Galapagos & Ecuador

28/10/2022 – 15/11/2022
Practical information

Planning the trip

We planned this trip for four people mostly on getting as much species as possible of our target list for the mainland (see appendix 1) and most Galapagos endemics (see appendix 2). This list was based on endemics, near endemics/restricted range species or species we missed on previous trips in surrounding countries like Panama, Colombia, Suriname and a previous trip to Ecuador. This list is made for the southwestern part of Ecuador. The list for the Galapagos is off course limited to the endemics and not added in the appendix. In total we had around 400 species, which is pretty good taking in account that the amount of species in the Galapagos is limited. But although the amount is limited you have very cool species and off course a lot of species you have read about for years like the Darwin finches, the Flightless cormorant, etc. The trip in Southwestern Ecuador has the possibility to see most of the Ecuadorian endemics.

The trip for the Galapagos was based on island hopping, which made it affordable. The areas visited was pretty good to cover all the species. In hindsight it might be possible to skip the trip to Seymour island and try to get to Floreana to add Floreana mockingbird. But on all the other trips we got relevant endemics, we missed none of the possible endemic targets in the Galapagos. You can add more endemics by visiting some extra islands, but probably this will cost a massive amount of money and some have almost become impossible like mangrove finch.

We arranged the trip with Neblina forest (https://www.neblinaforest.com/). We discussed an itinerary and arranged all the practical things. The part on the Galapagos was done by another local organization and the mainland was with a guide and driver from Neblina.

For birding we used in the Galapagos ‘Birds and Mammals of the Galapagos’ of Brinkhuizen & Nilsson. For the mainland we used ‘Birds of Ecuador’ by Freile & Restall. With these books you should be able to identify everything, although the quality of some paintings in the Birds of Ecuador is less than we are used to in recent European guides.

Getting there

We booked flights with KLM and had a direct flight from the Netherlands to Guayaquil. We loved to fly by KLM in the past, but prior to departure there were for months big operational issues on Schiphol airport. This caused some concern, but we arrived four hours prior to departure in the airport, could drop off our bags, had no queue for the safety check and only a pretty long line for the passport control. But check the problems at Schiphol prior to departure. Another practical issue was that we arrived in Guayaquil the day prior to the final of the Copa America. KLM didn’t allow us to get of the plane in Quito, so Neblina was so friendly to book us a return flight from Guayaquil to Quito. There were no hotels available in Guayaquil. So we flew the same evening from Quito to Guayaquil and back, just to fly the next morning from Quito to Guayaquil and further to San cristobal. The return flight is at night, so if you are lucky to sleep on a plane this is over quite quickly. The airports in Ecuador are a pleasure to travel. Everything goes extremely fast with border control, baggage, etc… Just lovely to travel this way, it should be an example for a lot of our European airports.
Food

Concerning food we had no problems at all and on most places you have quite a lot of choices. So just enjoy the diversity of Ecuadorian food.

Climate

Galapagos was luckily a little bit colder than expected, which made it a nice climate for travel. There are mostly clouds and an average summer European summer temperature. On the mainland there is the same cloud cover, except in the regions of the dry forest and around Cuenca which is drier or above the clouds.

Road

The road conditions are pretty good and certainly the big roads are quite good. Traffic is not a problem, even the traffic in Guayaquil was not too busy. Smaller roads can be of varying quality from normal to pretty bad. But anyway the biggest distance you will travel on the main roads. During the whole trip we didn’t experience any moment of extremely busy or dangerous traffic. Maybe because we have had much worse, but even then I suppose most people will experience it in the same way.

Visum and border control

You don’t need a visum to travel to Ecuador. We just had to fill in a Check-mig form concerning corona and a valid passport. Border control is very well organized and goes extremely fast. This is also an example for a lot of countries.

Sightings and sound recordings

All the sightings, mentioned in the report, are uploaded on www.observado.org with exact GPS-locations, so I didn’t add any GPS locations in the report because you can find them on the internet for the species of your interest. In appendix 3 you can click on every species with a link towards the exact sighting. I also made some sound recordings which are available on www.xeno-canto.org. Because we were travelling with four people, I only made a very small amount of sound recordings.

Contact

If you want more information, just contact me (Bram Vogels, written bramvogels and add @hotmail.com).

Day 1 – 28/10/2022: arrival Quito

Because of the Copa America we had to travel back to Quito the same evening. We only had a short period of birding at the entrance of Guayaquil airport with Saffron finch, Scrub blackbird, Blue-gray tanager and Grey-breasted martin.

Day 2 – 29/10/2022: Quito – San Cristobal

We had a morning flight from Quito to San Cristobal with a short stop in Guayaquil. On arrival in San Cristobal you are greeted by Small ground finches which look like being the most common Darwin finch. Before lunch we had a walk to the north of the city starting at the interpretation center. We
had Galapagos/Yellow warbler, Magnificent frigatebird, Blue-footed booby, Hudsonian whimbrel, Swallow-tailed gull, Small tree finch and San cristobal Mockingbird one of the targets we needed for this island. It was already 2PM so time to eat and while leaving we had Galapagos flycatcher. In the restaurant we could study the differences between Small ground finch and Medium ground finch, although for the rest of the trip we would have with several birds a discussion whether it was a small or a medium one.

