

Chile & Falklands Islands Birding Trip Report

By Stephen & Sandra Brauning (stevebrauning@yahoo.com)

Calendar December 29, 2018-January 17, 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
We traveled overnight from Newark New Jersey to Santiago, Chile on Dec. 29, 2018 on United Airlines, through Dallas/Fort Worth (DFW) & Houston (IAH). Arriving at 10:15AM, then renting a car, we had plenty of time to drive south the approx.. 4 hours to Lago Colbun and then to our lodging in Vilches.						29 Travel UA1866 EWR-SCL Depart 3:20PM
30 Arrival SCL: 10:15AM Rent car at "O'Clock", Drive 4+hrs to Lago Colbun and Vilches Lodging at Hosteria de Vilches	31 AM Birding Altos de Lircay PM drive to San Jose de Maipo 4 hrs Lodging at Hostal de Antaño, Maipo	1 AM birding Maipo valley, Yeso, etc. PM Drive to Chicureo abajo Lodging at B&B Chicureo	2 AM Batutco & Lampa, Concón & West entrance of Cerro La Campana at Olmué. Lodging at B&B Chicureo	3 AM drive to airport by 8AM LA293 SCL-PUQ (Punta Arenas) Depart 10AM Arrive 13:25 Rent car Avis Lodging at Hostal Ovejero	4 AM birding Punta Arenas area, Rt. 9, Tres puentes, Laguna Los Palos, Pali-Aike, lodging at Hostal Ovejero	5 Drive to the airport for travel to Falklands LA895 PUQ-MPN Depart 12:20PM Arrive 13:50 Transfer flight to Saunders Island. Excursion to "The Rookery"
6 Saunders Island Full day trip to "The Neck"	7 Transfer to Pebble Island Eastern side tour	8 Pebble Island Western side excursion	9 Transfer to Bleaker Island, Pebbly Bay	10 Bleaker Island Long Gulch, Big Pond	11 Transfer to Stanley, excursion to Volunteer Point	12 Return flight to Punta Arenas LA894 MPN-PUQ Depart 15:28 Arrive 17:07 Lodging at Hostal Ovejero
13 Birding Magallanes National Reserve. Lodging at Hostal Ovejero	14 Flight to Santiago LA280 PUQ-SCL Depart 8:40 Arrive 12:58 Travel to Nogales near La Calera, birding agricultural areas	15 Birding North entrance of Cerro La Campana (Palmas de Ocoa).	16 Relaxed day.	17 SCL-SDQ Depart 7:13AM Avianca #98 Through Bogota Arrive SDQ 4:37pm		

Introduction:

Both of us are very avid birders, and having lived for many years and traveled extensively in Latin America, we've birded a lot of places. Our approach to birding trips is to research and plan everything ourselves. We like to get the maximum number of species and lifers, of course, but are realistic in that if we don't get local or professional guides, we'll miss some birds. But we are not satisfied with a guide telling us "that's a", and "ticking" it off the list. We like the challenge of finding the birds ourselves on our own time-frame. Plus we are looking for economy, and since we speak Spanish, we can negotiate the logistics and enjoy the contacts with locals. With a life list of over 2,200 species of birds, all in the Americas, we are pretty confident in being able to handle the birds.

This trip came about since former colleagues of ours retired in Chile, and wanted to visit them, and even though we knew it wouldn't generate a super-high number of species, most would be lifers. And then the Falklands trip

came about since we really wanted to see penguins and we found that Chile was the best way to get there. Due to the complicated logistics on the islands, we decided to pay for a package for that portion.

Preparations:

We were able to do all our bookings and reservations on-line: flights, of course, hotels mostly on Booking.com, some on Expedia, and rental cars mostly on www.economycarrentals.com. We did not hire any guides since they seemed very expensive. Albatross Birding www.albatross-birding.com/ would be a good option, and we definitely missed out on some species, but we stuck with the plan.

The Birds of Chile field guide by Alvaro Jaramillo, published by Princeton, is a must, and as a bonus, it covers the Falkland Islands. We also downloaded many of the bird songs from xeno canto.

Overall impressions of Chile, logistics, and birding:

Comparing Chile to other places we have traveled, birded and lived in Latin America, our overall impression is that it is a prosperous, orderly and safe country, easy to travel and bird. As far as geography, as is well known, it is extremely long north to south, but not very wide east to west. People are quite friendly, very social and expressive, and generally helpful. The highways are excellent, although the tolls kind of add up, car rental is easy and reasonable, gas stations and ATMs (for getting pesos) are fairly common and easy, and food is abundant and reasonable, especially fruit in the right season. The general climate in the center is quite dry, wetter as you head south, drier as you head north. It also gets cooler as you go south. We were there in the southern hemisphere's high summer, a great time for birding.

Birding is challenging in that there are not many birders around, in fact, in all our travels in Chile, we never encountered any other birders. Even in the national parks, when we asked the park personnel about birds, they generally only had vague answers and seemed not very knowledgeable.

Having a smart phone with a good plan helped with all kinds of communications, navigation, etc., for everything from normal phone calls, Google, Google maps, Whatsapp for messaging, etc. We live in the Dominican Republic and our cell phone is through a company called "Claro", and Claro also operates in Chile (and Mexico – see our other trip reports) so I had full service and no extra charge, except for a few voice calls out of the country which were also cheap. Just being able to call the car rental places, hotels and restaurants, was nice. If you don't have service in the country, try going to a Claro store and buying a SIM card. Speaking Spanish helps although English is not uncommon.

Day-by-day report:

Sunday, Dec. 30:

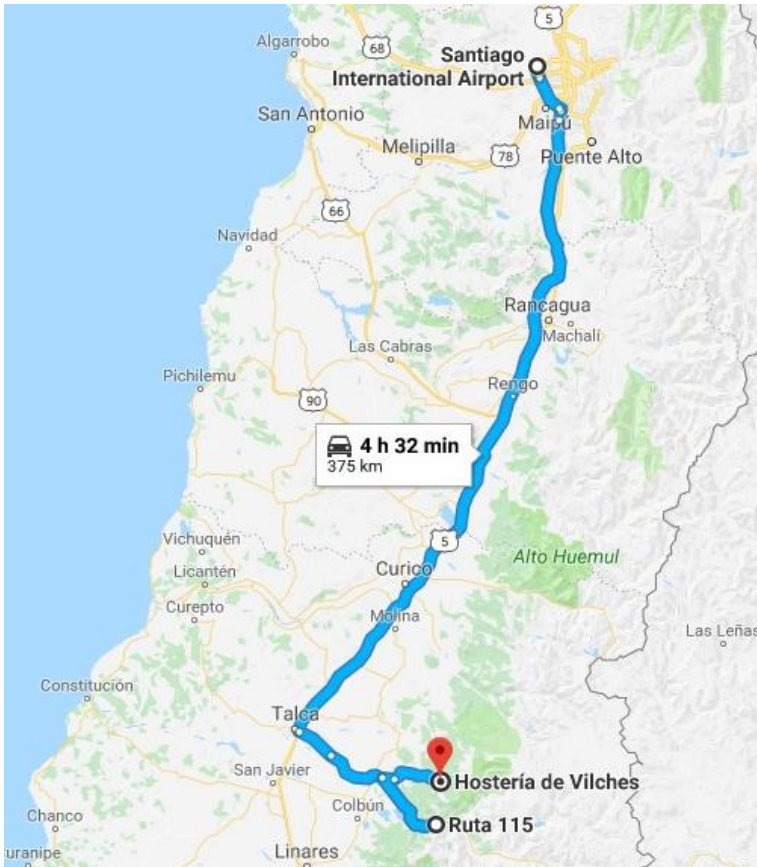
Arrival at Santiago airport (SCL), officially named Aeropuerto Internacional Comodoro Arturo Merino Benitez: Passport control was very slow, with a long line snaking around. After about 30 minutes we got lucky and got pulled out of the long line to a special line where we had seen wheel-chair bound and elderly go through, I guess due to my gray hair. We probably saved 45 minutes to an hour of wait time. Customs (checking your luggage) was pretty quick, although they are strict about bringing in food and we were told that we were not allowed to bring in our mix of almond, walnuts and cashews, since they were not in their original packaging. But the guy was nice and let us go through with them anyway. We also changed some US dollars cash to Chilean pesos at a booth. The exchange rate was in the 600 + range to the US dollar, and varied somewhat at to where we exchanged. The best way was to use ATMs.

The airport is doing a huge expansion project, so at some time in late 2019 or 2020, there should be many more gates, better passport control and customs, and better flow of traffic. But we hit it at a very busy time.

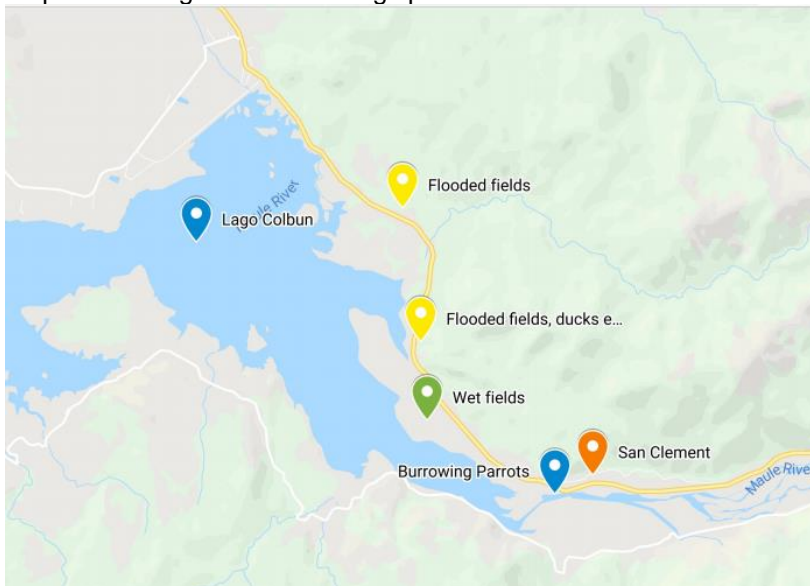
Rental car: Economy Rent-a-car is off-site, about 10 minutes from the airport at Barros Borgo 20, primer Subsuelo, Providencia. It is also literally around the corner from the Diego de Almagro hotel, which we stayed at later, a reasonable and very nice hotel.

