the delight of us and the many tourists. While at a nearby small colony of Magellanic penguins fog rolled in from the sea and we turned back. We finished the day off at Punta Pyramides but we didn't see the hoped-for Sheatbill.

9 dec - We made a random stop 12 kms from the main road and immediately got Band-tailed earthcreeper. Then driving to Punta Tombo south of Trelew and the biggest mainland colony of Magellanic penguin. Lots of penguins and tourists and a few Chubut steamer-ducks but no Sheatbill. Our last chance was Punta Lomo which we had missed on the way down so we had to drive up some 70 kms north of Trelew and here we finally got good views of the Sheatbill for 5 minutes before it flew off. Puh!

10 dec - Morning flight from Trelew to Calafate. We checked in at a private B&B home and rented a car and made a visit to laguna Nimez just out of town. Very windy conditions and here we saw another target bird - Magellanic plover. A Cinereous harrier decided to patrol that part of the beach and the plovers flew away before we were satisfied. In the afternoon we drove to the Moreno Glacier NP and got Spectacled ducks and on the way back Lori the woodpecker-finder found us a male Magellanic woodpecker that gave too brief views for Doc Lino who scramble up a hill and refound it so we all had gripping views.

11 dec - We were picked up by the driver at 8 am and started the long drive north to Estancia Angostura. Chocolate-vented tyrants and Tawny-throated dotterels en route. After several hours we finally arrived at the lake for Hooded grebe and we started to scan the lake finding loads of Silvery grebes and after a

while also two Hooded grebes. Later we found ten more in another bay, some of them were displaying. On the way here our driver told us that a Swiss guy had shot about two hundred birds in the lake just two weeks before, including several Hooded grebes! He had been caught in the customs in Buenos Aires. After this we drove on for another two hours to Estancia Angostura and checked in at this nice place and went out and soon we had lured out two Austral rails from the reeds.

12 dec - A long day in the car that eventually took us to Rio Gallegos. Only a few stops along the way for Cinnamon-bellied ground-tyrant and at a lake which had a family of Magellanic plovers and also Tawny-throated dotterels and Short-billed miners.

13 dec - A full day at Cabo Virgenes about 130 kms from Rio Gallegos. At Estancia Condor we had three Ruddy-headed geese and at the point we enjoyed a lot of seabirds including some Great shearwaters. Austral canastero made it onto the list without problems but we failed to find Magellanic horned owl. On the way back we quickly found Rufous-chested dotterels which turned out to be rather common in the cushion plant areas. The driver took us on a side track and there we baged the stunning Black-throated finch. Back to Rio Gallegos and the flight to Ushuaia.

14 dec - Woke up to rain and wind. We couldn't really agree what to do so we booked ourselves on a boat ride to a penguin colony in the Beagle channel departing from Estancia Haberton. One and a half hour drive to get there with little en route. Some albatrosses in the channel and we had booked a tour that allowed us to get ashore which we did. We had good views of the Gentoo penguins for which this is the only site on mainland South America, but we were not allowed to walk around on the island so we went back. In retrospect it would have been better to just do the boat ride to the island and back without getting ashore, you see the Gentoos anyway and that boat is bigger. Now we went back with a smaller and faster boat so it was almost impossible to see anything from the boat. The temperature had fallen as we drove back to Ushuaia and to the rubbish dump. Soon we found some White-throated caracaras and a surprising Yellow-bridled finch. By now it was almost freezing and snow had begun to fall higher up.

15 dec - Surprisingly we woke up to a brilliant day with clear skies and no wind. We decided to drive up 50 kms to Garibaldi pass and try for the White-bellied seedsnipe, which hardly anyone sees. Most people try for this bird at the ski-lift in vain so we thought that this place might be better. After finding our way up above the tree-line for an hour and a half, we were in habitat and soon found droppings. A couple of hours later we all had had gripping views of two White-bellied seedsnipes and some Yellow-bridled finches. The scenery was fantastic and this was a fine end to a good trip.



Adult and juvenile Magellanic Plover



White-bellied Seedsnipe at Garibaldi Pass

Birding sites and Birds - Argentina

This section describes the birding sites as we birded them. Directions how to get to the sites, main targets and accommodation etc.

The bold headlines tell in which general part of the country the sites are situated. As we didn't do the list together in the evening this is mainly the birds that I saw, but we birded close together so few things are missing. I won't bother with listing the most common birds, just the more noteworthy ones.

Buenos Aires

Costanera Sur

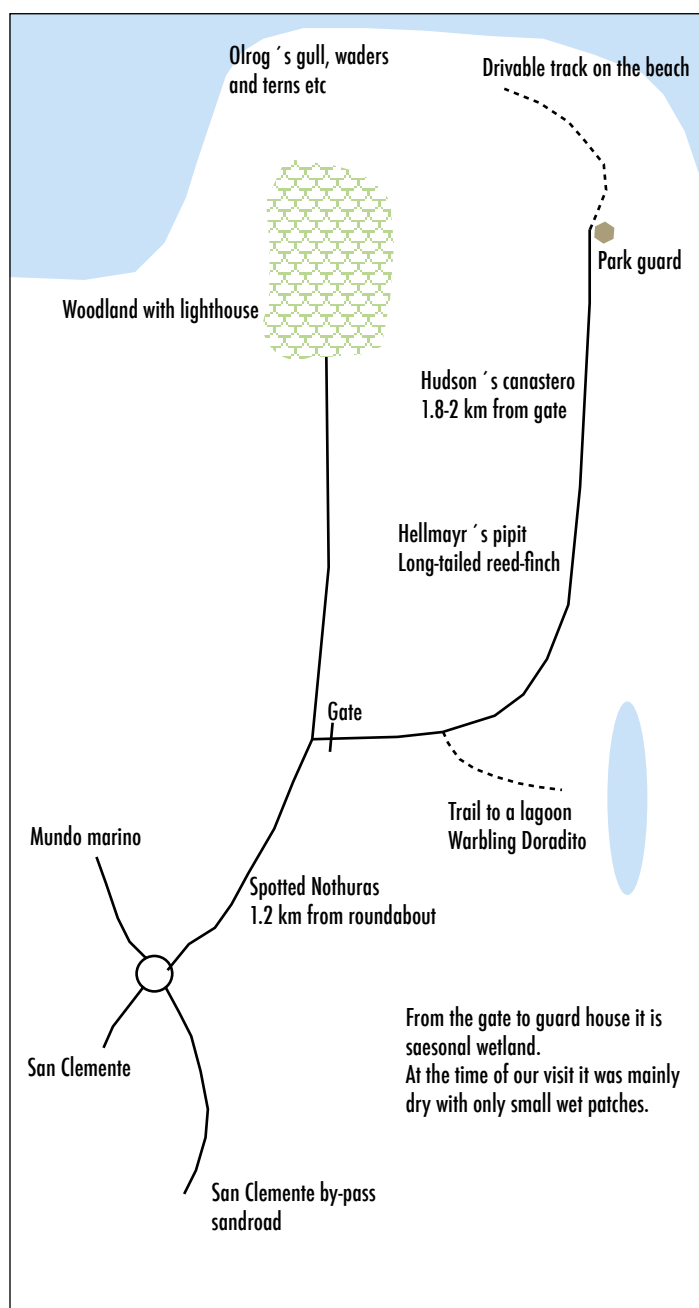
This nice wetland is right in the centre of Buenos Aires next to Rio de la Plata. There are two entrances and they don't open until 8 am and it's not negotiable. One can go here earlier and bird the canal just outside. This place is very popular among the Argentinians for recreation. Good, wide walking trails makes most parts available. There are two main pools where most birds are but also lots of reed, bushes and some trees. Just take a taxi and ask to be taken to "Reserva Ecologica Costanera Sur". Once there you can get a trail map at the visitor centre. Allow at least a half day here.

Birds seen: White-tufted grebe 100, Rufescent tiger-heron 1, Black-necked swan 50, Coscoroba 15, Silver teal 50, Red shoveler 15, Black-headed duck 10, Lake duck 25, Rosy-billed pochard 25, Rufous-thighed hawk 1, Gray-necked wood-rail 3 including nest-building, Plumbeous rail 3, Spot-flanked gallinule 50, White-winged-, Red-fronted- and Red-garthered coots - common, Collared plover 1, South American Snipe 1, Stilt sandpiper 5, Sandwich (Cayenne) tern 1, Snowy-crowned tern 3, Black skimmer 1, Nanday (Black-hooded) parakeet 25, Monk parakeet 15, Dark-billed cuckoo 2, Ashy-coloured cuckoo 1 seen by Jonas, Glittering-bellied emerald 3, Green-barred woodpecker 5, Freckle-breasted thornbird 3, White-crested tyrannulet 1, Blue-billed black-tyrant 1 female, Spectacled tyrant 15, Cattle tyrant 1, Creamy-bellied thrush 2, Masked yellowthroat 10, Black-and-rufous Warbling-Finch 50, Double-collared seed-eater 20, Misty yellow-finch 2, Great pampa-finch 3, Red-crested cardinal 2, Screaming cowbird 2, Epaulet oriole 3.

Punta Rasa (see map)

This point is close to the town San Clemente some three hours drive southeast of Buenos Aires. Especially the last 100 kms are rather birdy in the flat pampas grassland mixed with some wetlands so it can take longer to get there.