Going back to our hotel we added Lava gull, Nazca booby, Ruddy turnstone, Spotted sandpiper and Elliot’s storm petrel and Brown noddy just from the city center. Sea lions are also incredible common here and you can find them almost everywhere from the beach, to the streets up into the first houses.

In the afternoon we visited La Loberia, a little bit to the south of the airport. It is a nice short walk along the coast that ends at a cliff with magnificent views of some nice seabirds. While waiting for the taxi we had a second San cristobal mockingbird. Along the walk towards the cliff we had Red-billed tropicbird, Elliot’s storm petrel, Nazca booby, Ruddy Turnstone, Wandering Tattler, Hudsonian whimbrel, Striated heron, Semipalmated plover, Smooth-billed ani, Galapagos shearwater, Nazca booby, Magnificent frigatebird and Lava gull.

At night while coming back from the restaurant we had a Yellow-crowned night heron just standing in the middle of a crosspoint on the road...

Day 3 – 30/10/2022: Espanola

Today was a boat trip towards Espanola. Although most people get bored during the boat trip, birders will never get bored thanks to all the birds flying around. While leaving the harbor you will already have several Elliot’s storm petrels. Once out of the harbor this is added with some Pomarine skuas, soon Galapagos shearwaters appear and a lot of Red-necked phalarope. We quickly had our first Galapagos petrel and we saw several of these magnificent flyers. After an hour we also saw our first Waved albatross. On arrival in Espanola we had to wait a short moment for the landing, but you’ll enjoy with Waved albatross, Great frigatebird, Red-billed tropicbird, Swallow-tailed gull and Elliot’s storm petrel. Once on land Espanola mockingbird is pretty common, as well as Grey warbler-finch. We had a lot of ground finches and also some Espanola cactus-finch. Waved albatrosses, Great frigatebirds, Nazca boobies and blue-footed boobies are everywhere. We also had our first Galapagos hawk, which is even as tame as the Darwin finches. On the walk we further added Red-billed tropicbird, Franklin’s gull, American oystercatcher, Lava heron and Galapagos shearwater.
The next part of the trip we went for a snorkeling area. It was a nice area, but pretty cold water so be sure you have a wetsuit. On the way back towards San cristobal we could enjoy again a lot of seabirds. We also had several Wedge-rumped storm petrels and two Band-rumped storm petrels and of course many Elliot’s storm petrels. With Red-necked phalaropes and still some Waved albatrosses we had a magnificent day.

Day 4 – 31/10/2022: San Cristobal - Isabella

Today we had a transfer to Isaballe with a very small plane. Before leaving San cristobal we had in the morning some White-cheeked pintails flying by and a Grey warbler finch around the airport besides all the ground finches.

On arrival on the small airport, we immediately had Galapagos Mockingbird. After checking in to the hotel we started a walk around the turtle breeding center. At the lagoons just north of the breeding center we had White-cheeked pintail, Black-necked stilt, American flamingo, Galapagos mockingbird, Medium ground finch and American yellow warbler. In the breeding center itself we had our first Large ground finches and some Small tree finches besides Galapagos flycatcher.

You can walk from here back to the city through a wetland/mangrove area with Common gallinule, Semipalmated plover, Common cactus finch, Hudsonian whimbrel, Sanderling, Grey plover, Least sandpiper, Wandering tattler and Lava heron.

In the afternoon we went for a short boat ride to Tintoreras. There is an impressive roost of White tipped reef sharks. We counted at least 111 animals and had our first Galapgos penguins besides Elliot’s storm petrel and Lava gull. The snorkeling was nice with several sea turtles.

Day 5 – 01/11/2021: Isabelle – Punta Moreno

Today we had a boat for the four of us and headed for Punta Moreno. Although the you are sailing at a high speed you’ll notice a lot of Galapagos shearwaters, Nazca boobies, Elliot’s storm petrels, Brown noddies and several Galapagos petrels. But the amount of Red-necked phalaropes is just massive. We’ve seen thousands of them on this day. The main target was off course Flightless cormorant of which we had terrific views. Just one of these evolutionary curiosa. The area is also
Day 6 – 02/11/2022: Isabella – Santa cruz

In the morning we went up the vulcano, because we had some unfinished business with several more highland species. We arrived in dense mist, but luckily the sun came through and the clouds stayed below us. Birding delivered already during breakfast with Green warbler-finch. We finished breakfast at the entrance and started birding. We added Woodpecker finch, Large tree finch and serveral Darwin’s flycatchers/Little vermilion flycatcher. We walked up to the crater and had one of our other targets first a female and a little bit later a male Galapagos martin, while a Dark-billed cuckoo was entertaining us. Cattle egret is also present and we heard Galapagos crake, but didn’t see it.