They had an employee meet us with a sign with our name (since we had sent our arrival information). Cost: US\$24 a day, plus, as is common, there was a security voucher of something like US\$500. Make sure to get the toll option since around Santiago it seems almost all highways have tolls, and most are electronic. So we got on the road pretty fast. And we headed south to **Lago Colbún, Hostería de Vilches, and Altos de Lircay**.

Google Map: Santiago International Airport to Lago Colbún (Ruta 115) and Hostería de Vilches, Región del Maule, Chile



Map below: Lago Colbun birding spots



As stated before, the highways were great, and we had no problem finding Lago Colbun. It was tricky finding a place to observe birds on the water, though, since the highway right along the lake edge was narrow, not good for pulling over. But water level was high, and there were flooded spots and wet fields along the road sides, where there were ducks, waders, etc. The highlight was the flock of Burrowing Parakeets (or Parrots if you please) found around the little village of San Clemente. After hearing them nearby, we easily found a flock of over 40, which was very active and was going back and forth from their burrow colony, easily visible on the opposite side of the river on the top of the embankment, just above the river.

Lago Colbun eBird list, Sun Dec 30, 2018 4:40 PM Duration: 2 hour(s), 10 minute(s) Distance:4.2 kilometer(s) 23 species total	
2	<u>Spectacled Duck</u> <i>Specularnas specularis</i>
18	<u>Chiloe Wigeon</u> <i>Mareca sibilatrix</i>
35	<u>Yellow-billed Pintail</u> <i>Anas georgica</i>
2	<u>Yellow-billed Teal</u> <i>Anas flavirostris</i>
4	<u>Eared Dove</u> <i>Zenaida auriculata</i>
38	<u>White-winged Coot</u> <i>Fulica leucoptera</i>
42	<u>Southern Lapwing</u> <i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
17	<u>Neotropic Cormorant</u> <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>
1	<u>Cocoi Heron</u> <i>Ardea cocoi</i>
5	<u>Great Egret</u> <i>Ardea alba</i>
7	<u>Black-faced Ibis</u> <i>Theristicus melanopis</i>
1	<u>Variable Hawk (Red-backed)</u> <i>Geranoaetus polyosoma (Red-backed)</i>
23	<u>Chimango Caracara</u> <i>Milvago chimango</i>
1	<u>American Kestrel</u> <i>Falco sparverius</i>
42	<u>Burrowing Parakeet</u> <i>Cyanoliseus patagonus</i>
5	<u>White-crested Elaenia</u> <i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
4	<u>Blue-and-white Swallow</u> <i>Pygochelidon cyanoleuca</i>

10	Chilean Swallow <i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>
5	Chilean Mockingbird <i>Mimus thenca</i>
20	Black-chinned Siskin <i>Spinus barbatus</i>
1	Long-tailed Meadowlark <i>Leistes loyca</i>
8	Austral Blackbird <i>Curaeus curaeus</i>
2	Grassland Yellow-Finch <i>Sicalis luteola</i>

Less than an hour from Lago Colbun, Hostería de Vilches is a family-owned hotel with rustic rooms and cabins, and beautiful grounds. It's the perfect staging location to bird Altos de Lircay National Park, which is in the transition area between the drier and mostly barren mountains in central Chile and the wetter forests in the more temperate southern Andes. Nothofagus trees predominate, to the point of being almost the only large tree present in most of the forests that we saw. On the way to the Hostería, highway 705 had extensive work being done and was rough and dusty, but once finished it should be better. There are various good birding spots like near the river and in agricultural fields and orchards along the road: we just pulled over occasionally and drove into several short roads in scrubby areas. It was the only place we saw the White-throated Hawk.



K-705 on the way to Vilchez 14 species	
7	<u>California Quail</u> <i>Callipepla californica</i>
4	<u>Chilean Pigeon</u> <i>Patagioenas araucana</i>
6	<u>Eared Dove</u> <i>Zenaida auriculata</i>
1	<u>White-throated Hawk</u> <i>Buteo albigula</i>
9	<u>Chimango Caracara</u> <i>Milvago chimango</i>
2	<u>Austral Parakeet</u> <i>Enicognathus ferrugineus</i>
16	<u>White-crested Elaenia</u> <i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
2	<u>Fire-eyed Diucon</u> <i>Xolmis pyrope</i>
9	<u>Chilean Swallow</u> <i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>
5	<u>Austral Thrush</u> <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>
1	<u>Chilean Mockingbird</u> <i>Mimus thenca</i>
7	<u>Black-chinned Siskin</u> <i>Spinus barbatus</i>
2	<u>Rufous-collared Sparrow</u> <i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
2	<u>Common Diuca-Finch</u> <i>Diuca diuca</i>

At Hostería Vilchez, we had over an hour before dark (at this latitude, it doesn't get dark until like 10PM this time of year), so were able to walk the grounds and the road. We did the same after returning from the national park the next day. This was the only place that we saw the Green-backed Firecrown and that was on the hummingbird feeders they had. This may be due to the season, and other times of year it may be more common. This list is for the two days:

Hostería Vilchez 10 species	
5	<u>Chilean Pigeon</u> <i>Patagioenas araucana</i>
4	<u>Green-backed Firecrown</u> <i>Sephanoides sephaniodes</i>
4	<u>Austral Parakeet</u> <i>Enicognathus ferrugineus</i>
4	<u>White-crested Elaenia</u> <i>Elaenia albiceps</i>

2	<u>Chilean Swallow</u> <i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>
4	<u>Austral Thrush</u> <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>
5	<u>Rufous-collared Sparrow</u> <i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
6	<u>Shiny Cowbird</u> <i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>
2	<u>Patagonian Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus patagonicus</i>
2	<u>Common Diuca-Finch</u> <i>Diuca diuca</i>

Monday, Dec. 31: Altos de Lircay National Park: Our hotel was the perfect staging location to bird Altos de Lircay National Park, which is in the transition area between the drier and mostly barren mountains in central Chile and the wetter forests in the more temperate southern Andes. The forest is amazing dominated by huge Nothofagus trees, to the point of being almost the only large tree present in most of the forests that we saw.

Driving up to the entrance of the national park early in the morning, we heard a Chestnut-throated Huet-huet along the side of the road. We parked by the closed gate. We heard another “Huet-huet” again further up the road, but never saw one. This was a miss for us, but at least we heard it. So we walked the road up past the national park office for a couple kilometers and then back to the Sendero Antumahuída, which was spectacular! We got most of our targets here, including the Chucao Tapaculo which put on quite a show for us, demonstrating what could almost be considered teleporting: first he’s back there, then he’s right here, then he’s over there somewhere! This went on for about 20 minutes, on two occasions, and thankfully we got a couple of good views throughout the process. Another bird that was really entertaining was the Thorn-tailed Rayadito, aptly named due to the tail’s appearance as well as the bird’s behavior: “Rayadito” could be translated “little lightning bolt”, and it’s constantly flitting about.

This list is just for the trail, but we didn’t see anything different throughout the rest of the national park.

Altos de Lircay National Park, 19 species	
1	<u>Variable Hawk (Red-backed)</u> <i>Geranoaetus polyosoma</i> (Red-backed)
2	<u>Chilean Flicker</u> <i>Colaptes pitius</i>
1	<u>Chimango Caracara</u> <i>Milvago chimango</i>
4	<u>Austral Parakeet</u> <i>Enicognathus ferrugineus</i>
2	<u>Chucao Tapaculo</u> <i>Scelorchilus rubecula</i>
7	<u>White-throated Treerunner</u> <i>Pygarrhichas albogularis</i>
12	<u>Thorn-tailed Rayadito</u> <i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>
6	<u>Tufted Tit-Tyrant</u> <i>Anairetes parulus</i>

24	<u>White-crested Elaenia</u> <i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
1	<u>Fire-eyed Diucon</u> <i>Xolmis pyrope</i>
1	<u>House Wren</u> <i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
2	<u>Sedge Wren</u> <i>Cistothorus platensis</i>
5	<u>Austral Thrush</u> <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>
2	<u>Chilean Mockingbird</u> <i>Mimus thenca</i>
23	<u>Black-chinned Siskin</u> <i>Spinus barbatus</i>
5	<u>Rufous-collared Sparrow</u> <i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
6	<u>Shiny Cowbird</u> <i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>
6	<u>Patagonian Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus patagonicus</i>
2	<u>Common Diuca-Finch</u> <i>Diuca diuca</i>

Now, so far we had a major “miss”, the Magellanic Woodpecker, and this was going to be our best, maybe only, chance for this spectacular bird. So as we were walking back down and out of the park, we were feeling a little down. Sure, we got a bunch of lifers. Sure, they said at the Hostería that they had the woodpecker on their grounds, but like once in the prior month, so, we weren’t very hopeful since we had spent the whole morning in prime habitat without even a hint of the bird. So we still felt a “void”. Then, we heard it. Thankfully we had prepared with audio files, and immediately recognized the very distinctive whiney and chirpy call, and over the fence southwest of the road, in the large trees a pair was jumping around about 100 meters away. They came to within about 50 meters and we had good views for about 10 minutes, and while we were watching, there was another distinct staccato, typical woodpecker call reminiscent of the Downy in North America: the Striped Woodpecker! No surprise, it’s the same genus as the Downy. So, right there in the same spot, two lifer woodpeckers. That saved the day.

The location is several hundred yard above the gate.

3	<u>Striped Woodpecker</u> <i>Dryobates lignarius</i>
3	<u>Magellanic Woodpecker</u> <i>Campephilus magellanicus</i>

So we went back the Hostería and packed up and left, very pleased with the stay. We really appreciated the personal attention by the owners, and the food was excellent, too, by the way. We then drove back north on the same route we took down. Along the road we didn't see much bird life except for the more common species, and the only bird we noted here that we didn't see anywhere else was the White-tailed Kite (*Elanus leucurus*) which is a very wide-spread species in the Americas.