Soon after passing an arch there is small parking lot and a trail that goes for a few hundred metres to a lagoon. Continuing for another 3-4 kms takes you to a guard house by the beach. Hudson's canastero and Bay-crowned wren-spinetail occurs along the track. Past this house you can drive on the beach to the very point and look for gulls and waders.



Map of Punta Rasa

Birds seen: Greater Rhea 30 en route to San Clemente, Spotted nothura 3, Great grebe 1, Whistling heron 13, Maguari stork 25, Chilean flamingo 100, Roseate spoonbill 30, Southern screamer 30, White-tailed kite 10 en route, Long-winged harrier 30, Cinereous harrier 1, American golden plover 200+, Hudsonian godwit 500+, White-rumped sandpiper 500+, Stilt sandpiper 100+, Wilson's phalarope 1, Parasitic jaeger 1, Olrog's gull 25 imm, Kelp gull 25, Grey-hooded gull 10, Common tern 500+, Snowy-crowned tern 20, Black skimmer 200+, Green-barred woodpecker 3, Campo flicker 2, Bay-capped wren-spinetail 10, Hudson's canastero 4, Freckle-breasted thornbird 3, White-crested tyrannulet 1, Many-coloured rush-tyrant 3, Warbling doradito 3, Speckled tyrant 50, Correndera pipit 3, Hellmayr's pipit 1 singing, Long-tailed reed-finch 3, Mistle yellow-finch 25, Brown-and-yellow marshbird 100, Scarlet-headed blackbird 4.

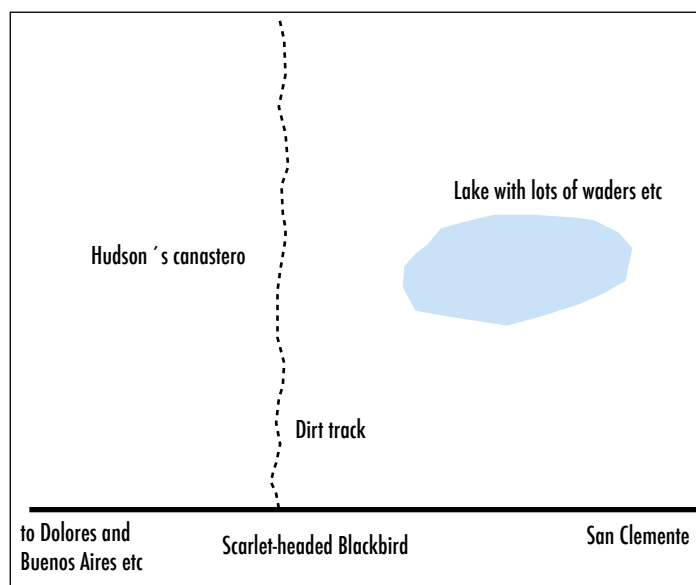
Campo del Tuyu (see map)

This site is about 10 kms before (west) San Clemente. When we there the gate was looked so we climbed the fence. After about 1 km there is a lake on the right which had lots of wader. Several Hudson's canasteros here. This site is said to be good for South american painted snipe but it was rather dry so perhaps they are seasonal. Scarlet-headed blackbird was just opposite the gate.

Birds seen: Several of the waders and pampas birds listed above, Hudson's canastero 3, Scarlet-headed blackbird 2.

Otamendi (see map page 10)

This nice place is about an hour north of Buenos Aires and it is sign-posted for the reserve as soon as you turn off the highway. There are two sites here to bird. One is by the park HQ where a trail starts and does a loop for about 1 km. It has a great view point so bring a scope. The other is past the headquarter for a few kilometres and you pass the railway station and the railway. Then a long straight road crosses the marsh and gives good viewing facilities on both sides. We didn't give this area enough time, partly due to rain. There are no places to stay in Otamendi and nearest hotels are in Campana 8 kms further along the highway so it's close enough.



Map of the Campo del Tuyú

Birds seen: Bare-faced ibis 300+, White-faced ibis 500+, White-faced whistling-duck 20, Brazilian teal 2, White-tailed kite 2, Aplomado falcon 1, Gray-necked wood-rail 3, Giant wood-rail 2, South american snipe 3, Dark-billed cuckoo 2, Short-eared owl 1, Glittering-bellied emerald 5, Curve-billed reedhaunter 5, Straight-billed reed-haunter 1 pair that was probably nesting as they were seen carrying food, Chichli spinetail 3, Stripe-crowned spinetail 3, Freckle-breasted thornbird 2, Narrow-billed woodcreeper 3, Rufous-capped antshrike 3, Small-billed elaenia 5, White-crested tyrannulet 5, Mottle-cheeked tyrannulet 1, Warbling doradito 2, Tawny-crowned pygmy-tyrant 1, White monjita 5, Golden-crowned warbler 2, Red-crested finch 2, Red-rumped warbling-finch 2, Black-capped warbling-finch 3, Yellow-billed cardinal 1, Ultramarine grosbeak 2, Scarlet-headed blackbird 2.

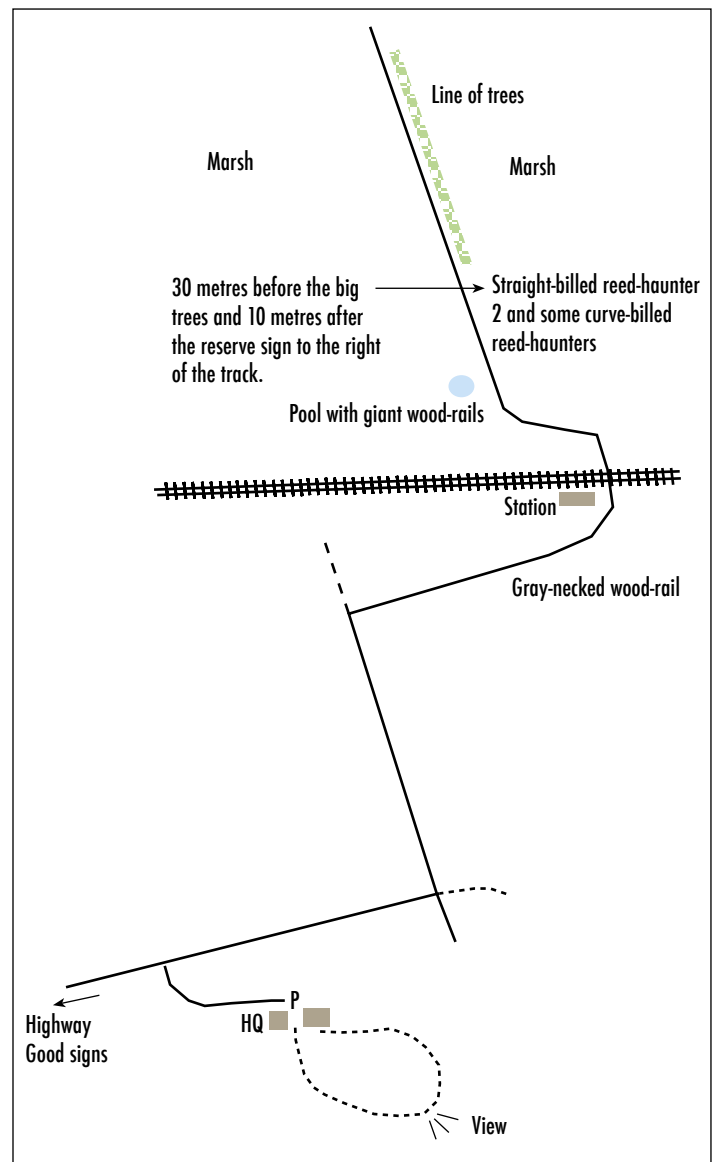
Gualayachú, Nandubaysal and Puerto Boca (see map on page 11)

Gualayachú is fair-sized town in the Entre Ríos province and nearby Nandubaysal and Puerto Boca are two camping sites that offers good birding. Especially Puerto Boca has some nice marshes which can be viewed from the track leading down to the river and camping site. The road was closed but we jumped the fence. According to South American Red Data book most of the seedeaters and Saffron-cowled blackbird have been recorded here and the marshes surely looked good but we failed to find any. The both campingsites are along the same road about 10 kms out from Gualayachú, ask if in doubt.

We drove out onto road 136 from Puerto Boca and drove 11 kms east, here is where a dirt track branches off to the left. About 1 km along this track is a side track to the left but we drove straight ahead for another 3.5 kms until the next side road to the left. In this junction is where we had the Saffron-cowled blackbirds and short before a few Dark-throated seedeaters. Birding had to be aborted here due to rain

which made the road undrivable. Otherwise this track continues down to the river which looked good and maybe some of the other goodies can be found along here.