In the afternoon we had to go to the harbor to catch our boat shuttle towards Santa cruz. The visibility on this boat is bad, so birding was not really an option although we had Elliot’s storm petrel, Galapagos shearwater, Red-billed tropicbird, Blue-footed booby, Nazca booby, Waved albatross and Red-necked phalarope. On arrival in Santa cruz we had some Black-tipped reef sharks and Galapagos mockingbird and a lot of cattle egrets flying to their roost.

Day 7 – 03/11/2022: Santa cruz
We visited in the morning the volcano/Media luna with our main target to see the crake. The weather was pretty bad with very dense fog and a little bit rainy. So birding was hard we started with Large ground finch, Small tree finch, a Darwin’s flycatcher and Woodpecker finch. We searched for the crake, but only were successful when we arrived in areas with lower vegetation so above the area with lower trees. There we had several Galapagos crakes, which are like a lot of other species, very tame and just walk around through the ferns at about one meter. Because the weather was not very good, we descended and after a Galapagos flycatcher we went to Rancho chato.

This area has a lot of Galapagos turtles. You could only imagine how much turtles would have been walking around on the Galapagos before humans arrived. In this area we had Small tree finch, Large tree finch, an American barn owl, Woodpecker finch, Large ground finch, Small ground finch, Medium ground finch and Green warbler-finch.

In the afternoon we went for the Darwin center. Because we already had most of the endemics we became group Paloma, because we were still missing the Galapagos dove. The Darwin center has a lot of turtles and sadly also lonesome George is in the museum. Extinction just in front of your eyes. We couldn’t add any new species to the list but had Large ground finch, Small tree finch, Galapagos mockingbird, Lave gull, Elliot’s storm petrel, Galapagos shearwater, Lava heron and Yellow-crowned night heron.

Day 8 – 04/11/2022: Santa cruz

Today we had a visit to Seymour island. We got picked up by a bus and sailed towards the island. The search for the dove was still on. The island is packed with seabirds and all are very tame and just breed next to the trail. We had good views of Elliot’s storm petrel, Brown noddy, Nazca booby, Galapagos shearwater, Great blue heron, Red-necked phalarope, Great frigatebird, Dark-billed cuckoo, Lava heron and Yellow warbler.

In the afternoon it was snorkeling time, but we decided to bird on the beach in the hope of finding this dove which should be common. On the beach we had American flamingo, Hudsonian whimbrel, Least sandpiper, Wandering tattler, Lave
gull, Galapagos flycatcher, Ruddy turnstone, Yellow warbler, Small ground finch, Semipalmated sandpiper and Lava gull back on arrival.

After returning to the hotel we still had two hours for birding and wanted to walk to Tortuga bay. This walkway was closed because we were too late, but we could bird around the entrance. We started with Large ground finch, Small tree finch, Galapagos mockingbird and then finally had our first Galapagos doves. And as always a little bit later we had several Galapagos doves.

Day 9 – 05/11/2022: Santa cruz - Guayaquil

Today was our last day on the Galapagos and we still had one endemic target and that was Vegetarian finch. We went to Los gemelos, which is a very nice and pristine forested area in the moist highland. The scenery was again magnificent but we were here on a mission. Green warbler-finch is very common, we had Small tree finch, Large ground finch, Galapagos mockingbird, Galapagos flycatcher, Large tree finch and at last Vegetarian finch. With all the endemics possible on this trip in the pocket, we could relax and see what else was there. Galapagos doves were flying around in the craters and Woodpecker finch was also present.

Then we had to go for the airport and had our last short boat trip to get on Baltra island with Elliot’s storm petrel, Blue-footed booby, Lava gull and Brown noddy. At the airport you will be entertained by Galapagos doves and the last frigatebirds. Our plane was on time and we could head back to the mainland after a succesfull trip on the Galapagos. In Guayaquil our guide Miguel Hippo was waiting for us with the driver and we headed for the hotel.

Day 10 – 06/11/2022: Guayaquil – Maglares Churrute

We got out of Guayaquil before light and headed for Maglares Churrute. Som roadside birding got us Pale-legged hornero, a lot of snail kites (all immature), Harri’s hawk, Limpkin, Cocio heron, Snowy egret, Ecuadorian ground dove, Snowy-throated kingbird, Southern rough-winged swallow, Grey-breasted martin, Roseate spoonbill, Groove-billed ani, Wattled jacana, Pacific parrotlet, Croaking ground dove, Shiny cowbird, Savanna hawk, Neotropic cormorant.

We didn’t take the indicated entrance for Maglares churrute, but followed a small river towards some bigger wetlands. The first part is more in arable land with shrubs with the following species: Ringed kingfisher, Streaked saltator, Social flycatcher, Variable seedeater, Yellow-bellied elaenia, Smooth-billed ani, Striped cuckoo, Tricolored munia, Southern beardless tyrannulet, Giant cowbird, Cocio heron, Baird’s flycatcher, Golden-olive woodpecker, Muscovy duck, Peruvian meadowlark,
After passing the first dam, there is much more water and the amount of waterbirds increases with hundreds of Fulvous whistling duck, Black-necked stilt, Pied-billed grebe, Southern lapwing, Anhinga, Spotted sandpiper, Yellow-crowned night heron, Black-crowned night heron, Wattled Jacana, a lot of Horned screamers, Common gallinule, Black-bellied whistling duck, White-cheeked pintail, Blue-winged teal and Pied plover.