On to **San José de Maipo**, where we had lodging at Hostal de Antaño (Booking.com). I had located it on Google maps, using my trusty Claro cell phone data, which was our lifeline. But when we got to the address, which was on the main one-way street going back out of town, there was just this little fairly drab looking little house. No sign, nothing. Knowing that Google maps sometimes errs on specific addresses, we searched up and down the block, but found nothing. Thankfully I had the phone number, so I called, and described where I was, and the guy told us that we had to drive around the block and go in through a gate on the opposite side. Also which had no sign. I was a little unnerved since it was getting dark, and both these streets were the main thoroughfares for the town and the whole Maipo region. And it was New Year's Eve! But we went around and there was the open gate, so we pulled in and parked, and it turned out indeed to be the little house that we stopped in front of, just entered from around the block. We were in. I should have picked up on the name, "Antaño". It means "yesteryear", aptly named, since it was a really old fashioned place, the structure, the décor, the service, the means of payment... "Oh, you don't take Visa?" "No, it says it right on the Booking.com confirmation." "OK, how much in dollars?" "We don't take dollars either, see, it says right here, 'local currency'." Oh boy, I am kind of short on Chilean pesos here. "Is there an ATM nearby?" "Oh, yes, just walk down the block here, cross the park, and it's on the other side." "Should I drive?" "No, it's quite close." Yes, I suppose if you've lived in "yesteryear" San José de Maipo all your life, but I didn't find it all that close. I counted on the way back, it was 450 meters. And it was dark. And I didn't know where I was going, or know anybody, or anything. And it was New Year's Eve! A pretty quiet one in San José de Maipo. And I didn't know that neither of the two ATMs in town were going to work. One was completely shut off and the other came up with a screen that I didn't understand so I got an error message. I had not used an ATM in Chile yet, and at a later date, I realized that it had been my mistake in reading the options on the menu, but meanwhile, there I was without enough Chilean pesos to pay for my room. By the time I got back to the hostel, my wife had gotten us all cozily settled in, and I had rehearsed my sob story... and thankfully our host was gracious enough to accept our dollars. OK, that's enough of a digression. Back to our bird report. We had a pleasant night and departed early to head up to...

Tuesday, Jan. 1: Valle de Yeso: driving from San José de Maipo fairly early, we traveled along the Maipo river, but we were not able to see much since it was still dark. So we missed the Torrent Duck, which wasn't a lifer, although the Chilean variant would have been a "good get". We got to the turn-off (see map) and headed up the Yeso Valley scanning the rugged landscape for birds. Our first stop was about 4 kilometers up, and I call it the Turca and Chilia spot, since we got those lifers there. Plus we got the Black-winged Ground-Dove and the Chilean Flicker. It's a fairly wide, flat area with steep rocks on the south end: that's where the Chilias are.



Road to Yeso, Km 4 12 species Turca and Chilia spot	
3	<u>Black-winged Ground-Dove</u> <i>Metriopelia melanoptera</i>
1	<u>Giant Hummingbird</u> <i>Patagona gigas</i>
5	<u>Southern Lapwing</u> <i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
4	<u>Turkey Vulture</u> <i>Cathartes aura</i>
1	<u>Chilean Flicker</u> <i>Colaptes pitius</i>
2	<u>Mountain Caracara</u> <i>Phalcoboenus megalopterus</i>
12	<u>Chimango Caracara</u> <i>Milvago chimango</i>
3	<u>Moustached Turca</u> <i>Pterotochos megapodius</i>
4	<u>Crag Chilia</u> <i>Ochetorhynchus melanurus</i>
3	<u>Austral Thrush</u> <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>
4	<u>Rufous-collared Sparrow</u> <i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
8	<u>Long-tailed Meadowlark</u> <i>Leistes loyca</i>

The point on the map called “Furnarids, Tryants and Finches”, an eBird Hotspot called Las Cáscaras (ex-refugio militar), below the dam, was very productive due to the habitat: there were some grassy areas, water running along side the road from a large sprinkler, and areas around the buildings. As the following list shows, we got a bunch of good birds, mostly lifers:

Las Cáscaras (ex-refugio militar), below the dam, 17 species	
2	<u>Black-winged Ground-Dove</u> <i>Metriopelia melanoptera</i>
1	<u>Giant Hummingbird</u> <i>Patagona gigas</i>
1	<u>Moustached Turca</u> <i>Pterotochos megapodius</i>
2	<u>Rufous-banded Miner</u> <i>Geositta rufipennis</i>
4	<u>Scale-throated Earthcreeper</u> <i>Upucerthia dumetaria</i>
2	<u>Gray-flanked Cinclodes</u> <i>Cinclodes oustaleti</i>

2	<u>Cordilleran Canastero</u> <i>Asthenes modesta</i>
2	<u>Cinereous Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola cinereus</i>
3	<u>Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola rufivertex</i>
2	<u>White-browed Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola albilora</i>
3	<u>Black-fronted Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola frontalis</i>
25	<u>Yellow-rumped Siskin</u> <i>Spinus uropygialis</i>
12	<u>Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus gayi</i>
7	<u>Mourning Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus fruticeti</i>
2	<u>Band-tailed Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus alaudinus</i>
2	<u>Plumbeous Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Geospizopsis unicolor</i>
16	<u>Greater Yellow-Finch</u> <i>Sicalis auriventris</i>

The previous map ends just short of the Yeso dam, which we continued past, up and along the reservoir on the rather precarious road, parts of which are cut into the sheer rock slopes high about the water. Reaching the delta area past the reservoir, we were on the look-out for a number of target species, the main one being the Diademed Sandpiper-plover, due to its very limited habitat and range. This was our only chance for this bird.

And we missed it. We felt like we gave it the ol' college try, scouring the bogs all along the river, but no go. But we felt pretty good about the rest of the trip: more furnarids, ground-tyrants, and finches, a Gray-breasted Seedsnipe, a bunch of condors, and a few others. The seedsnipes were in the delta area. The condors were eating a dead goat on the lower slopes.

I didn't mention the spectacular scenery, but it was amazing.



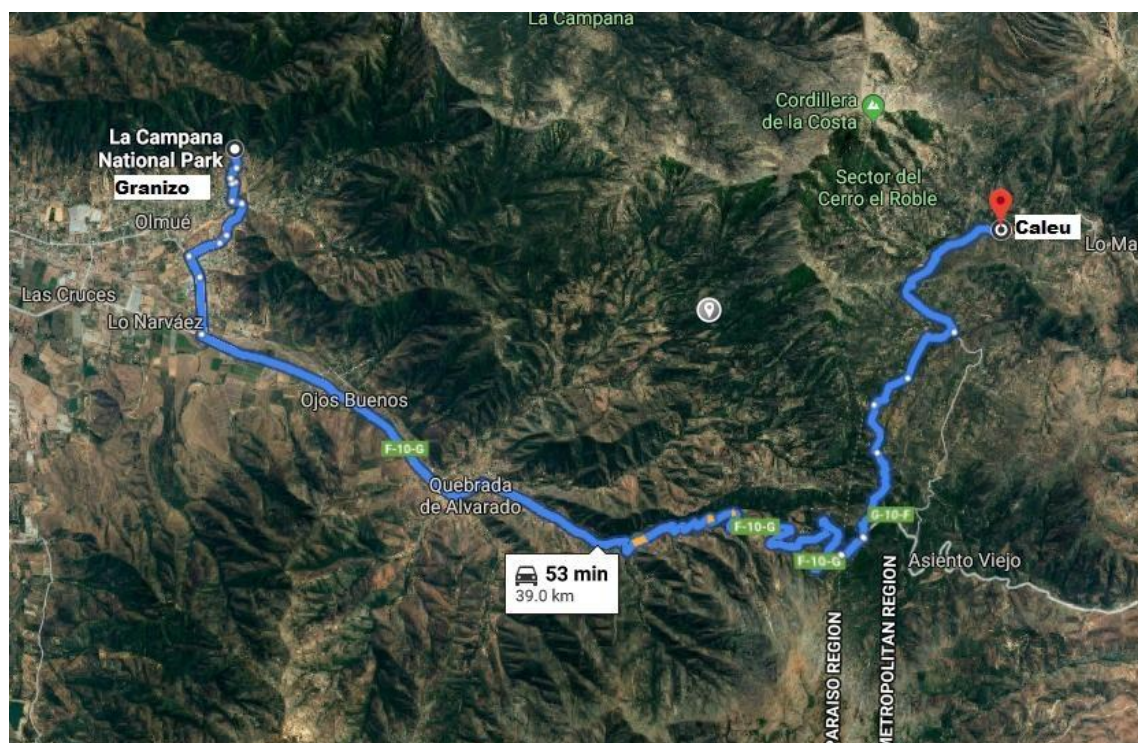


Valle de Yeso, 19 species	
5	<u>Gray-breasted Seedsnipe</u> <i>Thinocorus orbignyianus</i>
17	<u>Andean Condor</u> <i>Vultur gryphus</i>
1	<u>Peregrine Falcon</u> <i>Falco peregrinus</i>
2	<u>Rufous-banded Miner</u> <i>Geositta rufipennis</i>
3	<u>Creamy-rumped Miner</u> <i>Geositta isabellina</i>
5	<u>Scale-throated Earthcreeper</u> <i>Upucerthia dumetaria</i>
2	<u>Buff-winged Cinclodes</u> <i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>
1	<u>Gray-flanked Cinclodes</u> <i>Cinclodes oustaleti</i>
2	<u>Cordilleran Canastero</u> <i>Asthenes modesta</i>
1	<u>Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola maculirostris</i>
1	<u>Cinereous Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola cinereus</i>
2	<u>Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola rufivertex</i>
2	<u>Black-fronted Ground-Tyrant</u> <i>Muscisaxicola frontalis</i>
8	<u>Chilean Swallow</u> <i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>
6	<u>Chilean Mockingbird</u> <i>Mimus thenca</i>
5	<u>Yellow-rumped Siskin</u> <i>Spinus uropygialis</i>
16	<u>Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus gayi</i>
2	<u>Mourning Sierra-Finch</u> <i>Phrygilus fruticeti</i>
3	<u>Greater Yellow-Finch</u> <i>Sicalis auriventris</i>

So we got back on the road and headed back to the Santiago area for our next leg of birding. We booked B&B Chicureo (Booking.com), and it was another interesting experience: first we had to go through a security gate to get into the community, and drove up to this spacious, manicured property up on a hill. Our host was very gracious and attentive, the house was immaculate, very up-to-date, decorated with art from all over the world. We had two nights there.