Birds seen (incl birds seen en route from Otamendi): Greater rhea 6, Red-winged tinamou 5, Spotted nothura 2, Wood stork 10, Maguari stork 20, Roseate spoonbill 15, Southern screamer 300+, Ringed teal 16, Brazilian teal 25, Snail kite 50, Long-winged harrier 15, Limpkin 5, Rufous-sided crane 2, Giant wood-rail 11, Spot-flanked gallinule 1, Pectoral sandpiper 10, Dark-billed cuckoo 2, Tropical screech-owl 1 heard, Nacunda nighthawk 5, Glittering-bellied emerald 10, Gilded sapphire 5, White-throated hummingbird 5, Checkered woodpecker 2, Campo flicker 1, Curve-billed reed-haunter 1, Sooty-fronted spinetail 3, Stripe-crowned spinetail 1, Sulphur-bearded spinetail 1, Greater thornbird 1, Freckle-breasted thornbird 5, Fire-wood gatherer 1, Narrow-billed woodcreeper 5, Rufous-capped antshrike 5, Sooty tyrannulet 5, White-crested tyrannulet 3, Mottle-cheeked tyrannulet 1, Tawny-crowned pygmy-tyrant 1, Gray monjita 1, White monjita 5, Yellow-browed tyrant 1, Swainson's flycatcher 1, Golden-crowned warbler 2, Long-tailed reed-finch 6, Black-capped warbling-finch 2, Double-collared seedeater 10, Dark-throated seedeater 3, Yellow-billed cardinal 1, Golden-billed saltator 25, Ultramarine grosbeak 1, Saffron-cowled blackbird 30, Chestnut-capped blackbird 50, Brown-and-yellow marshbird 100, Scarlet-headed blackbird 5,



Map of the Otamendi area

Salta - Tucuman

Yala NP

This park is 13 kms north of Jujuy on the left hand side. It is signposted and a gravel road takes you past some houses and across a river. A few kilometres further on is a small picnic site by the river and it is around here that you can see the Rufous-throated dipper. Soon afterwards the track leaves the river and goes up and right. We saw a guan here that might have been a Red-faced but it wasn't red in the face but had reddish legs. Others have seen Red-faced here recently. We mainly birded the area around the picnic site.

Birds seen: Torrent duck 2, Dusky-legged/Red-faced guan 1, Ashy-tailed swift 10, White-bellied hummingbird 2, Ocellated piculet 1, Green-barred woodpecker 1, Cliff flycatcher 2, Andean tyrant 4, Yellow-browed tyrant 1, Variegated flycatcher 2, Crested Becard 1 pair, Rufous-throated dipper 1, Andean slaty-thrush 2, Brown-capped whiststart 5, Rusty-browed warbling-finch 5, Fulvous-headed brush-finch 1, Ultramarine grosbeak 2, Crested oropendola 1, Golden-winged cacique 1.

Yavi

This is in the northernmost Argentina at high altitude. A few former Bolivian endemics have been found here. We made some roadside stops en route here and also birded the vicinity by foot. There are nice places to stay in the village.

Birds seen: Mountain caracara 4, Aplomado falcon 2, Least seedsnipe 2, Bare-faced ground-dove 5, Mountain parakeet 4, Brown-capped tit-spinetail 1, Rusty-vented canastero 1, Rufous-naped ground-tyrant 1,

Brown-backed mockingbird 15 en route, Black-hooded sierra-finch 5, Common diuca-finch 10, Puna yellow-finch 15, Bright-rumped yellow-finch 15, Citron-headed yellow-finch 100+, Greenish yellow-finch 15 en route.

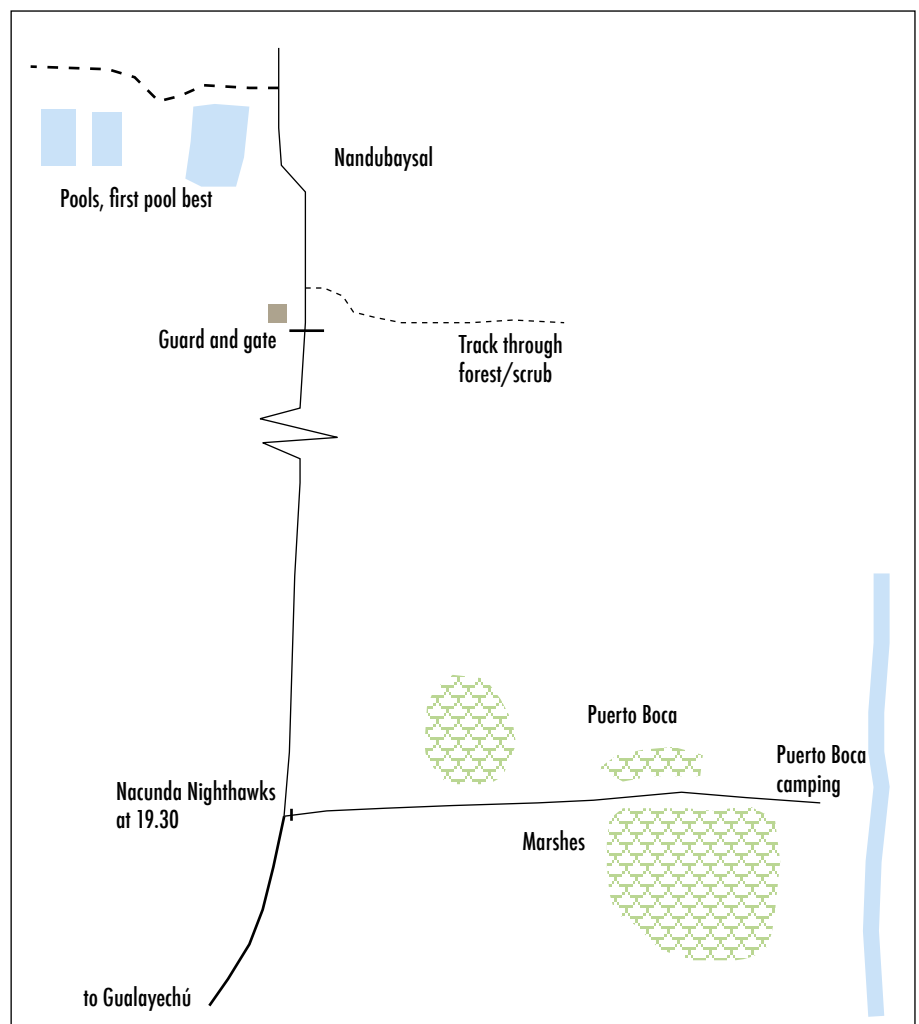
Lago Pozuelos

This large highland lake is mostly dried out but it is worth a visit anyway. It is one of few accesible sites in Argentina where Horned coot is seen. One was present here until a few weeks before our visit. We did see all three flamingoes and Puna Rhea plus some high altitude birds. It is sign-posted from the main highway. You may go here with a normal car but it is better to have a 4WD, at least for the higher ground clearance. Make sure to have enough petrol, food and water because there is nothing around the lake.

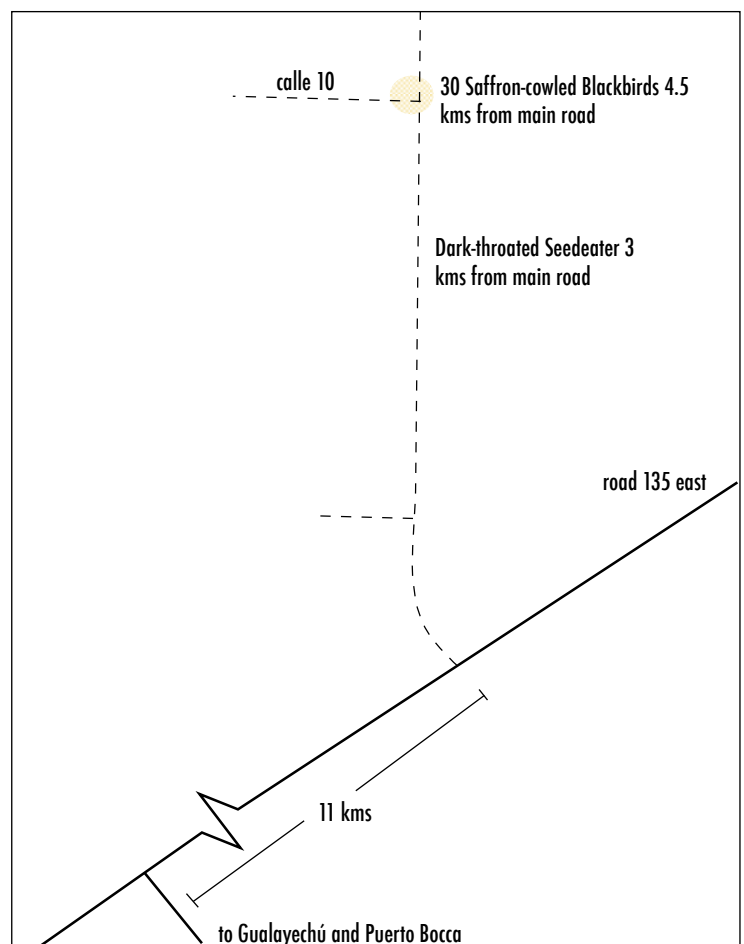
Birds seen: Puna rhea 17, Ornate tinamou 1, Chilean flamingo 50, Andean flamingo 15, Puna flamingo 20, Cinereous harrier 1, Puna hawk 1, Mountain caracara 1, Aplomado falcon 1, Giant coot 5 probables in the heat-haze, Andean avocet 10, Puna plover 10, Tawny-throated dotterel 1, Baird's sandpiper 4, Gray-breasted seedsnipe 3, Least seedsnipe 1, Black-winged ground-dove 10, Golden-spotted ground-dove 50+, Burrowing owl 5, Andean flicker 1, Common miner 1, Puna miner 4, Rufous-banded miner 2 at nest, Rusty-vented canastero 1, Cordilleran canastero 1, Streak-fronted thornbird 2, DÓrbigny's chat-tyrant 2, Black-billed shrike-tyrant 1, Rufous-webbed tyrant 1, Puna yellow-finch 5.