We retraced our steps and added some other species like Yellow-tailed oriole, Black-cheeked woodpecker and Buff-throated saltator. We had lunch in a small restaurant where House sparrows were present an Palm tanager.

After lunch we took a sideroad of the big road to have some extra birding before the drive towards the Umbrellabird lodge. It was again an agricultural area with some common species and some targets. In this area we had Roadside hawk, Thick-billed euphonia, Ecuadorian thrush, Rufous-tailed hummingbird, Purple-crowned fairy, Bananquit, Short-tailed swift, Yellow-bellied elaenia, Blue-and-white swallow, Grey-cheeked parakeet (magnificent views), Blue-headed parrot, Striated heron and Boat-billed flycatcher. We started heading further towards our destination but could add on the road Crimson-breasted finch, Gartered trogon and Wood stork.

On arrival in the Umbrellabird lodge it was almost dark but we could still see a Broad-winged hawk sitting in a tree.

**Day 11 – 07/11/2022: Umbrellabird lodge**

We got up early to walk in the dark forest towards the lek of the Long-wattled umbrellabird. We waited some hours but the target didn’t show itself. During the wait we had Olive-striped flycatcher, Zeledon’s antbird, Ochre-bellied dove (calling), Rufous-fronted wood quail (calling), Grey-breasted wood wren, Ochre-bellied flycatcher, Scale-throated foliage-gleaner and Tropical parula. We started to head back to the lodge for breakfast. It is a nice forest trail and we had nice views of Chestnut-backed antbird, White-tipped sicklebill, Spotted woodcreeper, Scaly-crested pygmy tyrant, Grey-and-gold warbler, Wedge-billed woodcreeper, Spotted barbtail, One-colored becard, Slaty antwren,
Black-crowned antshrike, Dusky-capped flycatcher, Red-masked parakeet, Speckle-breasted wren, Bay-headed tanager and White-bearded manakin.

In the lodge are some nice feeders, so breakfast had to wait a little bit longer. On and around the feeders were several species like Lemon-rumped tanager, Black-faced dacnis, Bronze-winged parrot (flying over), White-whiskered hermit, Yellow tyrannulet, Rufous-headed chachalaca, Green honeycreeper, Crowned woodnymph, White-necked Jacobin, Green thorntail, Stripe-throated hermit, Green-crowned brilliant, Andean emerald, Fawn-breasted brilliant, Pale-mandibled aracari and Brown violetear.

After breakfast we started birding again the forest track, but we stayed on the jeep track and climbed more uphill. Birds were still very active because it was cloudy: Orange-bellied euphonia, Smoke-colored pewee, Swainson’s thrush, Buff-rumped warbler, White-shouldered tanager, Song wren, Plain antvireo, Barred hawk, Fawn-breasted tanager, Slaty becard, Guira tanager, Lesser greenlet, Yellow-throated bush tanager, Collared trogon, Violet-tailed sylph, Ashy-throated bush tanager, Bay wren, Orange-billed sparrow, Yellow-throated toucan, Ochre-breasted tanager, Russet antshrike, Slaty-capped flycatcher, Ruddy foliage-gleaner, Ornate flycatcher, Broad-billed motmot, Plain xenops, a marvelous White-tipped sicklebill and one of our targets Esmeraldas antbird. Time was going fast and we had to return to eat with Black-and-white bacard and Brown-capped tyrannulet.

On the feeders were several Red-masked parakeets which gave magnificent views besides Blue-necked tanagers. In the afternoon the sun came through and we had White-collared swift, Grey-rumped swift and Ornate hawk eagles high in the sky. In later afternoon we tried again for the Umbrellabird without success but saw Collared trogon, Grey-breasted flycatcher, Pallid dove and Northern schiffornis. In the evening we heard Black-and-white owl pretty far from the lodge.

**Day 12 – 08/11/2022: El Oro – Umbrellabird lodge**

We had an early start to reach in time the place of the El oro parakeets. After breakfast in the lodge we heard an Andean pygmy owl calling, but went on the road to get to the spot of the parakeets. When we arrived we quickly heard El oro parakeets and saw them flying pretty far. We continued birding in the area and checking the parakeets. We had Yellow-bellied siskin, Club-winged manakin, Green honeycreeper, Black-chinned montaint tanager, Rufous-headed chachalaca, Blue-winged mountain tanager, Squirrel cuckoo, Golden tanager, Common bush tanager, Orange-bellied Euphonia and then the parakeets came sitting wright in front of us. Around 15 parakeets were just on a couple of meters preening itself, drinking, etc. Nice views and one of the Ecuadorian endemics in the pocket.