Wednesday, Jan. 2: we had researched and planned birding three sites in the area: Lampa, Batutco, and the west entrance of Cerro La Campana at Olmué. All were total failures. The Lampa marsh was dry, we couldn't find access to the lake at Batutco, and then when we found the park entrance at Olmué, we discovered that the park was completely closed due to construction. We did scrounge a few birds by the entrance, including an Austral Pygmy Owl that was very accommodating, and a Dusky-tailed Canastero on a side road. We also went around the south and east edges of the Campana part including El Roble area, and scrounged a few more species: here's the whole list for the region:

South and east edges of the Cerro La Campana national park 10 species total	
2	Picui Ground-Dove <i>Columbina picui</i>
6	Eared Dove <i>Zenaida auriculata</i>
1	Harris's Hawk <i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>
1	Austral Pygmy-Owl <i>Glaucidium nana</i>
5	Chimango Caracara <i>Milva chimanao</i>
1	Dusky-tailed Canastero <i>Pseudasthenes humicola</i>
6	Tufted Tit-Tyrant <i>Anairetes parulus</i>
18	White-crested Elaenia <i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
7	Austral Thrush <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>
2	Chilean Mockingbird <i>Mimus thenca</i>



As I said we headed out to the coast near the **mouth of the Aconcagua river**, and covered **three locations**:



The best location was along the **Estero Mantagua**, accessed through the **Posada del Parque**, a private park, which was GREAT! There's an easily visible sign along the highway. After paying a small entrance fee, we spent about four hours, walking along the wetlands on nice trails, all the way down to the beach. They also have a bookstore, a café, and offer guide services. We had a great list (see below), picking up a number of lifers among the waterfowl, and one highlight was the Spectacled Tyrant, which put on a nice show for us.

Another stop was **Parque Ecológica La Isla**, giving access to the **Aconcagua river mouth** with a small trail and boardwalk area, able to be covered in an hour. There was a Great Grebe swimming right in front of one of the platforms!

A stop at the **Roca Oceanica in Concón**, a majestic location, was also nice for birds. We picked up one lifer, the Seaside Cinclodes. The sheer numbers of birds is impressive here: hundreds of Peruvian Boobies, Kelp Gulls, and Inca Terns.

Posada del Parque, Estero Mantagua (32 spp)		Parque Ecológico La Isla, desembocadura Río Aconcagua (11 spp)		Roca Oceánica (9 spp.)	
<u>Coscoroba Swan</u> <i>Coscoroba coscoroba</i>	3	<u>Yellow-billed Teal</u> <i>Anas flavirostris</i>	3	<u>Kelp Gull</u> <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	500
<u>Cinnamon Teal</u> <i>Spatula cyanoptera</i>	7	<u>Great Grebe</u> <i>Podiceps major</i>	1	<u>Inca Tern</u> <i>Larosterna inca</i>	250
<u>Chiloe Wigeon</u> <i>Mareca sibilatrix</i>	32	<u>West Peruvian Dove</u> <i>Zenaida meloda</i>	1	<u>South American Tern</u> <i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>	8
<u>Black-headed Duck</u> <i>Heteronetta atricapilla</i>	2	<u>Great Egret</u> <i>Ardea alba</i>	2	<u>Peruvian Booby</u> <i>Sula variegata</i>	400
<u>Lake Duck</u> <i>Oxyura vittata</i>	5	<u>Chimango Caracara</u> <i>Milvago chimango</i>	35	<u>Red-legged Cormorant</u> <i>Phalacrocorax gaimardi</i>	2
<u>White-tufted Grebe</u> <i>Rollandia rolland</i>	5	<u>Wren-like Rushbird</u> <i>Phleocryptes melanops</i>	4	<u>Neotropic Cormorant</u> <i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	70
<u>Pied-billed Grebe</u> <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	1	<u>Sharp-billed Canastero</u> <i>Asthenes pyrrholeuca</i>	2	<u>Guanay Cormorant</u> <i>Phalacrocorax bougainvillii</i>	55
<u>Red-fronted Coot</u> <i>Fulica rufifrons</i>	35	<u>Many-colored Rush Tyrant</u> <i>Tachuris rubrigastra</i>	3	<u>Peruvian Pelican</u> <i>Pelecanus thagus</i>	120
<u>Red-gartered Coot</u> <i>Fulica armillata</i>	300	<u>Rufous-tailed Plantcutter</u> <i>Phytotoma rara</i>	4	<u>Seaside Cinclodes</u> <i>Cinclodes nigrofumosus</i>	3
<u>White-winged Coot</u> <i>Fulica leucoptera</i>	24	<u>Austral Thrush</u> <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>	3		
<u>Black-necked Stilt (White-backed)</u> <i>Himantopus mexicanus melanurus</i>	75	<u>Chilean Mockingbird</u> <i>Mimus thenca</i>	5		
<u>American Oystercatcher</u> <i>Haematopus palliatus</i>		38			
<u>Collared Plover</u> <i>Charadrius collaris</i>		5			
<u>Two-banded Plover</u> <i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>		1			
<u>Whimbrel</u> <i>Numenius phaeopus</i>		5			
<u>Baird's Sandpiper</u> <i>Calidris bairdii</i>		2			
<u>Greater Yellowlegs</u> <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>		8			
<u>Franklin's Gull</u> <i>Leucophaeus pipixcan</i>		20			

Posada del Parque, Estero Mantagua (32 spp) continued	
<u>Kelp Gull</u> <i>Larus dominicanus</i>	50
<u>Stripe-backed Bittern</u> <i>Ixobrychus involucris</i>	1
<u>Great Egret</u> <i>Ardea alba</i>	1
<u>Snowy Egret</u> <i>Egretta thula</i>	3
<u>Cattle Egret</u> <i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	2
<u>Black-crowned Night-Heron</u> <i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	1
<u>Chimango Caracara</u> <i>Milvago chimango</i>	18
<u>Dark-bellied Cinclodes</u> <i>Cinclodes patagonicus</i>	1
<u>Spectacled Tyrant</u> <i>Hymenops perspicillatus</i>	4
<u>Rufous-tailed Plantcutter</u> <i>Phytotoma rara</i>	4
<u>House Wren (Southern)</u> <i>Troglodytes aedon [musculus Group]</i>	1
<u>Austral Thrush</u> <i>Turdus falcklandii</i>	24
<u>Chilean Mockingbird</u> <i>Mimus thenca</i>	4
<u>Yellow-winged Blackbird</u> <i>Agelasticus thilius</i>	22

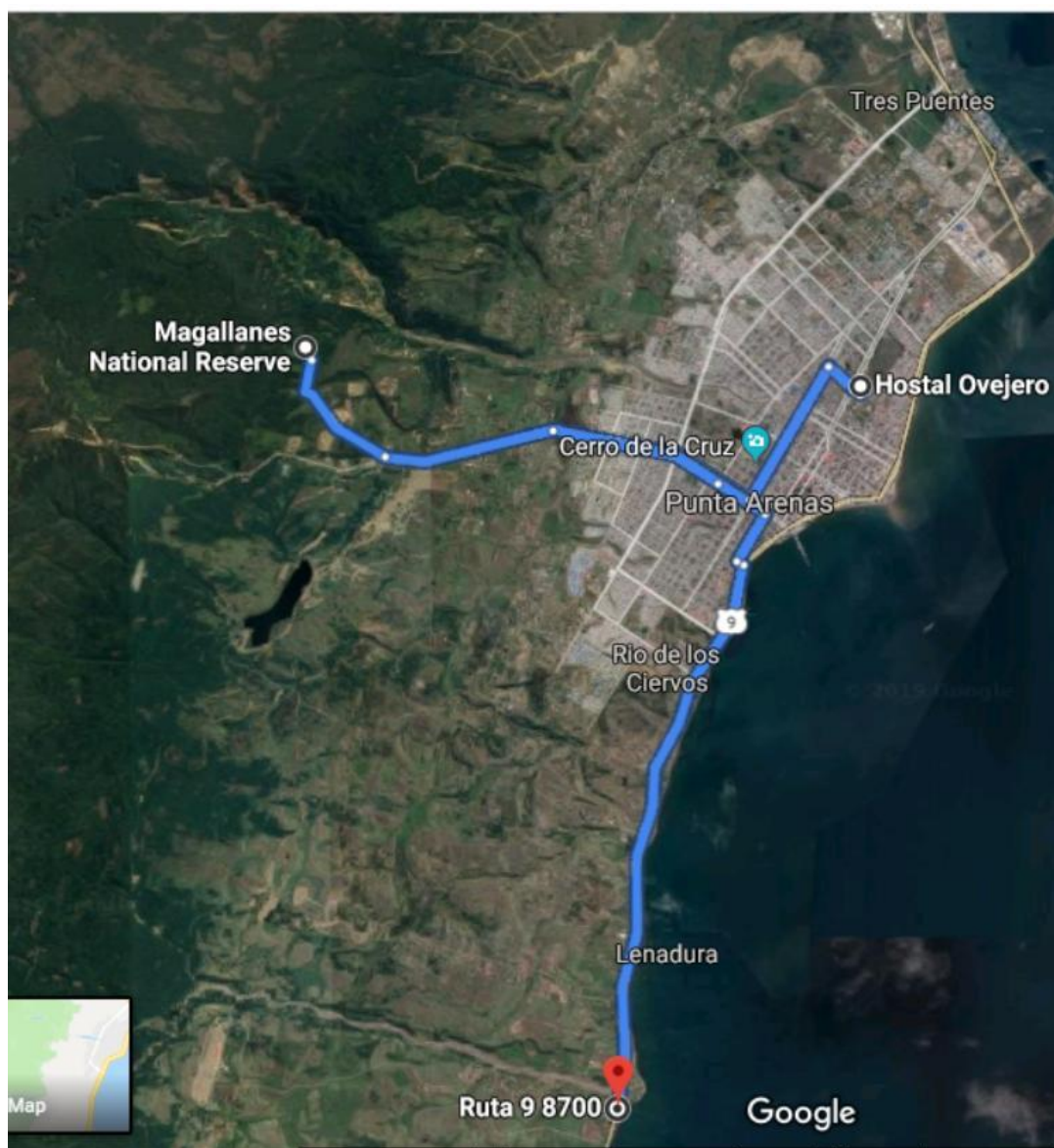
We returned to B&B Chicureo in the evening.

Thursday, Jan. 3: we got up early and got to the airport in good time to return our car and catch our non-stop flight down to **Punta Arenas**, all the way down at the bottom of South America. One interesting experience was being able to see huge glaciers from the plane. When we got out of the airport we were hit with one factor that would be with us until we left Punta Arenas twelve days later: WIND! It was everywhere, all the time. In fact, that was one important warning the car rental rep. gave us: always be careful when you open the car door, and we heeded that warning because it was true. When one of us would open a car door, unless we were holding on tight, it could have been ripped off its hinges. Or if the wind was coming the other way, you had to fight to push door open. The temperatures were cool, in the high 40s to low 50s F (8 to 12 C), so you need a jacket or coat, scarf, (baclava), gloves, hats, etc. especially with the wind. But it's sunny most of the time, and there are days when it actually was comfortable. Another factor was even longer days. At a latitude of 53 S, the sun was coming up before 5AM and going down after 11PM!