Calilegua NP

This nice forested national park is close to the town General San Martin. The entrance is a few kilometres east of town and sign-posted. After a few kilometres you come to the first ranger station and birding is good around here. To get there you need to cross a river which was not a problem for us but others have had to turn around here if it has been raining a lot. Best to have a 4WD. From the ranger station the road continues uphill with good forest all the way to the road and birding is worthwhile everywhere. You'll pass a second ranger station and half an hour later you come to the pass at 1700 metres.



Map of the Puerto Boca and Nandubaysal areas



Map of the Saffron-cowled Blackbird site

Around the pass is where Red-faced guans are sometimes seen but we failed to find any. Good place for raptors, we saw 17 species here.

Birds seen: Tataupa tinamou 5 heard, Plumbeous ibis 1, Andean condor 1, King vulture 3, Hook-billed kite 1, Rufous-thighed hawk 1, Short-tailed hawk 3, White-throated hawk 1, Swainson's hawk 1, Black-and-white hawk-eagle 1, Peregrine falcon 1, Pale-vented pigeon 10, Golden-collared macaw 4, Mitred parakeet 150+, Green-cheeked parakeet 10, Tucuman parrot 10, Scaly-naped parrot 10, Hoy's screech-owl 1, Planalto hermit 1, White-bellied hummingbird 20, Speckled hummingbird 2, Slender-tailed woodstar 4, Blue-crowned trogon 1, Toco toucan 2, Ocellated piculet 1, Ochre-cheeked spinetail 2, Giant antshrike 2, Variable antshrike 3, Black-capped antwren 3, White-throated antpitta 15 heard and 2 seen, Greenish elaenia 1, Highland elaenia 3, Sclater's tyrannulet 1, Buff-banded tyrannulet 2, Ochre-faced tody-flycatcher 25, Andean tyrant 3, Southern martin 1, Andean slaty-thrush 100+, Plush-crested jay 10, Brown-capped whitestart 25, Two-banded warbler 7, Pale-legged warbler 2, Orange-headed tanager 2, Golden-rumped euphonia 2, Fulvous-headed brush-finch 15, Stripe-headed brush-finch 4, Saffron-billed sparrow 25, Black-backed grosbeak 3, Golden-winged cacique 1, Solitary cacique 2, Crested oropendola 10,

Joaquin V Gonzales

Around this town is some degraded chaco habitat. Just out of town is a wide dirttrack going east and there are patches of dense chaco scrub around here. At km 16 is a short track to the right which is worthwhile birding. At km 27 is a track to the left and 700 metres along this track are some big trees and a trail goes through the scrub here offering good birding.

Birds seen: Greater rhea 10, Tataupa tinamou 5 heard, Comb duck 1, Swainson's hawk 3, Chaco chachalaca 10, Black-legged seriema 1 heard, Blue-crowned parakeet 2, Blue-fronted parrot 10, Little nightjar 1 heard, Ocellated piculet 1, Chaco earthcreeper 3, Crested hornero 8, Pale-breasted spinetail 2, Stripe-crowned spinetail 2, Short-billed canastero 1, Lark-like brush-runner 5, Brown cachalote 1, Scimitar-billed woodcreeper 1 pair at nest, Great antshrike 2, Stripe-backed antbird 1 heard, Crested gallito 5 heard and 1 seen, Large elaenia 1, Small-billed elaenia 10, Chaco suiriri 2, Greater wagtail-tyrant 3, Tawny-crowned Pygmy-Tyrant 2, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant 2, Cinereous tyrant 1 female, Yellow-browed tyrant 1, Red-crested finch 3, Black-capped Warbling-Finch 2, Stripe-capped Sparrow 2,

Infiernillo

This site is about 20 kms above Tafi del Valle which is a nice town in the mountains. There are three gullies with some sparse vegetation here, two at km 78 and one at km 80. The two gullies at km 78 were the best. The upper side of the gully at km 80 had recently been burned. If this continues then this easily accessible site for the Tucuman mountain-finch will soon be gone.

Some 10 kms further on the road there is a wide riverbed on the left and the road is lined with tobacco plants which attracted several hummingbirds and here is where we saw our only Buff-breasted earthcreepers.

Further on the habitat turns into stony desert with some cactus and Rusty-vented canasteros occur here.

Birding can be worthwhile on the way up from Tucuman but most of the habitat was gone due to fire. We did see our only Yellow-striped brush-finches in some scrub on a random stop. When you see a big indian statue on a hill you can stop where applicable and look in the river Sousa for Rufous-throated dipper, we saw a pair on a random stop here.

Birds seen below Tafi del Valle: Rufous-throated dipper 2, Yellow-striped brush-finch 2.

Birds seen at Infiernillo: Ornate tinamou 2, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle 1, Bare-eyed Ground-Dove 5, Black-winged Ground-Dove 15, Gray-hooded Parakeet 4, Andean Hillstar 2, Giant Hummingbird 1, Red-tailed Comet 15, White-fronted Woodpecker 2 at Quilmes, Andean Flicker 5, Buff-breasted Earthcreeper 2, Tufted Tit-Spinetail 1 at Quilmes, Brown-capped Tit-Spinetail 1, Rusty-vented Canastero 3, Lesser (Sharp-billed) Canastero 1 at Quilmes, Puna Canastero 2, White-throated Cacholote 2 at nest at Quilmes, White-browed Tapaculo 3, White-bellied Tyrannulet 4 at Quilmes, D'Orbigny's Chat-Tyrant 4, White-browed Chat-Tyrant 2, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant 2, Short-billed Pipit 2, Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch 2, Tucuman Mountain-Finch 2 ad+1 juv.

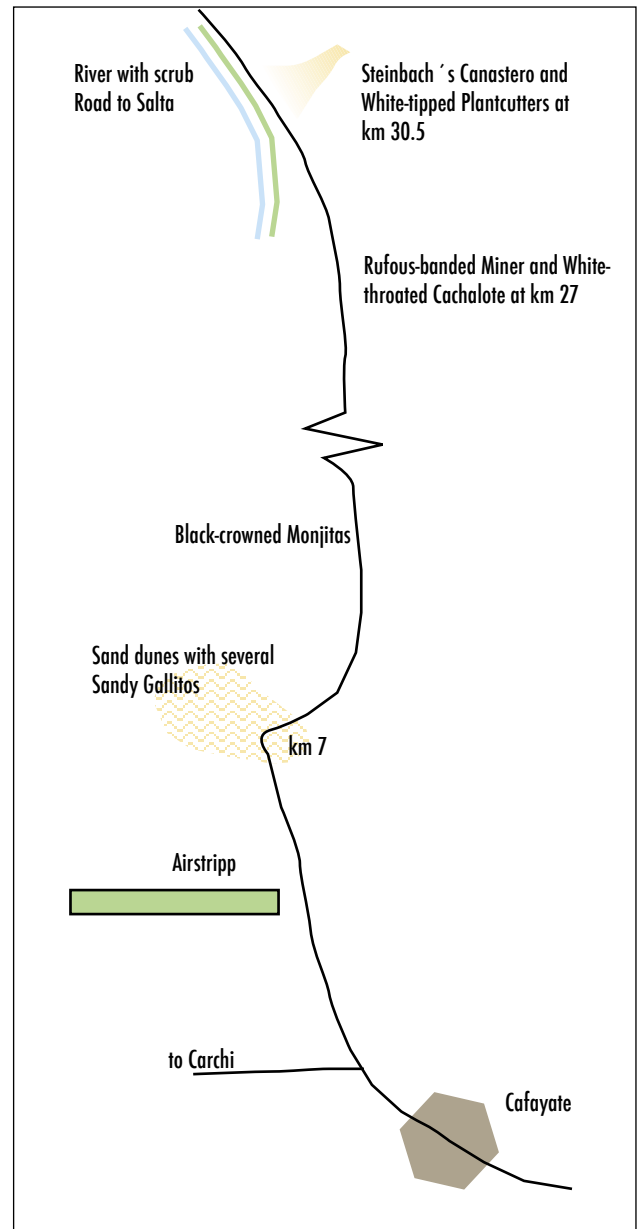
Cafayate (see map)

This nice town in the wine district offers a good base for birding the surroundings. 7 kms out of town towards Salta passed the airstrip on the left, you find sand dunes in a right hand curve and this is the site for Sandy gallito which is hard to see but not uncommon. Several are singing in the morning. Continuing along the road we saw Black-crowned monjitas and Burrowing parrots are common. At km 27 we saw White-throated cachalote and Rufous-banded miner and at km 30.5 we found a pair of the localized Steinbach's canastero as well as White-tipped plantcutters. The rest of the road to Salta is very scenic and reminds of the Middle East. See map for this site.