We continued downwards on foot with Olive-crowned yellowthroat, Black-winged saltator, Slate-throated whitestart, Silver-throated tanager, Blue ground dove, Andean solitaire, House wren,
Variable seedeater, Beryl-spangled tanager, Line-cheeked spintail, Dusky bush tanager, White-booted racket-tail, Ruddy pigeon, Black-lored yellowthroat/Masked yellowthroat, Violet-tailed sylph, Grey-headed kite, Rose-faced parrot, broad-winged hawk and Azara’s spinetail.

In the lower region around the river is also a hummingbird feeder with Green thorntail, Brown inca, White-whiskered hermit, Fawn-breasted brilliant and Three-banded warbler was active in this area. We ended the excursion in this area with Slaty-capped flycatcher and Wedge-billed woodcreeper.

We returned to the entrance road towards the Umbrellabird lodge to bird in the semi forested en semi agricultural area. We had some nice birds in this part with Choco toucan, Yellow-bellied seedeater, Bran-colored flycatcher, Yellow-bellied siskin, Olivaceous piculet, Speckle-breasted wren, Thick-billed seed finch, Grey-lined hawk, Grey-backed hawk, Fasciated wren, Yellow tyrannulet, Streak-headed woodcreeper, Orange-crowned euphonia and White-tipped dove.

In the afternoon the plan was to slowly walk towards the lek site for the Umbrellabird and bird the way towards there. So we started walking back the forested track uphill from the lodge with Yellow-throated toucan, Scaly-throated foliage-gleaner, Ashy-throated bush tanager, Fawn-breasted tanager, Lesser greenlet, Red-eyed vireo, Scale-crested pygmy tyrant, Wedge-billed woodcreeper, Red-masked parakeet and plain-brown woodcreeper. When we suddenly got views of a foraging Long-wattled umbrellabird. The bird was first pretty far in the forest, but came closer and closer until it was just above our heads low in the trees. What a day. Long-wattled umbrellabird for more than half an hour just next to us.

When the bird finally decided to go and forage deeper in the forest, we continued birding along the smaller tracks with Western woodhaunter, Slaty antwren, White-throated spadbill, Chestnut-backed antbird and Tawny-faced gnatwren.

**Day 13 – 09/11/2022: Umbrellabird lodge – Arenillas**

Today we had to leave the Umbrellabird lodge and drove on smaller tracks, while birding, towards the dry forest of Arenillas. Ecologically this is a big difference going from the cloud forest, through agricultural areas and smaller river valleys towards the dry forest.
After breakfast we birded on the way out of the Umbrellabird lodge with Rufous-headed chachalaca, Yellow-throated toucan, Black phoebe, Choco toucan and Lesser swallow-tailed swift. During the whole morning we made several stops for birding, but check on observado for the exact locations if necessary. The first stop produced Pacific pygmy owl, One-colored becard, Rufous-headed chachalaca, Black-cheeked woodpecker, Hook-billed kite, Grey-cheeked parakeet, Sooty-headed tyrannulet and Amazilia hummingbird. Next stops were around smaller river areas with Neotropic cormorant, Roseate spoonbill, Masked water tyrant, Black-bellied whistling duck, Pale-vented pigeon, Striated heron, Blue-headed parrot, Rufous-headed chachalaca, Pale-legged hornero, Yellow-rumped cacique, Spotted sandpiper, Green kingfisher, Solitary sandpiper, Collared plover, Purple gallinule, Pacific royal flycatcher, Wood stork, Short-tailed hawk, Tricolored heron, Yellow-throated toucan, Hook-billed kite and Guayaquil woodpecker.

The area became drier and drier with Cinnamon becard, Whooping motmot, Buff-rumped warbler, Plain-browed woodcreeper, Red-masked parakeet, Grey-linied hawk, Squirrel cuckoo, Great antshrike, Yellow-tailed oriole, Lesser goldfinch, Yellow-rumped cacique, Purple-crowned fairy and Crimson-breasted finch.

Around noon we arrived in Arenillas and on the parking lot we had during our lunch Long-tailed mockingbird and White-tailed jay. We started to walk in the heath of the day but in the end we got most of our targets for this area on the bigger walkway with Whooping motmot, Grey-breasted flycatcher, Collared antshrike, Scarlet-backed woodpecker, Superciliated wren, Ecuadorian piculet, Pale-browed tinamou, Southern beardless tyrannulet, White-edged oriole, Sooty-crowned flycatcher, Fulvous-faced scrub tyrant, Black-capped sparrow, Sooty-headed tyrannulet, Collared warbling finch, Amazilia hummingbird and Guayaquil woodpecker.

When we arrived in our hotel in Machala late in the evening three West Peruvian screech owls were calling, but there were in an enclosed block so not possible to get views.

**Day 14 – 10/11/2022: Machala - Cuenca**

We first did some roadside birding along the big road towards Cuenca. Our fist stops were in the wetter areas with Pale-mandibled aracari, Olive-crowned yellowthroat, Grey-cheeked parakeet, Bronze-winged parrot, Grey-backed hawk and Bat falcon. Continuing higher up it becomes pretty dry and we had a lot of American kestrels besides Harris's hawk, Short-tailed woodstart, Eared dove, Croaking ground dove, Black-chested buzzard-eagle, Rufous-tailed hummingbird, Golden-olive woodpecker and Hooded siskin.