To explain our planning: we set aside two nights in Punta Arenas before and two nights after going to the Falklands since we heard that the flights could be touch-and-go due to weather, and we didn't get travel insurance. So we just split our time. It allowed us time to bird the area, but not time to go further a-field, for example, the Torres de Paine national park which is spectacular, they say. Crossing over to Tierra del Fuego would also be an interesting addition.

Arriving mid-afternoon, we picked up our rental car from Avis at the airport, and drove the 20 kilometers south to the city. Our lodging was at Hostal Ovejero, which is a very nice small place with a good location for getting around town and for getting in and out of town, since it is just off one of the main roads. It's also easy to find since it is near the "Ovejero" monument. And it includes breakfast. There's a nice restaurant just down the road, Bar Bulnes, amazing pizza, burgers, salads, and beer. There are fancy places downtown that specialize in locally caught king crab (called *centolla* in Spanish), not cheap, but very good.

There are three main birding areas right around the town: Tres Puentes wetlands, the coastline, and the Reserva Nacional Magallanes forest.



On two occasions we went to the **Tres Puentes wetlands**, a well-marked spot with parking at the intersection of highway #9 and "Avenida Presidente Eduardo Frei Montalva", a main thoroughfare, just north of town.

Coastal birding: We drove along the coast heading south several times, starting at the town's popular waterfront by the large Punta Arenas sign: there are several old unused piers that are loaded with birds, mainly cormorants but also some gulls. From there, driving south on highway 9, there are multiple points where you can observe birds along the way, mainly in wetland areas between the highway and the ocean. A nice spot was by the Rio Leñadura bridge and both sides of the river, just a dozen or so miles from town. On one drive, we observed a large fin whale not far off shore.

The other birding spot near Punta Arenas is the **Reserva Nacional Magallanes** which is predominantly *Nothofagus* forest, easily accessed up the mountains from town. There's a national park station and road that goes about 5 miles with multiple points including several nice trails and scenic overview at the end. It just so happens that we visited here after our trip to the Falklands. We didn't do much else due to the flight times. And that we just wanted to take it easy.

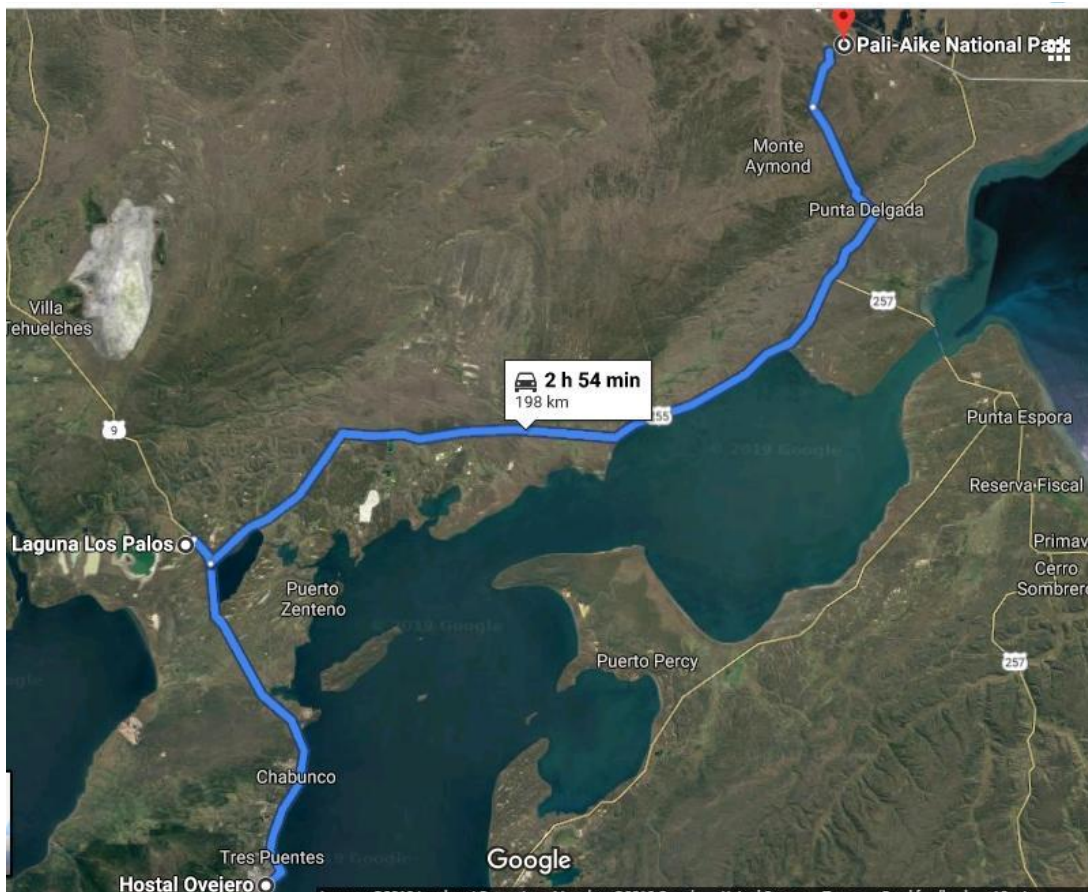
Tres Puentes wetlands (14 spp)		Río Leñadura wetlands, coastal birding (13 spp)		Magallanes Reserva Nacional (15 spp.)	
Black-necked Swan (<i>Cygnus melancoryphus</i>)	11	Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	32	Southern Lapwing (<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>)	2
Coscoroba Swan (<i>Coscoroba coscoroba</i>)	4	Flying Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>)	2	Black-faced Ibis (<i>Theristicus melanopis</i>)	4
Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	50	Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	6	Bicolored Hawk (<i>Accipiter bicolor</i>)	1
Flying Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>)	5	Blackish Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ater</i>)	1	Chimango Caracara (<i>Milvago chimango</i>)	3
Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	12	Magellanic Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>)	12	Short-billed Miner (<i>Geositta antarctica</i>)	3
Red Shoveler (<i>Spatula platalea</i>)	5	Southern Lapwing (<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>)	25	White-throated Treerunner (<i>Pygarrhichas albogularis</i>)	1
Chiloe Wigeon (<i>Mareca sibilatrix</i>)	45	Brown-hooded Gull (<i>Chroicocephalus maculipennis</i>)	88	Dark-bellied Cinclodes (<i>Cinclodes patagonicus</i>)	1
Yellow-billed Pintail (<i>Anas georgica</i>)	16	South American Tern (<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>)	46	Thorn-tailed Rayadito (<i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>)	8
Yellow-billed Teal (<i>Anas flavirostris</i>)	9	Black-browed Albatross (<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>)	6	White-crested Elaenia (<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>)	10
White-tufted Grebe (<i>Rollandia rolland</i>)	4	Southern Giant-Petrel (<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>)	2	Austral Negrito (<i>Lessonia rufa</i>)	1
Silvery Grebe (<i>Podiceps occipitalis</i>)	2	Magellanic Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>)	27	Chilean Swallow (<i>Tachycineta leucopyga</i>)	11
Baird's Sandpiper (<i>Calidris bairdii</i>)	25	Chimango Caracara (<i>Milvago chimango</i>)	20	House Wren (Southern) (<i>Troglodytes aedon</i> [musculus Group])	16
Buff-winged Cinclodes (<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>)	1	Austral Negrito (<i>Lessonia rufa</i>)	4	Austral Thrush (<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>)	19
Gray-flanked Cinclodes (<i>Cinclodes oustaleti</i>)	1			Black-chinned Siskin (<i>Spinus barbatus</i>)	11
NOTE: I think we may have missed two species of goose at both Tres Puentes and the coast, the Ashy-headed and the Ruddy-headed, since we were not picking up the field marks.				Rufous-collared Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>)	69

Friday, Jan. 4: We headed out north of Punta Arenas to visit two other birding areas: Laguna Los Palos, and the Pali-Aike National Park. This is pretty much a full day trip due to the distances.

The morning was cold and windy... as usual. Maybe more than usual. Our first stop, Laguna Los Palos, was going to be our best chance for the Magellanic Plover, a very limited range bird. Arriving at the site, we had to climb a fence and fight the wind to get down to the water's edge, along which we walked for perhaps half a kilometer, but saw nothing but a few White-rumped Sandpipers and Two-banded Plovers. Then a single condor soared over very low, amazingly in control in spite of the stiff wind. Then it started to rain... and with a vengeance. The wind was blowing so hard we could barely walk. Sometimes we had to walk arm in arm, hunched over. We learned to do that quite a bit here and in the Falklands.

Anyway, as we got about half way back, we saw a bird flying low against the wind, and as we trained our binoculars on it... it was the Magellanic Plover! YES! We were not going to be skunked again! We braved the rain and wind and approached it, watching for a few minutes as it flitted back and forth low over the sandy terrain, fairly unperturbed either by us or by the weather. It was the only one we saw.

So we headed back out towards Pali Aike, and along the way, started seeing Lesser Rheas and Guanacos all along the barren landscape. It's about a three hour drive from Punta Arenas. After the left turn at Punta Delgada, the road is not paved, and there are some interesting spots where smaller birds start showing up. Arriving at the gate to the national park, we talked to a park guard who gave us a good map and some tips, not for birds so much, but just to get around. We first drove to the lake where we observed a flock of Chilean Flamingos at a distance. Then we followed the roads to see the interesting volcanic formations. Along most of the way, Cinnamon-bellied Ground Tyrants were the most common bird, and we were searching for the Chocolate-vented Tyrant since this would be probably our only chance for it. We saw many possibilities, but were able to definitively ID one thanks to its distinctive wing markings when in flight. Another good find was the Least Seedsnipe, which we saw right along the road, and it was the only place we saw them. As can be seen from the species list, it was a successful trip.