Birds seen: Brushland tinamou 3 heard between Cafayate and Salta, Red-backed Hawk 2, Red-legged Seriema 1 heard, Blue-crowned Parakeet 6 en route to Salta, Burrowing Parrot 50, Red-tailed Comet 3, White-fronted Woodpecker 3, Rufous-banded Miner 5, Steinbach's Canastero 2, Lesser Canastero 5, White-throated Cacholote 1, Sandy Gallito 5 heard and 2 seen, White-tipped Plantcutter 3, Cliff Flycatcher 1, Black-crowned Monjita 3, White-winged Black-Tyrant 1, Many-colored Chaco-Finch 2 en route to Salta, Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch 5, Band-tailed Sierra-Finch 2, Ringed Warbling-Finch 5, Greenish Yellow-Finch 2, Epaulet Oriole 1, Black Siskin 10.

Cuesta del Obispo

This high altitude site is south of Salta and easily found. We went here one afternoon for a short visit as we had information that Zimmer's tapaculo had been seen here a few weeks before. We saw a tapaculo that came out of a hole but it looked like a White-browed tapaculo to us. It did however not come in to playback either of that species or Zimmer's. We didn't really give this site a fair chance as this was more of a twitch for the tapaculo.



Map of the Cafayate area

Cordoba

Ichu Cruz

This town about an hour west of Cordoba is a site for chaco species but the habitat is very degraded and we birded here for an afternoon picking up some birds we didn't see elsewhere. There are a maze of tracks and we didn't really find a proper place to bird.

Birds seen: Brushland Tinamou 2 heard and 1 seen, Andean Tinamou 1 heard, Black-crowned Night-Heron 1, Tucuman Pygmy-Owl 1 at the campsite, Blue-tufted Starthroat 1 male, Brown Cacholote 2 heard, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper 2, Olive-crowned Crescent-chest 1, White-bellied Tyrannulet 1, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant 4, Cinereous Tyrant 1, Many-colored Chaco-Finch 3, Black-and-chestnut Warbling-Finch 3, Stripe-capped Sparrow 5.

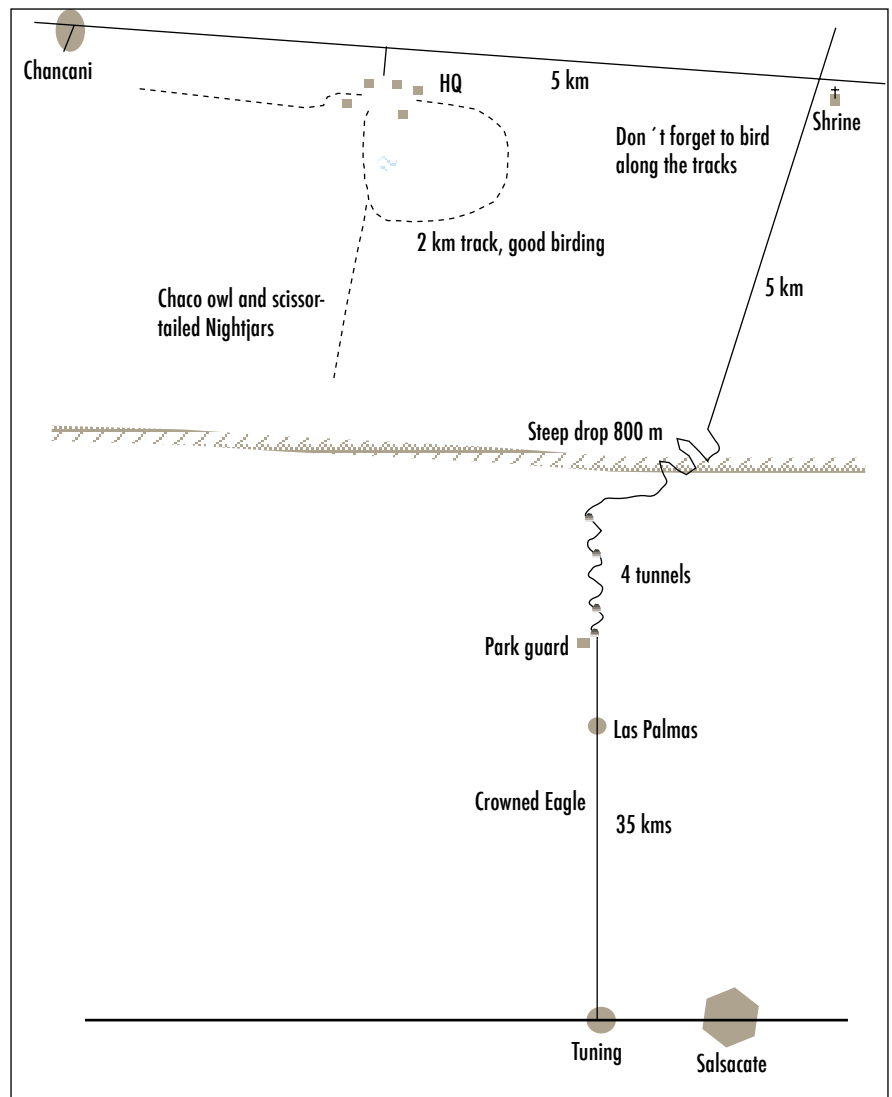
Pampa de Anchala

This nice upland area is easily reached from Ichu Cruz. Olrog's cinclodes can be seen in the stream just opposite the restaurant or in any of the roadside streams. Comechingones cinclodes is common and Puna (Cordoba) canastero is found along the track going uphill opposite the restaurant. A few morning hours is enough to do the site.

Chancani NP (see map)

This very nice chaco national park should not be missed. Just south of Salsacate is the small village Tuning and a dirttrack runs west from here for 35 kms to the first park HQ. The area is flat and you get the impression of driving on a lowland plain but you are driving on an upland plateau which is soon evident! Past the HQ you drive through four tunnels and after the fourth you have a grand view of the lowland plain below! This is reminiscent of the Rift Valley in East Africa and you are overlooking the lowland part of the national park. The drop down is 800 metres and once down the mountain there is a 5 km straight stretch to a four road junction with a shrine. Turn left here and drive for another 5 kms on a straight dirt road and you have the park HQ on your left. Don't neglect to bird along the dirt roads. Camping is the only option here and there are facilities in terms of toilets and showers. The village Chancani is another 5 kms along the road but it has no accomodation and not much else either so bring what you need. The staff at the headquarter knows a fair bit about birds and they are very helpful.

From the HQ there is a 2 km loop track which is good for birding and several other tracks penetrating the chaco forest. We spent one afternoon and one morning here but two full days can easily be spent here. It gets very hot during the midday.



Map of Chancani NP and how to get there

Birds seen: Tataupa tinamou 5 heard, Brushland Tinamou 2 seen, Andean Condor 5, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle 3, Crowned Eagle 1 imm, Swainson's Hawk 10, Spot-winged Falconet 2, Black-legged Seriema 1-2, Wattled Jacana 1, Blue-crowned Parakeet 20, Ash-colored Cuckoo 2, Dark-billed Cuckoo 2, Striped Cuckoo 5 heard, Chaco Owl 2 seen and another heard, Little Nightjar 2 heard, Scissor-tailed Nightjar 10, Blue-tufted Starthroat 1 female, Spot-backed Puffbird 2, White-fronted Woodpecker 5, Campo Flicker 1, Crested Hornero 10, Tufted Tit-Spinetail 2, Pale-breasted Spinetail 10, Stripe-crowned Spinetail 3, Short-billed Canastero 3, Brown Cacholote 5, Scimitar-billed Woodcreeper 5-10, Narrow-billed Woodcreeper 1, Variable Antshrike 1, Crested Gallito 1 seen and 3 heard, Chaco Suiriri 2, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant 4, Pearly-vented Tody-Tyrant 2, White-naped Xenopsaris 2, Southern Martin 50, Rufous-browed Peppershrike 1, Many-colored Chaco-Finch 7, Red-crested Finch 3, Black-crested Finch 2, Ringed Warbling-Finch 4, Black-capped Warbling-Finch 1.

Miramar/Mar Chiquita

Miramar is a small tourist resort by the south shore of Mar Chiquita which despite it's name is a sizeable lake. According to Wheatley this is a site for Crested and Dinelli's doraditos. We found our way down to the lake and river mouth but only found some Subtropical doraditos. If time permits (which we didn't have) good wetland birding can be had around the lake.

Birds seen: Greater rhea 10 en route, Spotted Nothura 3, Red-winged Tinamou 1, Spotted Nothura 10, Great Grebe 10, Cocoi Heron 1, Wood Stork 2, Chilean Flamingo 50, Southern Screamer 10, White-faced Whistling-Duck 6, Limpkin 2, Collared Plover 3, Wilson's Phalarope 50, Snowy-crowned Tern 25,

Striped Cuckoo 2 heard, Blue-tufted Starthroat 1 female, Spot-backed Puffbird 1, Checkered Woodpecker 2, Chotoy Spinetail 3, Yellow-chinned Spinetail 2, White-tipped Plantcutter 25, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant 1, Subtropical Doradito 3, Cliff Swallow 100+, Ruddy-breasted Seedeater 3, Red-crested Cardinal 2, Yellow-winged Blackbird 50, Scarlet-headed Blackbird 1.