Around noon we arrived in the area for Pale-headed brushfinch, a pretty major target. We first had something to eat and then started to bird in the area with Great thrush, Golden grosbeak, Rufous-browed peppershrike and Grey-browed brushfinch. We checked if the reserve was open, but because
we didn’t say we were coming there was no staff so we couldn’t enter. We went searching in the surroundings, but if you have the brushfinch out of the reserve don’t forget to donate at the Jocotoco foundation, it is thanks to their work that you can still see the bird.

We looked pretty hard but couldn’t connect with the brushfinch but had Slate-throated whitestart, Rufous-collared sparrow, Rainbow starfrontlet, Speckled hummingbird, Striped cuckoo, Tiny hawk, Dusky-capped flycatcher and on our last try we suddenly had a Pale-haded brushfinch and a White-tipped swift was flying around in this area too. So two targets in a short time. A good end of the day.

When we were almost in Cuenca we had some Andean teals next to the road, but then it was almost dark.

Day 15 – 11/11/2022: NP Cajas

Today we first focused on the lower parts of the park. On the hotel grounds we had Andean teals and Andean gulls. At the lower entrance we fist birded the entrance road with Brown-bellied swallow, Turquoise jay, Azara’s spinetail, Black flowerpiercer, Tyrian metaltail, Tawny-rumped tyrannulet, Superciliaried hemispingus, Spectacled whitestart, Yellow-breasted brushfinch, Masked flowerpiercer, Streak-throated bush tyrant, Mountain wren and Russet-crowned warbler.

We then passed the entrance gate and first birded around the parking spot which was a pretty productive area: Mountain wren, Russet-crowned warbler, Grey-breasted mountain toucan, White-banded tyrannulet, Crowned chat-tyrant, Pearled treerunner, Streaked tuftedcheek, Blue-backed conebill, White-throated tyrannulet, Equatorial antpitta and Andean guan.

Next we walked around the lake but it was already late in the morning so birding was a little bit slower with Andean duck, Andean coot, Grass wren, Ecuadorian/Virginia rail, Yellow-billed pintail, Plain-colored seedeater, Grey-breasted mountain toucan and Rufous-breasted chat-tyrant.
It was time to eat and after that we walked a small trail behind the hotel, but birding became pretty slow in the afternoon. But anyway we added some new species to the list and had Mountain wren, Tyrian metaltail, Mouse-colored thistletail, Tawny antpitta, Variable hawk, Great sapphirewing, Superciliaried hemispingus, White-throated tyrannulet and Blue-backed conebill.

Day 16 – 12/11/2022: NP Cajas

This day we could have two more of the Ecuadorian endemics, so the expectations were high. We would be birding in the higher altitudes of the national park, so slowly walking around was the key message.

While driving up we had Carunculated caracara and Plumbeous sierra finch. On the first stop we had our first endemic the Violet-throated metaltail. It seemed pretty common in this area. Other species were Tawny antpitta, Brown-backed chat-tyrant, Streak-backed canastero, Red-rumped bush tyrant, Andean tit-spinetail, Tufted tit-tyrant, Chestnut-winged cinclodes, Many-striped canastero and Mouse-colored thistletail. We walked back to the car and drove over the pass towards the control station at the other site. This should be a good stretch for Giant conebill. We had Shining sunbeam and Blue-mantled thornbill as most relevant species, but it took a while when suddenly we found two Giant conebills.

With these species in the pocket we drove back to have a walk a little bit higher than the visitor center where Tit-like dacnis was pretty common, the second endemic we needed. We walked towards the visitor center from this spot and had views of Stout-billed cinclodes, Variable hawk, Buff-breasted mountain tanager, Ecuadorian hillstar and Cinereous conebill.

After lunch we decided to try the lower elevations because me had most of our targets on this high elevations. Because it was already later in the afternoon birding was much slower than in the morning the day before. The most relevant species were Hooded siskin, Masked flowerpiercer, Purple-throated sunangel, Chestnut-crowned antpitta and Turquoise jay.

When it was dark we had on the parking lot of our hotel also a Band-winged nightjar.

Day 17 – 13/11/2022: NP Cajas - Guayaquil

We first tried again for the Streak-backed canastero, because we only heard it the day before. But unfortunately this bird didn’t show. We walked the area again with Violet-throated metaltail, Cinereous conebill, Tawny antpitta, Blackish tapaculo, Azara’s spinetail, White-throated tyrannulet, Yellow-breasted brushfinch, Red-rumped bush tyrant, Tufted tit-tyrant and Andean tit-spinetail. We
then crossed the pass and started our decent towards the coast while having short birding stops with Tawny-rumped turyannulet, Superciliaried hemispingus, Band-tailed pigeon, White-crested eleania, Blackish tapaculo, White-throated hawk, Black-chested buzzard-eagle and Chestnut-collared swift.