Laguna Los Palos, 4 species		Pali Aike National Park 16 spp.	
Magellanic Plover <i>Pluvianellus socialis</i>	1	Lesser Rhea (Darwin's) (<i>Rhea pennata pennata</i>)	62
Two-banded Plover <i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>	5	Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	58
White-rumped Sandpiper <i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>	6	Chilean Flamingo (<i>Phoenicopterus chilensis</i>)	45
Andean Condor <i>Vultur gryphus</i>	1	Two-banded Plover (<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>)	34
\		Least Seedsnipe (<i>Thinocorus rumicivorus</i>)	6
		White-rumped Sandpiper (<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>)	11
		Chimango Caracara (<i>Milvago chimango</i>)	4
		Common Miner (<i>Geositta cunicularia</i>)	1
		Cordilleran Canastero (<i>Asthenes modesta</i>)	1
		Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant (<i>Muscisaxicola capistratus</i>)	50
		Chocolate-vented Tyrant (<i>Neoxolmis rufiventris</i>)	1
		Correndera Pipit (<i>Anthus correndera</i>)	2
		Black-chinned Siskin (<i>Spinus barbatus</i>)	36
		Rufous-collared Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>)	8
		Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch (<i>Phrygilus gayi</i>)	15
		White-bridled Finch (<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>)	21

The Falkland Islands is a British overseas territory in the South Atlantic Ocean about 300 miles east of southern South America. At a latitude of 52 degrees south, the climate is humid maritime, meaning cold, wet, and windy, but moderated by the ocean, so temperatures do not vary greatly: did I mention that it's cold and windy? Get used to it. Even though we were there at the peak of summer and the sun shone most of the time from about 5AM to 10PM, it was rarely above 10 C (50 F), and, did I mention the wind? So we wore our winter coats, baclavas, gloves, hats, etc. almost all the time.

Although small in size at 4,700 square miles, smaller than the US state of Connecticut and about the same as the country of Jamaica, getting around the Falklands is complicated since it is an archipelago, made up of many smaller island, each with different attractions as well as logistical complications. So instead of planning our own trip like we usually do, we decided to go through an agency to arrange the inter-island flights and the lodging. We went with "International Tours & Travel" (ITT), which we highly recommend. For tour information, including maps, I will defer to the agency website, www.falklandislands.travel/, which has plenty of information and guidance. We highly recommend consulting the "Wildlife Calendar" on the site, which will allow you to consider options for when to go depending on what you want to see. We are really glad that we went in early January since it was ideal to see the birds with chicks, but there are other time frames that could be interesting. Also, consult the bird lists for each island destination to decide on an itinerary, since different locations have different birds and options to see them. The agency's communication via e-mail, and all forms of service, really, were excellent.

We stayed just one week... I say "just" since we found that a lot of people went for two weeks. That's the option: one week or two, nothing in between, that due to the flight options. At least when we went, there were only two ways to get to the Falklands by air: from Punta Arenas on a Latam flight once a week on Saturdays, and on a Royal Air Force flight from the UK. There may be another flight being added from Brazil at some point, but for now, that's it. The other way to get to the islands is by boat, and a lot of people go on cruises, but as we observed their comings and goings, we're glad we went by air and therefore were able to spend way more time on the ground. Of course, there are flight problems sometimes, including with the inter-island flights, but we had no problems.

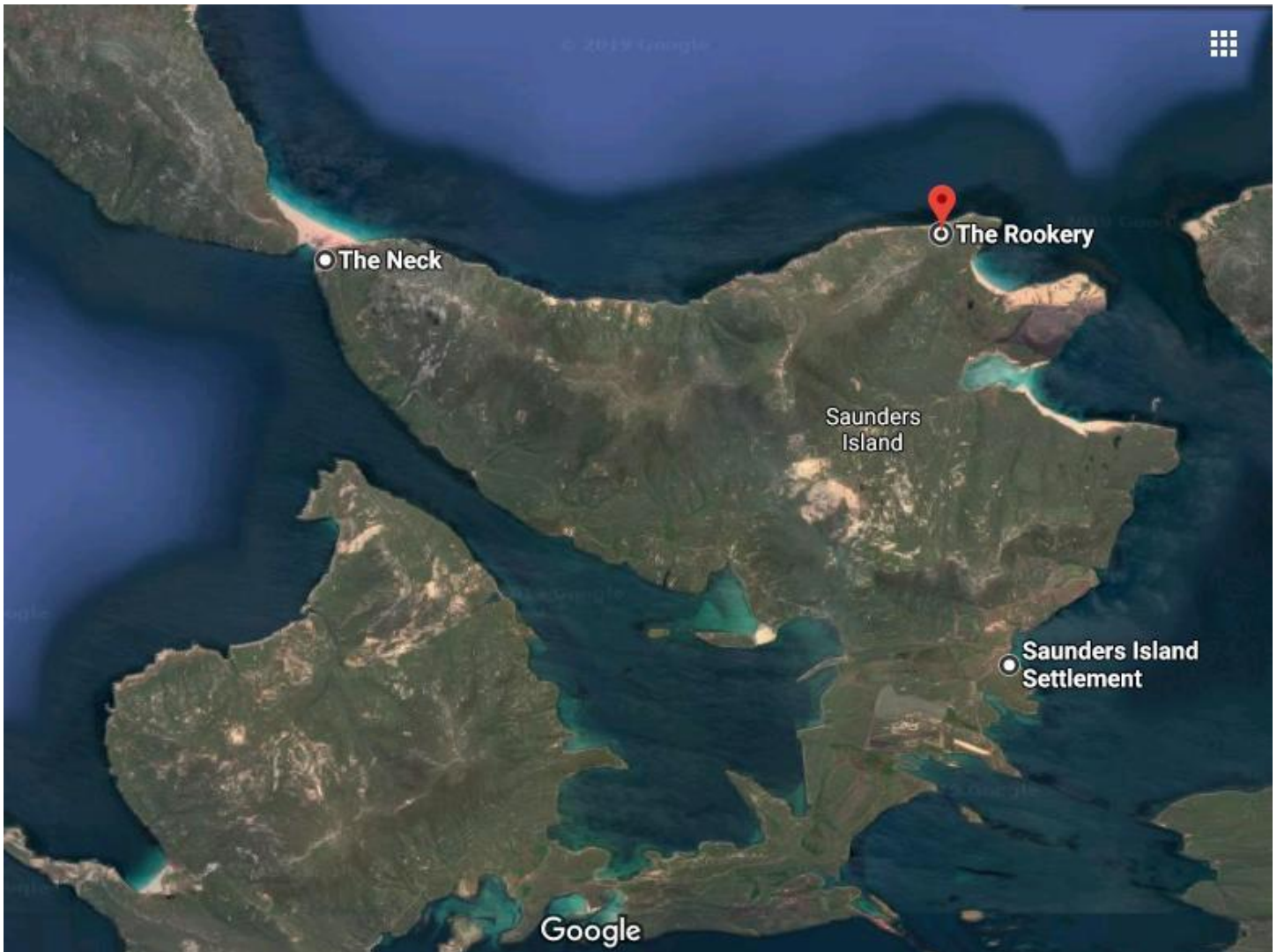
This was not a full birding tour as such, since not all the stops included guided excursion, but it got us to the right places and the staff at each place was helpful and knowledgeable, and in some cases they provided guided outings. All went as described in the literature.

Saturday & Sunday Jan. 5 & 6: Upon arrival to the Port Stanley Int'l airport on the Latam flight, we were met by agency staff that got us right away on our flight to **Saunders Island**. As is the case with most of the dozen or so larger inhabited islands, it is private property, owned by one family, and is primarily a sheep farm. Tourism is a growing industry and supplants the owners' incomes and also is closely tied to a growing environmental concern among the population. The owners and their extended family run the farm and the guest houses, as well as run the tours. Mrs. Pool-Evans, who picked us up at the airstrip, took us straightway to the famous "**Rookery**", which hosts breeding colonies of Southern Rockhopper Penguins, Black-browed Albatrosses, and Imperial Cormorants. We got there over rough "roads" and Mrs. Pool-Evans said, "Let have a look at the shower", and walked over and disappeared down what look to me like a sheer cliff. We started following, thinking, hey, if she can do it, so can we, and sure enough, down some fairly treacherous rocky edges, there were albatross nests, penguins hopping up and down, and yes, even a penguin shower (fresh water running off the rocks, penguins taking turns getting a douch). Amid a cacaphony of bird sounds and the impressive elegance and size of the albatross' flying around, we were able to enjoy this a bird wonderland. It also included life and death drama, not just our stumbling along narrow rock ledges, but the presence of predatory Striated Caracaras and Southern Giant Petrels. We spent a magical afternoon there.

Returning to "the settlement", we were lodged in the oldest structure on the island, a stone house nicely set up as a guest house. It was cold and windy but there was heat, a nicely set up kitchen, and good company, a Belgian couple that we enjoyed getting to know and birding with here and over on Pebble Island. The set-up here on Saunders included "self-catering" provided by ITT.

The next day was our full-day trip to “**the Neck**” that has another area similar to the Rookery as well as a beach. We were dropped off there and left to our own devices for the day. Additional attractions there included several large Gentoo Penguin colonies and a small group of King Penguins that seem to just be hanging around, maybe the start of a new breeding colony. From the high rocky cliffs, we observed a pod of more than a dozen of the striking black and white Commerson’s Dolphins swimming through the waves. There was also the constant coming and going of the penguins as they carry out their daily feeding cycle, diving into the ocean waves to go out and feed, then swimming back into shore and popping out on the beach. There were also Magellanic Penguins here, which are actually probably the most numerous since they nest in burrows all over this and probably all the islands. We observed caracaras and petrels grabbing rockhopper chicks and skuas constantly patrolling and occasionally diving over the gentoo colonies in search of prey.

Just wandering around with the constant wind and cold left us feeling battered and tired, so we took refuge in the guest house there and had our lunch. Then we went back out for while in the afternoon, and were picked up again for the long and fairly torturous drive back.