Mendoza

Aconcagua NP

This beautiful area at the foot of South America's highest mountain offers high altitude birding with Creamy-rumped miner as a speciality. Drive from Mendoza west along the road to Chile and after about two hours you get to Puente del Inca which has a nice hostería. A few kilometres further towards Chile is a track to the right and a trail continues up into the mountains. The miner is easily found along the first part of the trail alongside other mountain birds.

The next morning we birded along the stream upstream from the Puente de Vacas which is about 10 kms towards Mendoza. Rather good birding here.

Birds seen: Aplomado Falcon 1, Gray-breasted Seedsnipe 5, Rufous-banded Miner 2, Creamy-rumped Miner 3, Scale-throated Earthcreeper 3, Gray-flanked Cinclodes 1, Steinbach's Canastero 2 about half-way from Mendoza, Black-billed Shrike-Tyrant 1, Black-fronted Ground-Tyrant 7, White-winged Black-Tyrant 5, Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch 5, Greater Yellow-Finch 50+, Thick-billed Siskin 2, Black Siskin 3, Yellow-rumped Siskin 10.

Trelew - Valdez Peninsula

San Antonio de Oeste

This town is 300 kms north of Trelew and a good base for birding the Patagonian scrub. At km 1110 about 35 kms east of town towards Viedma offers many good birds. Here are two tracks on either side of the road.

A few kilometres further on the road is laguna Monte on the left side of the road. The habitat is very degraded around here and we didn't see much. Just south of San Antonio is the beach resort Las Grutas. We only birded here for a few midday hours and it was naturally very quiet.

Birds seen: Elegant Crested Tinamou 5, Cinereous Harrier 2, Swainson's Hawk 1 imm, Red-backed Hawk 25, Least Seedsnipe 6, Burrowing Parrot 200, Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail 5, Short-billed Canastero 10, Patagonian Canastero 2, Firewood-gatherer 1, Brown Cacholote 2, White-tipped Plantcutter 3, White-crested Tyrannulet 10 Gray-headed tyrannulet may have been involved here, Greater Wagtail-Tyrant 2, Yellow-billed Tit-Tyrant 4, White Monjita 3, Hudson's Black-Tyrant 3, White-winged Black-Tyrant 3, Swainson's Flycatcher 2, Patagonian Mockingbird 100, White-banded Mockingbird 10, Carbonated Sierra-Finch 2, Ringed Warbling-Finch 2, Long-tailed Meadowlark 50.

Valdez Peninsula

This big peninsula is a popular tourist place for watching birds, whales and the mammal colonies. The only place to stay is at Puerto Piramides and it also has the only gas station. Before coming there you call in at the park HQ and pay the entrance fee and they also have a museum. From here you can turn left and drive 5 kms down to "Isla de los Pajaros" (Bird island) and view the seabirds from the shore.

There are a few tracks penetrating the peninsula to the various mammal colonies. Most of the peninsula is endless low Patagonian scrub. In the southeast you have the Punta Delgada which has a Sea elephant colony and an expensive restaurant. About halfway north along the coast is Caleta Valdez which has a Sealion colony and Killer whales are often seen here. We saw two that caused a lot of excitement among the many tourists here. This place has a popular restaurant. 5 kms north is a small Penguin colony. This was as far as we got before fog rolled in. Continuing north takes you to Punta Norte but we never got there. Near Puerto Piramides is Punta Piramides which is also worth visiting.

From Puerto Piramides you can go out in the bay to watch whales. We did this and it should not be missed. It is truly amazing to have 14 metre Southern Right whales just a few metres from the boat!

13 kms south of Puerto Maldryn at Punto Lomo is a Sea elephant colony. This was the only place where we saw Snowy Shearwater.

Birds seen on the peninsula: Lesser Rhea 1 ad with 12 big chicks and another group of 6, Darwin's/Spotted Nothura 3. Everyone sees Darwin's nothura on the peninsula but we were not really sure what species we saw. Elegant Crested Tinamou 75, Magellanic Penguin 500+, Southern giant petrel 50, Rock Shag 200, Imperial Shag 25, Cinereous Harrier 5, Aplomado Falcon 1, Magellanic Oystercatcher 4, Blackish Oystercatcher 35, Two-banded Plover 6 incl juv and pull, Semipalmated Sandpiper 4, Sanderling 50, Snowy Sheathbill 1, Dolphin Gull 6, Royal Tern 50, South American Tern 500+, Burrowing Owl 3, Common Miner 5, Scale-throated Earthcreeper 5, Band-tailed Earthcreeper 1, Patagonian Canastero 1, Rusty-backed Monjita 3, Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant 3, Lesser Shrike-Tyrant 4, Southern Martin 25, Short-billed Pipit 5, Common Diuca-Finch 20.

Punta Tambo

This site is 130 kms south of Trelew and it has the biggest mainland colony of Magellanic penguins and it is also the most reliable site for the Chubut steamerduck. Other seabirds are seen here as well with Southern giant petrels patrolling the colony. Lot's of tourists find their way here.

Birds seen: Magellanic penguin 5000+, Southern giant petrel 50, Rock Shag 200, Chubut steamer-duck 8, Brown Skua 10.

Calafate - Rio Gallegos

Laguna Nimez

This small inlet of the larger Lago Argentino just in the outskirts of Calafate offers some nice birding and Magellanic plover is regulary seen here. A good trail goes around the lagoon. Note that it is very windy here, reportedly less so in the morning.

Birds seen: Black-faced Ibis 5, Upland Goose 500+, Ashy-headed Goose 2, Chiloe Wigeon 50, Red Shoveler 50, Lake Duck 5, Cinereous Harrier 5, Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle 1, Red-gartered Coot 5, Magellanic Plover 3, South American Snipe 3, Baird's Sandpiper 5, Austral Negrito 50, Correndera Pipit 2, Short-billed Pipit 25, Patagonian Yellow-Finch 1.

Moreno Glacier NP

This nice national park is about an hour west of Calafate and offers a spectacular view of the big glacier. Boats goes out to the edge of the glacier but we settled for distant views. Around here we saw two pairs of Spectacled ducks.

Birds seen: Spectacled Duck 4, Austral Parakeet 6, Magellanic Woodpecker 1 male, Magellanic Tapaculo 1, White-winged Black-Tyrant 1, Patagonian Sierra-Finch 3.

Hooded Grebe lake

This lake is several hours north of Calafate and has several Hooded grebes and loads of Silvery alongside many other waterbirds. Best to arrange a visit here by contacting Santiago Imberti.

Birds seen including en route from Calafate and to Rio Gallegos: Lesser Rhea 35 incl 12 juvs, Silvery Grebe 200+, Hooded Grebe 12 incl displaying, Chilean Flamingo 10, Black-necked Swan 500+, Coscoroba Swan 10, Flying Steamerduck 5, Magellanic Oystercatcher 1, Two-banded Plover 30, Tawny-throated Dotterel 17, Magellanic Plover 4 incl 1 juv, Baird's Sandpiper 5, Least Seedsnipe 200+, Brown-hooded Gull 25, Common Miner 5, Short-billed Miner 3, Scale-throated Earthcreeper 3, Lesser Canastero 3, Chocolate-vented Tyrant 15, Gray-bellied Shrike-Tyrant 3, Austral Negrito 200+, Short-billed Pipit 25, Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch 1, Mourning Sierra-Finch 30, Patagonian Yellow-Finch 25.

Estancia Angostura

This very nice Estancia is about two hours drive from the grebes and it is the stake-out for Austral rail which at least is heard just outside the house. Very good food and the surrounding is nice as a change from the endless dry patagonian scrub which you have been driving through. Just walk 200 metres back the track to the red gate and play the tape of the rail and you may get views of them in the reed.

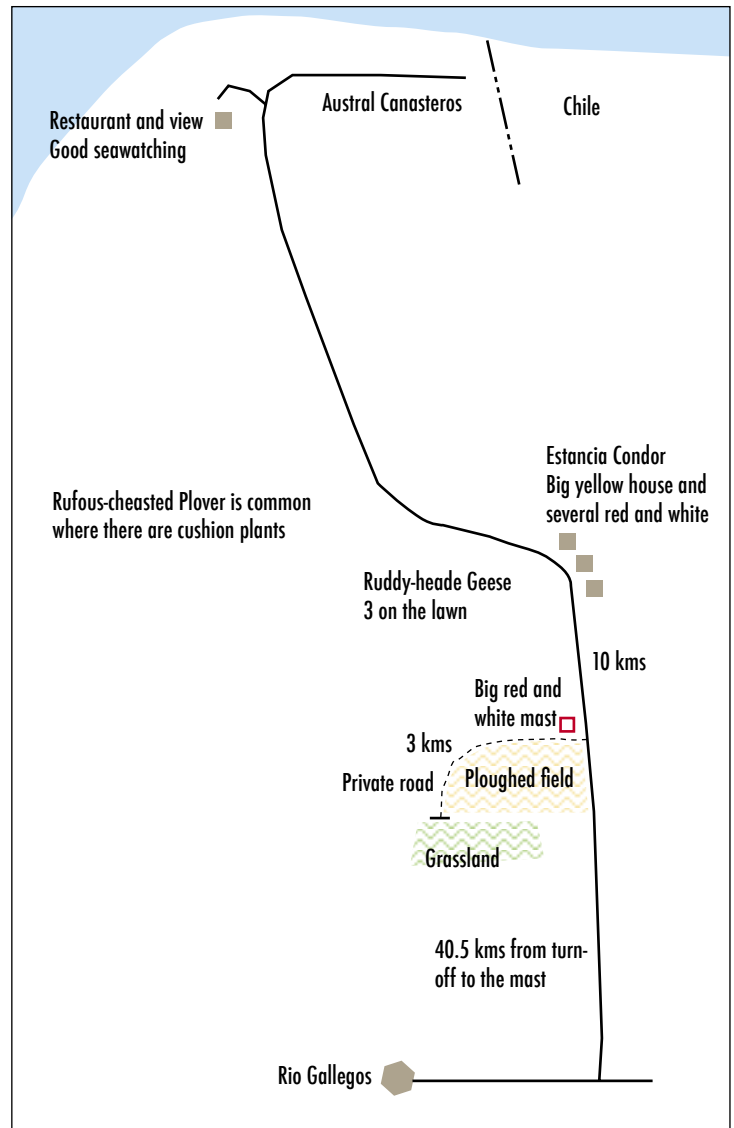
Birds seen: Black-faced Ibis 5, Silver Teal 4, Cinereous Harrier 4, Austral Rail 2 seen+2 heard, Wren-like