We then tried for Ecuadorian tapaculo on the Via del oro, but it was extremely misty in the cloud forst so birding was difficult. Maybe we also didn’t drive far enough on the road, anyway we missed this last endemic. Although there are sightings on the first part of the road too, maybe we had just bad luck or the weather was too bad. Anyway other species we had in the thich fog were Spotted barbtail, White-whiskered hermit, Buff-rumped warbler, Black-winged saltator, Bay wren, Whiskered wren, Streak-headed antbird, Black-ored yellowthroat, slate-throated whitestart, Yellow tyrannulet, Southern beardless tyrannulet, Violet-tailed sylph, Golden tanager, Golden-naped tanager, Red-faced spinetail, Brown-capped vireo, Three-striped warbler, One-colored becard, Spotted woodcreeper, Slate-capped flycatcher, Rufous-rumped antwren, Black-and-white becard, Blackburnian warbler, Fawn-breasted tanager, Ochre-breasted tanager, Andean solitaire and Pacific parrotlet.

We then headed for our hotel in Guayaquil for our last night in Ecuador.

**Day 18 – 14/11/2022: Cerro blanco**

Our last birding hours in Ecuador were unfortunately arriving, but we still had some nice targets and a nice private reserve in front of us. To enter Cerro blanco you need a local guide and the reserve is enclosed what makes it very safe in the surroundings of Guayaquil.

We had a stroll in the park first on the entrance roads with Crimson-breasted finch (extremely common), Streaked flycatcher, Streak-headed woodcreeper, Grey-and-gold warbler, Red-masked parakeet, Yellow-rumped cacique, Amazilia hummingbird, Long-billed starthroat, Tropical parula, Yellow-bellied elaenia, White-tailed jay, Streaked saltator, Laughing falcon, Grey-cheeked parakeet, Tumbes pewee, White-winged parakeet, Ecuadorian thrush, Olivaceous woodcreeper, Gartered trogon.

Next we followed some smaller tracks where Henna-hooded foliage-gleaner can be seen, but we missed that one. Instead we got Sooty-crowned flycatcher, Variable seedeater, Fasciated wren, Collared antshrike, Saffron siskin, Blue-black grassquit, Red-rumped woodpecker, Squirrel cuckoo, Golden grosbeak, Ecuadorian piculet, Pacific elaenia, Black-capped sparrow, Ecuadorian trogon, White-shouldered tanager, several Saffron siskins and Speckled-breasted wren.
It started to get pretty warm around noon so we returned towards the parking area to have something to eat with Short-tailed swifts above us and Grey-breasted martins.

After lunch we still had time for a very short walk not far from the parking area where we had Boat-billed flycatcher, Red-eyed vireo, Savanna hawk, Short-tailed woodstar, Fulvous-faced scrub tyrant, Pacific pygmy owl, Pacific Elaenia and our last new bird for the trip list was Yellow-olive flatbill.

With this list we had to head for the airport to get our flight back home. The service on the airport was again incredible fast and we were in no time through check-in, border control and security control. I really love these Ecuadorian airports for their incredible service.

**Day 19 – 15/11/2022: Guayaquil - Amsterdam**

We flew through the night and arrived the next afternoon in Schiphol airport where our vacation ended and work was waiting for us.
Appendix 1: target list mainland

Lifer indicated in **bold red**: Endemic = important target
Lifer indicated in **bold**: range mostly restricted to Ecuador or the area visited = relevant target
Lifer indicated in normal: nice to have, but possible on other trips to

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### Appendix 2: Galapagos endemics