Saunders Island, the Neck, 27 species		Saunders Island, the Rookery, 13 species	
Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	19	Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	6
Kelp Goose (<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>)	7	Kelp Goose (<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>)	4
Ruddy-headed Goose (<i>Chloephaga</i>)	6	Falkland Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres</i>)	3
Falkland Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres</i>)	12	Snowy Sheathbill (<i>Chionis albus</i>)	4
Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	8	Brown Skua (Falkland) (<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>)	7
Snowy Sheathbill (<i>Chionis albus</i>)	6	Dolphin Gull (<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>)	24
Blackish Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ater</i>)	3	Kelp Gull (<i>Larus dominicanus</i>)	22
Magellanic Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus</i>)	15	Southern Rockhopper Penguin (<i>Eudyptes</i>)	230
Two-banded Plover (<i>Charadrius</i>)	5	Black-browed Albatross (<i>Thalassarche</i>)	85
White-rumped Sandpiper (<i>Calidris</i>)	3	Southern Giant-Petrel (<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>)	18
Brown Skua (Falkland) (<i>Stercorarius</i>)	7	Imperial Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>)	160
Dolphin Gull (<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>)	21	Striated Caracara (<i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>)	8
Kelp Gull (<i>Larus dominicanus</i>)	33	Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (<i>Muscisaxicola</i>)	2
South American Tern (<i>Sterna</i>)	5		
King Penguin (<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>)	24		
Gentoo Penguin (<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>)	1900		
Magellanic Penguin (<i>Spheniscus</i>)	350		
Southern Rockhopper Penguin (<i>Eudyptes</i>)	180		
Black-browed Albatross (<i>Thalassarche</i>)	45		
Southern Giant-Petrel (<i>Macronectes</i>)	26		
Imperial Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax</i>)	320		
Variable Hawk (<i>Geranoaetus polyosoma</i>)	1		
Striated Caracara (<i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>)	8		
Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (<i>Muscisaxicola</i>)	5		

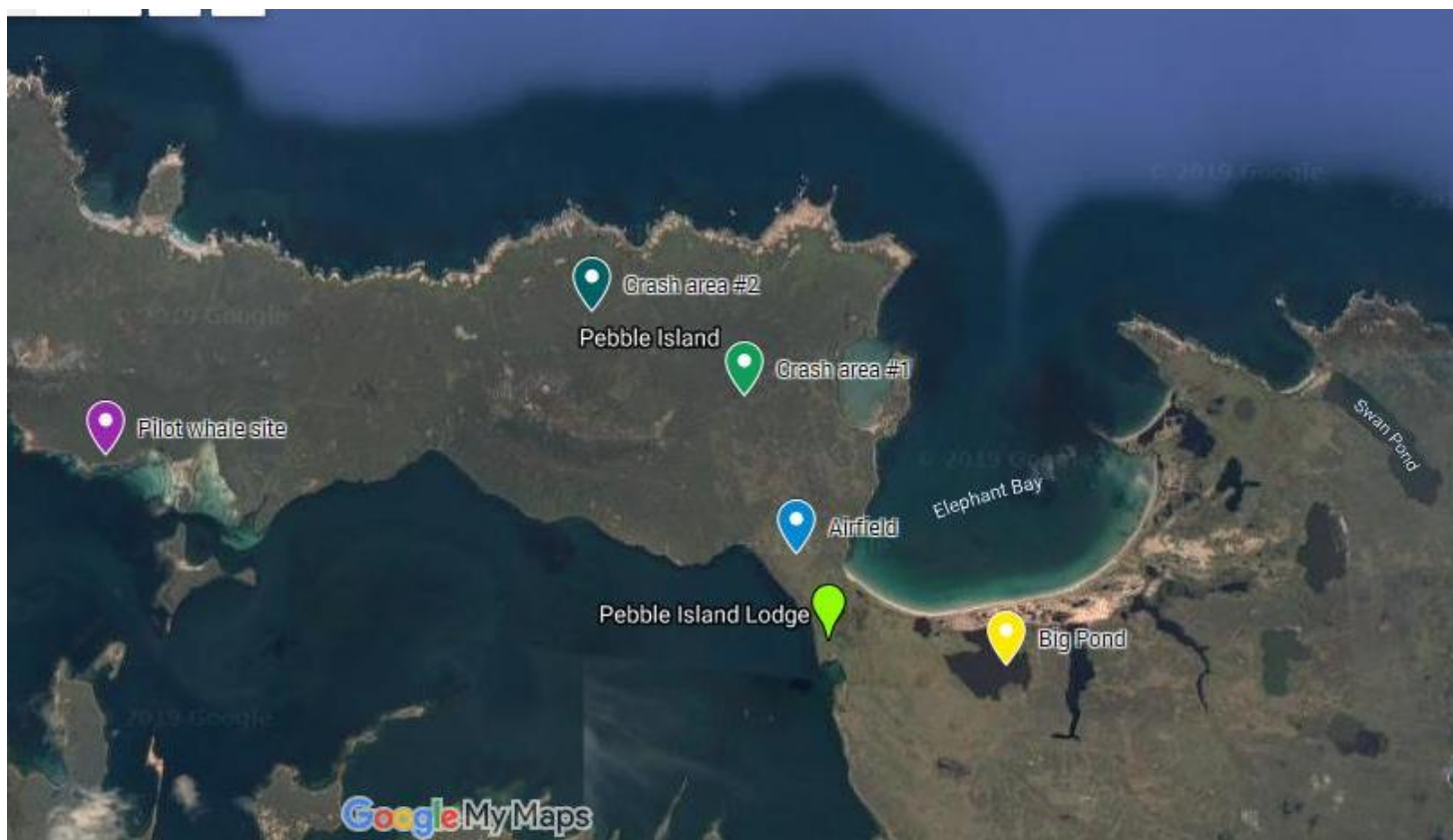
Austral Thrush (<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>)	3
Correndera Pipit (<i>Anthus correndera</i>)	2
White-bridled Finch (<i>Melanodera</i>	4

Monday & Tuesday, Jan. 7 & 8: Next stop, **Pebble Island**. Like Saunders, it is privately owned and is a sheep farm, but is different in that the owners have set up a larger, more elaborate tourism set-up with a lodge and full-time guides. The meals are top-notch, served family-style. The guided tours cover various and distant spots, basically on two trajectories, one east of the lodge, which was a half-day trip, the other west which was a full day. Both were done in jeeps. See the map and lists, below.

On the more mountainous western side, there is the additional interest of the aircraft wreckage from the Falklands war. The guides are very knowledgeable about the history with printed information on aircraft types, the identity of the pilots, and details about the incidents. First Mountain is a landmark, and the tour goes around it. On the southwestern coast there is a small bay where over 50 pilot whale beached themselves in 2018. These are covered by the driving tour. A walking tour can be done as well.

On the eastern side, which is flatter and has ponds and lakes, the “Big Pond” is a key spot for waterfowl and is easily accessible on foot from the lodge, as is the big 4 mile beach of Elephant bay. Beyond that the landscape is dominated by sandy areas and wetlands.

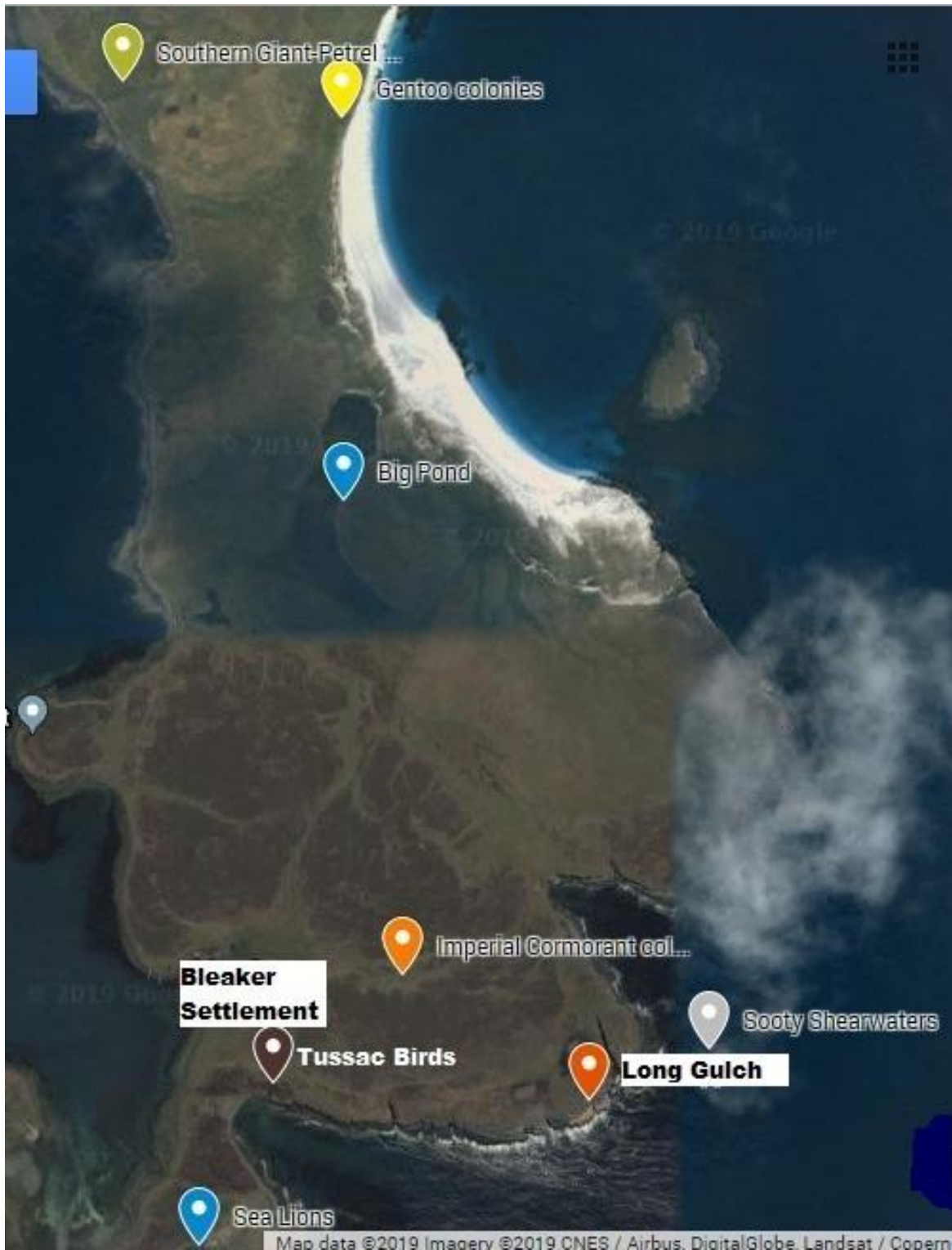
We had a number of bird highlights including three vagrants: a White-cheeked Pintail in one of the smaller ponds on the eastern side, an Eastern Kingbird seen on a wire fence just north of First Mountain near crash site #2, and a Mourning Sierra-Finch in the gorse bushes north of the lodge towards the airfield, which Sandra and I found while walking. We were also rewarded with a lifer, three South American Snipes by a gate east of the lodge as we walked towards Little Pond.