Rushbird 2, Many-colored Rush-Tyrant 1, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant 1, Spectacled Tyrant 5, Yellow-winged Blackbird 5.

Cabo Virgenes (see map)

This nice area is 130 kms south of Rio Gallegos. Driving is through rolling grassy steppe that is grazed by countless sheep. After 41 kms there is a big red and white mast on the left and a track branches off to the left here. When we were here the steppe had been ploughed on the left of the road. They do this to get rid of the cushion plants, which is the habitat for Rufous-chested plover, and give way to the grass which is good for grazing and also the habitat for Black-throated finch. After a few kilometres along this track we came to a gate and on the other side was higher, ungrazed grass and around here we saw the finches. Note: This is a private road. About halfway to the point is Estancia Condor and at the lawns in front of the houses is where we saw three Ruddy-headed geese. At any cushion plant areas before the Estancia you can see the plover. At the point we enjoyed lots of seabirds with Great shearwaters among others. A track continues down to a penguin colony and along this track we saw several Austral canasteros. Magellanic horned owl is supposed to be here but we failed to find them.

Birds seen: Lesser Rhea 5, Magellanic Penguin 1000+, Great Grebe 5, Black-browed Albatross 50, Southern Giant Petrel 25, Greater Shearwater 5, Sooty Shearwater 500+, Manx Shearwater 50, Imperial Shag 200, Upland Goose 100+, Ruddy-headed Goose 5, Red-backed Hawk 3, Magellanic Oystercatcher 1, Rufous-chested Dotterel 15, Baird's Sandpiper 4, Least Seed-snipe 25, Parasitic Jaeger 1, South American Tern 300+, Common Miner 3, Scale-throated Earthcreeper 1, Austral Canastero 5, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant 2, Austral Negrito 100+, Correndera Pipit 10, Canary-winged (Black-throated) Finch 5.



Map of the Cabo Virgenes area

Ushuaia

The Rubbish dump

This place is a few kilometres out of town towards the national park and the site for White-throated caracara. They cover the garbage so it is not as good as it used to be judging from other reports.

Birds seen: White-throated caracara, Southern caracara 1, Yellow-bridled finch 1male.

Estancia Haberton

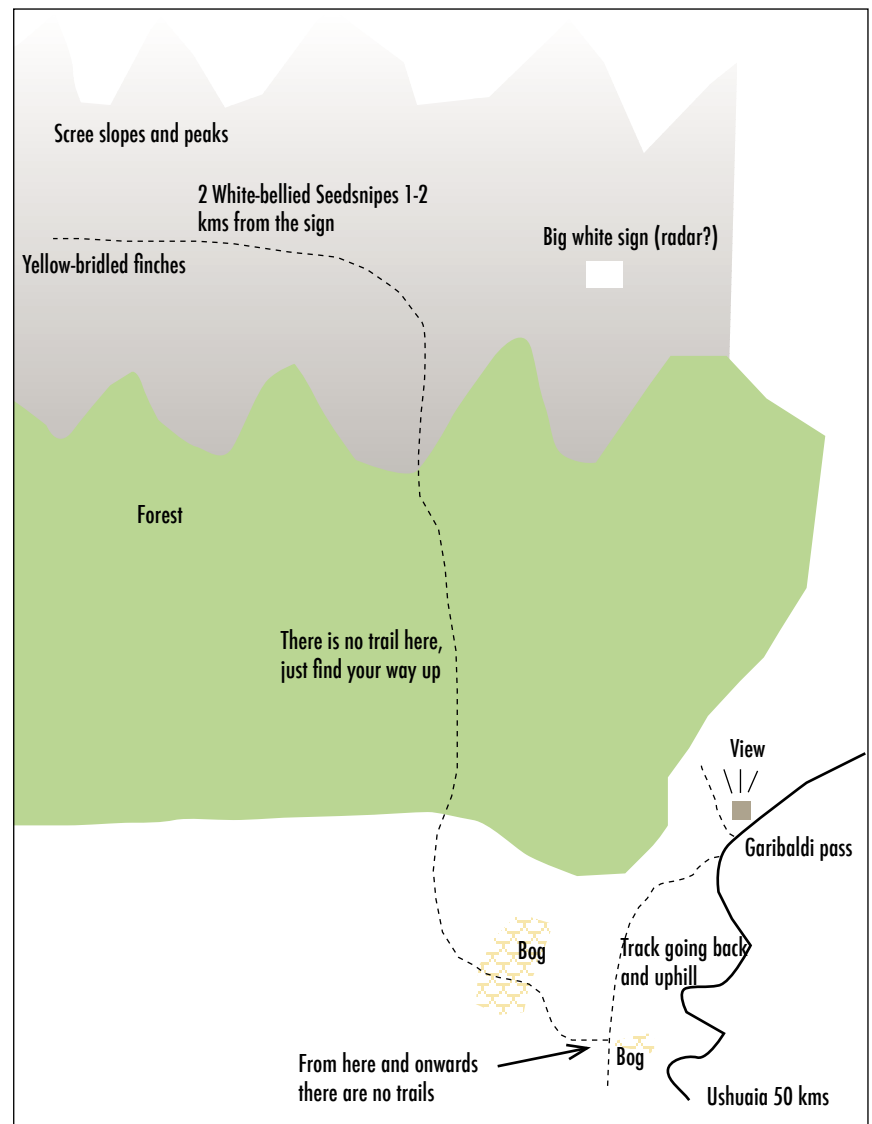
You can go out into the Beagle Channel from this Estancia which is one and a half hour east of Ushuaia or you can go on a full day boatride from Ushuaia to here. There is a Magellanic penguin colony here in which there are some pairs of Gentoo penguins, the northernmost site for them. The boatride offers seabirds in the channel and both Flying and Flightless steamerducks are seen as well as Kelp geese.

Birds seen: Gentoo Penguin 13, Magellanic Penguin 1000+, Black-browed Albatross 50, Southern Giant Petrel 5, Imperial Shag 200, Kelp Goose 5, Ashy-headed Goose 2, Flightless Steamerduck 3+2 with 5

juv, Flying Steamerduck 10, Magellanic Oystercatcher 2, Chilean Skua 10, Dolphin Gull 10, South American Tern 300+, Gray-flanked Cinclodes 2, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant 1, Austral Negrito 50, Chilean Swallow 50, Austral Thrush 5, Black-chinned Siskin 10.

Garibaldi Pass (see map)

This place is 50 kms northeast from Ushuaia along the main road. At the pass there is a shrine and a viewpoint. A track goes up to the left 50 m before the shrine and we walked this track a few hundred metres and walked off to the right by a bog and scrambled our way uphill through the forest to the alpine zone which you see a few hundred metres uphill. Walking here is easy as the altitude is only 7-800 metres. After two hours we had found two White-bellied seedsnipe, a species most people dip on, most people however look for it at the ski-lift area. We only had one trip-report from people who had been here and they didn't see it but we had many reports from people who had tried at the ski-lift without seeing it. Also up here were some stunning Yellow-bridled finches. A very scenic area provided the weather is good which it was on our visit.



Map of Garibaldi pass

Birds seen: South American Snipe 1, White-bellied Seedsnipe 2, Bar-winged Cinclodes 3, White-crested Elaenia 10, Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant 4, Ochre-naped Ground-Tyrant 2, Chilean Swallow 20, Austral Thrush 5, Yellow-bridled Finch 3, Black-chinned Siskin 10.

Birding sites and Birds - Chile

All sites in Chile are well covered in "Where to Watch Birds in Chile" except the Chillian area where the near-endemic Chestnut-throated Huet-huet occurs. This is the only area that I have bothered to make a map for.

La Campana NP

This national park is situated roughly 100 kms northwest of Santiago near the town Ulmue where there are lots of accommodations. We found birding here very slow with few birds heard and seen, although there is nice forest. The site holds several Chilean endemics and should not be missed. There are two entrances and we birded both. The Rufous-legged owl was heard a few hundred metres above the upper guard station and the guards know the birds well and can provide you with info about where to find what.

Birds seen: California quail 10, Chilean pigeon 50, Giant hummingbird 2, Dark-bellied cinclodes 2,

Thorn-tailed rayadito 5, Dusky-tailed canastero 2, Moustached turca 1 seen+2 heard, White-throated tapaculo 1 seen+1 heard, White-crested elaenia 25, Tufted tit-tyrant 15, Chilean swallow common, Austral thrush common, Chilean mockingbird common, Austral blackbird common.
Evening: Rufous-legged owl 1 heard, Dusky tapaculo 1 heard.

Concon

This town is by the coast just north of Vina del mar. We birded for a short while just north of the river mouth north of town and at another river mouth just north of here. To get to the northern river mouth you have to drive on the beach to a railway bridge and walk on the railway north where there is a nice lagoon.

Birds seen: Red-backed hawk 1, Blackish oystercatcher 2, American oystercatcher 10, White-backed stilt 220, Franklins gull 500, Many-coloured rush-tyrant 1, Austral negrito 2, Misto yellow-finch 5, Whimbrel 25, Spectakled tyrant 5,

El Yeso

This high altitude site is southeast of Santiago and the best base is at San Jose de Maipo from where it is only twenty minutes to the turn-off. From there it is another hour and a half stiff driving to get up to the bog for the Diademed sandpiper-plover. We gave this site to short time unfortunately.

there are two roads running parallel on either side of a river from Santiago to San Jose de Maipo. Make sure you stay north of the river as it is a better and faster road. At San Jose de Maipo there are some basic hotels.

Birds seen: Fire-eyed diucon 2, Andean condor 6, Common duica-finch 5, Red-backed hawk 1, Crested duck 30, Baird's sandpiper 2, Puna snipe 5, Grey-bellied seedsnipe 5, Mountain parakeet 8, Giant hummingbirdx 5, White-sided hillstar 3, Bar-winged cinclodes 10, Moustached turca 3, White-browed ground-tyrant 15, Great yellow-finch 50.

Estacion Colina

This site is along the road to Ulmue from the highway north of Santiago. The actual marsh is some 4 kms west of Estacion Colina just next to the road.

Birds seen: Southern wigeon 25, Rosybill 3, Spot-flanked gallinule 1, South american painted snipe 3, South american snipe 5, Wren-like rushbird 3.

Quintero pelagic

Quintero is a nice seaside town north of Vina del Mar. We went down to the harbour and found an office that offered pelagics. We paid about 300\$ for a halfday excursion including staff and chum. The boat can take up to 70 people so we had lots of space. We left at 5.45 and came back at 11.30. There are several places to stay close to the harbour.

Birds seen: Masatierra petrel 1, Stejneger's petrel 1, Pterodroma sp 5 probably Stejneger's, Bullers albatross 1 ad, Salvins albatross 20, Black-browed albatross 10, Southern giant petrel 5, Northern giant petrel 1, White-chinned petrel 10, Westland petrel 5, Pink-footed shearwater 50, Sooty shearwater 500, Wilson's stormpetrel 25, Peruvian diving-petrel 5, Humbolt penguin 2, Peruvian booby 30, peruvian pelican 25, Grey phalarope 50.

Quintero, Punta Liles

Punta Liles is just above the harbour and town. There are several roads leading down to the sea between the houses here and we just tried one and saw what we wanted.

Birds seen: Chilean seaside cinclodes 1, Black-chinned siskin 2, Rufous-tailed plantcutter 1.

Termas de Chillan (see map)

Thermas de Chillan is about 80 kms east of the PanAmerican highway and about 400 kms south of Santiago, that is about halfway between Santiago and Puert Montt. It is a long drive either way you want to tackle this site. If you want the Chestnut-throated Huet-huet you'll have to do the drive and it offers nice birding in general.

Birds seen: White-throated treerunner 5, Austral parakeet 2, Green-backed firecrown 2, Fire-eyed diucon 3, Thorn-tailed rayadito 25, Austral blackbird common, Chilean flicker 2, Striped woodpecker 2, Magellanic woodpecker 1 female, Magellanic tapaculo 1, Chucao tapaculo 3, Chestnut-throated huet-huet 1 seen+2 heard, Des Muir's wiretail 2, Patagonian sierra-finch 5.

En route Chillan-Puerto Montt

Birds seen: Short-eared owl 1, Black-faced ibis, Southern lapwing – common.

Puyehue NP

This rather nice national park east of Osorno, which is north of Puerto Montt, offered very poor birding at the time of our visit, partly because we had a light drizzle for most part of the day and it was cold. Not much was singing and very few birds seen.

Birds seen: Black-throated huet-huet 5 heard, Green-backed firecrown common, Chucao tapaculo 10, Austral pygmy-owl 1, Patagonian tyrant 1.

Ferry crossing to Chiloé island

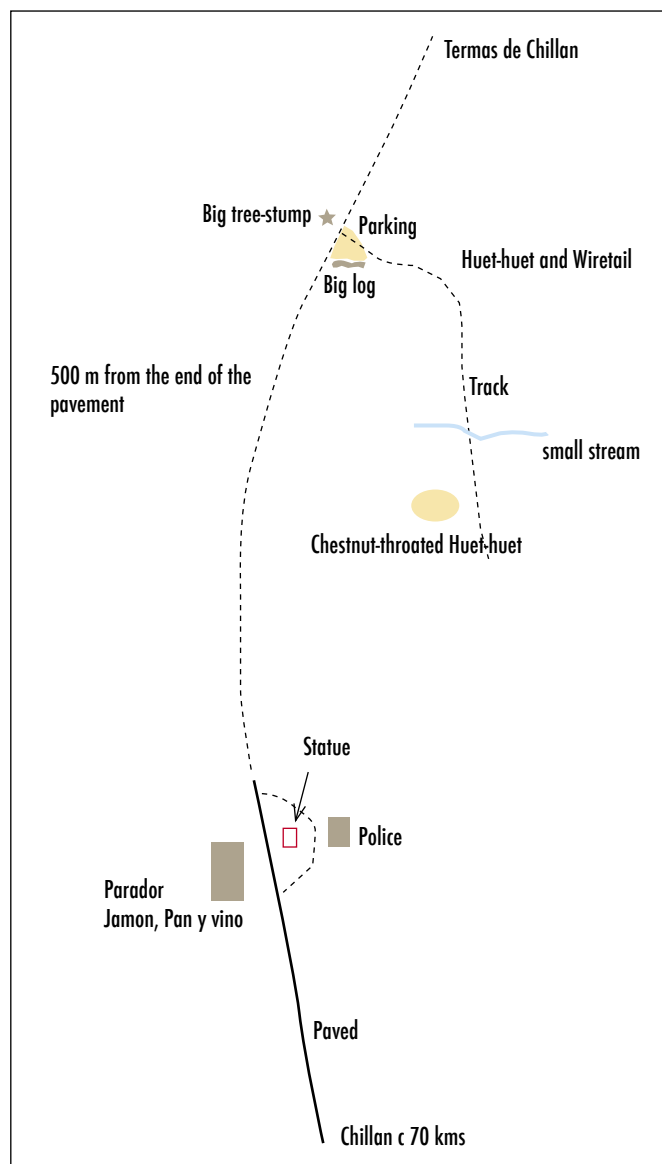
This half-hour ferry-crossing offers a mini-pelagic. It is surprisingly busy and birdy. The ferries are coming and going all the time so there is no waiting.

Birds seen: Blue-eyed shag 50, Red-legged cormorant 50, Black-browed albatross 3, Giant petrel sp.1, Sooty shearwater 200+, Pink-footed shearwater 25, Silvery grebe 25, Magellanic diving-petrel 20, Magellanic penguin 10, Black-necked swan 25, Whimbrel 5.

Chiloé NP

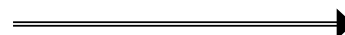
As we didn't see either Ochre-flanked tapaculo or Slender-billed parakeet at Puyehue, we went here as Jonas had been here on vacation a few months earlier and seen both. It is about 1 hour drive from the ferry down to the middle of the island to Cuzco where there are hotels. From here it is another hour on dirt road to the park. There are cabins to stay at near the sea and this is where we saw the tapaculo. The parakeets were seen a bit further on in another valley.

Birds seen: Slender-billed parakeet 10, Ochre-flanked tapaculo 1, Chucao tapaculo 5, Black-throated huet-huet 1 heard, Rufous-tailed plantcutter 25, Southern wigeon 5, Patagonian sierra-finch 5, Green-backed firecrown 5, Hudsonian godwit 4, Plumbeous rail 15.



Map of the Termas de Chillan area

The next two pages show some of the good birds we saw on this trip. All photos by Roger Ahlman.





Ruddy-headed Goose at Cabo Virgenes



Black-throated Finch at Cabo Virgenes



Tawny-throated Dotterel near Rio Gallegos



Rufous-cheasted Plover at Cabo Virgenes



Record shot of Crowned Eagle near Chancani NP



Spot-winged falconet at Chancani NP



White-necked Xenopsaris at Chancani NP



Seabirds off Quinteros, Chile



Red-tailed Comet at Infiernillo



Slender-tailed Woodstar at Calilegua NP



Saffron-cowled Blackbird near Gualayechú



Snowy Shearwater at Punto Lomo