Pebble Island, Eastern side, 43 species		Pebble Island, Western side, 28 species	
Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	120	Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	120
Kelp Goose (<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>)	22	Kelp Goose (<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>)	10
Ruddy-headed Goose (<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>)	45	Ruddy-headed Goose (<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>)	30
Flying Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres patagonicus</i>)	6	Falkland Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>)	8
Falkland Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>)	18	Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	5
Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	8	Two-banded Plover (<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>)	12
Silver Teal (<i>Spatula versicolor</i>)	2	Rufous-chested Dotterel (<i>Charadrius modestus</i>)	8
Chiloe Wigeon (<i>Mareca sibilatrix</i>)	5	White-rumped Sandpiper (<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>)	5
White-cheeked Pintail (<i>Anas bahamensis</i>)	1	Brown Skua (Falkland) (<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>)	5
Yellow-billed Teal (<i>Anas flavirostris</i>)	26	Dolphin Gull (<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>)	21
White-tufted Grebe (<i>Rollandia rolland</i>)	6	Kelp Gull (<i>Larus dominicanus</i>)	29
Silvery Grebe (<i>Podiceps occipitalis</i>)	9	South American Tern (<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>)	2
Snowy Sheathbill (<i>Chionis albus</i>)	6	Gentoo Penguin (<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>)	400
Blackish Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ater</i>)	3	Magellanic Penguin (<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>)	500
Magellanic Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>)	9	Southern Rockhopper Penguin (<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>)	300
Two-banded Plover (<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>)	20	Southern Giant-Petrel (<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>)	20
Rufous-chested Dotterel (<i>Charadrius modestus</i>)	16	Imperial Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>)	200
White-rumped Sandpiper (<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>)	4	Black-crowned Night-Heron (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)	1
South American Snipe (<i>Gallinago paraguaiensis</i>)	3	Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	8
Brown Skua (Falkland) (<i>Stercorarius antarcticus</i>)	8	Striated Caracara (<i>Phalco boenus australis</i>)	7
Dolphin Gull (<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>)	12	Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (<i>Muscisaxicola</i>)	8
Kelp Gull (<i>Larus dominicanus</i>)	44	Eastern Kingbird (<i>Tyrannus tyrannus</i>)	1
South American Tern (<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>)	5	Sedge Wren (<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>)	1
Gentoo Penguin (<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>)	700	Austral Thrush (<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>)	5

Magellanic Penguin (<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>)	1100	Correndera Pipit (<i>Anthus correndera</i>)	2
Southern Rockhopper Penguin (<i>Eudyptes chrysocome</i>)	600	Black-chinned Siskin (<i>Spinus barbatus</i>)	3
Black-browed Albatross (<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>)	28	Long-tailed Meadowlark (<i>Leistes loyca</i>)	6
Southern Giant-Petrel (<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>)	45	White-bridled Finch (<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>)	2
Magellanic Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>)	4		
Imperial Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>)	600		
Black-crowned Night-Heron (<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>)	11		
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	8		
Variable Hawk (<i>Geranoaetus polyosoma</i>)	1		
Striated Caracara (<i>Phalcoboenus australis</i>)	21		
Southern Caracara (<i>Caracara plancus</i>)	4		
Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (<i>Muscisaxicola maclovianus</i>)	15		
Sedge Wren (<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>)	1		
Austral Thrush (<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>)	20		
Correndera Pipit (<i>Anthus correndera</i>)	5		
Black-chinned Siskin (<i>Spinus barbatus</i>)	10		
Long-tailed Meadowlark (<i>Leistes loyca</i>)	8		
Mourning Sierra-Finch (<i>Phrygilus fruticeti</i>)	1		
White-bridled Finch (<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>)	6		

Wednesday & Thursday Jan. 9 & 10. Next: **Bleaker Island!** After transfer through Port Stanley, our flight took us off the southeastern side of the main islands. This island has a lot going for it with a comfy house and lodge serving delicious meals and the only place we saw Tussac grass and a scarce endemic bird, the Blackish Cinclodes, known locally as Tussac birds; Sea Lions are easy to see just a short walk from the settlement. One bird we missed is the Cobb's Wren, an endemic split from the Southern House Wren, that specializes in tussac grass areas, which we scoured several times both near Long Gulch and also just behind the owner's house near Pebbly Bay. There were no organized tours although we did get rides to several spots. Mostly we walked. We walked to the north end of the beach where the Gentoo and Magellanic penguins went in and out of the surf. It was also here that we saw penguins being chased and caught by sea lions in the surf.



Bleaker Island combined list for all points	#	Location
Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	220	All over
Kelp Goose (<i>Chloephaga hybrida</i>)	19	Rocky coast
Ruddy-headed Goose (<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>)	45	Inland
Falkland Steamer-Duck (<i>Tachyeres brachypterus</i>)	12	Coast
Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	9	Coast
Silver Teal (<i>Spatula versicolor</i>)	18	Big Pond`
Chiloe Wigeon (<i>Mareca sibilatrix</i>)	7	Big Pond
Yellow-billed Teal (<i>Anas flavirostris</i>)	22	Big Pond
White-tufted Grebe (<i>Rollandia rolland</i>)	6	Big Pond
Snowy Sheathbill (<i>Chionis albus</i>)	11	Rocky coast
Blackish Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus ater</i>)	5	Beach
Magellanic Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>)	3	Beach
Two-banded Plover (<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>)	2	Coast, grass
White-rumped Sandpiper (<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>)	9	Coast
Brown Skua (Falkland) (<i>Stercorarius antarcticus antarcticus</i>)	33	Grass area around cormorant colony
Dolphin Gull (<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>)	19	Coast
Kelp Gull (<i>Larus dominicanus</i>)	62	Coast
South American Tern (<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>)	5	Coast
Gentoo Penguin (<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>)	80	Colonies, beach
Magellanic Penguin (<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>)	330	All over
Black-browed Albatross (<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>)	5	Off shore, mostly east
Southern Giant-Petrel (<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>)	28	Colony near airstrip, offshore
Sooty Shearwater (<i>Ardenna grisea</i>)	46	Off shore from the Long Gulch area
Magellanic Cormorant (<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>)	540	Large colony at Long Gulch
Imperial Cormorant (King) (<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i> (King))	9000	Large colony in the center
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	5	Center of island
Striated Caracara (<i>Phalco boenus australis</i>)	5	Near Rockhopper colony
Blackish Cinclodes (<i>Cinclodes antarcticus</i>)	3	Tussac grass behind owner's house and along Pebbly Bay coast
Dark-faced Ground-Tyrant (<i>Muscisaxicola maclovianus</i>)	6	Grassy areas
Sedge Wren (<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>)	3	Tussac and grass
Correndera Pipit (<i>Anthus correndera</i>)	1	Grassy areas
Long-tailed Meadowlark (<i>Leistes loyca</i>)	3	Grassy areas, settlement
White-bridled Finch (<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>)	8	Grassy areas

Friday, Jan. 11: Our final stop in the Falklands was **Stanley** where we were picked up at the airport after our flight from Bleaker, and taken out on an old Land Rover to **Volunteer Point**, a truly torturous trip, to see the King Penguin colony. This was definitely a highlight of the trip. These are such elegant looking birds, while at the same time having comical behavior, males strutting around, slapping each other, and bellowing, while the females were sitting on eggs or chicks pecking at everything that walks by. We spent several hours there just watching. We also walked down to the beach where we could watch penguins entering and exiting the ocean.

Volunteer Point	
Upland Goose (<i>Chloephaga picta</i>)	40
Ruddy-headed Goose (<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>)	7
Crested Duck (<i>Lophonetta specularioides</i>)	2
Magellanic Oystercatcher (<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>)	4
Two-banded Plover (<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>)	14
Brown Skua (Falkland) (<i>Stercorarius antarcticus antarcticus</i>)	5
Dolphin Gull (<i>Leucophaeus scoresbii</i>)	38
Kelp Gull (<i>Larus dominicanus</i>)	50
King Penguin (<i>Aptenodytes patagonicus</i>)	1100
Gentoo Penguin (<i>Pygoscelis papua</i>)	400
Magellanic Penguin (<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>)	300
Turkey Vulture (<i>Cathartes aura</i>)	4
Austral Thrush (<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>)	2

ITT put us up at the Waterfront Hotel, a very nice “boutique” hotel. The restaurant was great too. We had a little time to walk around town, although we didn’t see anything different. Except House Sparrows. I don’t think we had them on any other Falkland lists. Oh well.

So we returned to Punta Arenas and then to back to **Santiago**. The rest of our trip was visiting our friends, but we were able to enjoy a little birding on their farm and at the La Campana National Park’s north entrance, called “Palmas de Ocoa”, where there are a lot of the huge endemic Chilean Palms, which look like royal palms but much larger. The only lifer we picked up was the Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail.

La Campana National Park’s north entrance, Palmas de Ocoa, 20 spp.	
California Quail (<i>Callipepla californica</i>)	27
Chilean Pigeon (<i>Patagioenas araucana</i>)	2
Picui Ground-Dove (<i>Columbina picui</i>)	3
Eared Dove (<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>)	6
Giant Hummingbird (<i>Patagona gigas</i>)	1
Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle (<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>)	1
Striped Woodpecker (<i>Dryobates lignarius</i>)	5
Chimango Caracara (<i>Milvago chimango</i>)	12
Thorn-tailed Rayadito (<i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>)	1
Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail (<i>aegithaloides</i>) (<i>Leptasthenura aegithaloides aegithaloides</i>)	3
Tufted Tit-Tyrant (<i>Anairetes parulus</i>)	2
White-crested Elaenia (<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>)	26
Fire-eyed Diucon (<i>Xolmis pyrope</i>)	3
Austral Thrush (<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>)	2
Chilean Mockingbird (<i>Mimus thenca</i>)	7
Rufous-collared Sparrow (<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>)	52
Long-tailed Meadowlark (<i>Leistes loyca</i>)	2
Austral Blackbird (<i>Curaeus curaeus</i>)	9
Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch (<i>Phrygilus gayi</i>)	5
Common Diuca-Finch (<i>Diuca diuca</i>)	10

So ended this trip, with 140 species seen in Chile and 47 in the Falklands. We got a total of 97 lifers. That's what we consider a success.