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46 Short-tailed Woodstar
47 Crowned Woodnymph
48 Rufous-tailed Hummingbird
49 Amazilia Hummingbird
50 Andean Emerald
51 Smooth-billed Ani
52 Groove-billed Ani
53 Striped Cuckoo
54 Squirrel Cuckoo
55 Dark-billed Cuckoo
56 Band-tailed Pigeon
57 Pale-vented Pigeon
58 Ruddy Pigeon
59 Ecuadorian Ground Dove
60 Croaking Ground Dove
61 Blue Ground Dove
62 White-tipped Dove
63 Pallid Dove
64 Ochre-bellied Dove
65 Eared Dove
66 Galapagos Dove
67 Ecuadorian Rail
68 Common Gallinule
69 Andean Coot
70 Purple Gallinule
71 Galapagos Crane
72 Limpkin
73 Pied-billed Grebe
74 American Flamingo
75 American Oystercatcher
76 Black-necked Stilt
77 Southern Lapwing
78 Grey Plover
79 Semipalmated Plover
80 Collared Plover
81 Pied Plover
82 Wattled Jacana
83 Hudsonian Whimbrel
84 Ruddy Turnstone
85 Sanderling
86 Least Sandpiper
87 Red-necked Phalarope
88 Spotted Sandpiper
89 Solitary Sandpiper
90 Wandering Tattler
91 Brown Noddy
92 Swallow-tailed Gull
93 Andean Gull
94 Lava Gull
95 Franklin’s Gull
96 Pomarine Jaeger
97 Red-billed Tropicbird
98 Galapagos Penguin
99 Elliot’s Storm Petrel
100 Waved Albatross
101 Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel
102 Band-rumped Storm Petrel
103 Galapagos Petrel
104 Galapagos Shearwater
105 Wood Stork
106 Magnificent Frigatebird
107 Great Frigatebird
108 Blue-footed Booby
109 Nazca Booby
110 Anhinga
111 Flightless Cormorant
112 Neotropic Cormorant
113 American White Ibis
114 Roseate Spoonbill
115 Black-crowned Night Heron
116 Yellow-crowned Night Heron
117 Lava Heron
118 Striated Heron
119 Western Cattle Egret
120 Great Blue Heron
121 Cocoi Heron
122 Tricolored Heron
123 Little Blue Heron
124 Snowy Egret
125 Osprey
126 Grey-headed Kite
127 Hook-billed Kite
128 Ornate Hawk-Eagle
129 Tiny Hawk
130 Snail Kite
131 Savannah Hawk
132 Barred Hawk
133 Roadside Hawk
134 Harris’s Hawk
135 Variable Hawk
136 Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle
137 Grey-backed Hawk
138 Grey-lined Hawk
139 Broad-winged Hawk
140 White-throated Hawk
141  Short-tailed Hawk
142  Galapagos Hawk
143  American Barn Owl
144  Andean Pygmy Owl
145  Pacific Pygmy Owl
146  West Peruvian Screech Owl
147  Black-and-white Owl
148  Ecuadorian Trogon
149  Gartered Trogon
150  Collared Trogon
151  Green Kingfisher
152  Ringed Kingfisher
153  Whooping Motmot
154  Broad-billed Motmot
155  Pale-mandibled Aracari
156  Grey-breasted Mountain Toucan
157  Choco Toucan
158  Yellow-throated Toucan
159  Ecuadorian Piculet
160  Olivaceous Piculet
161  Black-cheeked Woodpecker
162  Scarlet-backed Woodpecker
163  Red-rumped Woodpecker
164  Golden-olive Woodpecker
165  Guayaquil Woodpecker
166  Carunculated Caracara
167  Laughing Falcon
168  American Kestrel
169  Bat Falcon
170  Crested Caracara
171  Grey-cheeked Parakeet
172  Rose-faced Parrot
173  Blue-headed Parrot
174  Bronze-winged Parrot
175  Pacific Parrotlet
176  El Oro Parakeet
177  Red-masked Parakeet
178  Chestnut-winged Cinclodes
179  Stout-billed Cinclodes
180  Pale-legged Hornero
181  Andean Tit-Spinetail
182  Mouse-colored Thistletail
183  Streak-backed Canastero
184  Many-striped Canastero
185  Azara’s Spinetail
186  Red-faced Spinetail
187  Line-cheeked Spinetail
188  Spotted Barbtail
Pearled Treerunner
Streaked Tuftedcheek
Scaly-throated Foliage-gleaner
Western Woodhaunter
Ruddy Foliage-gleaner
Plain Xenops
Plain-brown Woodcreeper
Olivaceous Woodcreeper
Wedge-billed Woodcreeper
Spotted Woodcreeper
Streak-headed Woodcreeper
Rufous-rumped Antwren
Russet Antshrike
Slaty Antwren
Plain Antvireo
Collared Antshrike
Black-crowned Antshrike
Great Antshrike
Streak-headed Antbird
Chestnut-backed Antbird
Esmeraldas Antbird
Zeledon's Antbird
Chestnut-crowned Antpitta
Equatorial Antpitta
Tawny Antpitta
Blackish Tapaculo
Sooty-headed Tyrannulet
Tawny-rumped Tyrannulet
Pacific Elaenia
Yellow-bellied Elaenia
White-crested Elaenia
Coopmans's Elaenia
Brown-capped Tyrannulet
Southern Beardless Tyrannulet
White-throated Tyrannulet
White-banded Tyrannulet
Tufted Tit-Tyrant
Yellow Tyrannulet
Fulvous-faced Scrub Tyrant
Olive-striped Flycatcher
Ochre-bellied Flycatcher
Slaty-capped Flycatcher
Bran-colored Flycatcher
Ornate Flycatcher
Scale-crested Pygmy Tyrant
Common Tody-Flycatcher
Yellow-olive Flatbill
White-throated Spadebill
Grey-breasted Flycatcher
Black Phoebe
Smoke-colored Pewee
Tumbe Pewee
Vermilion Flycatcher
Darwin's Flycatcher
Streak-throated Bush Tyrant
Red-rumped Bush Tyrant
Masked Water Tyrant
Crowned Chat-Tyrant
Rufous-breasted Chat-Tyrant
Brown-backed Chat-Tyrant
Short-tailed Field Tyrant
Social Flycatcher
Baird's Flycatcher
Streaked Flycatcher
Boat-billed Flycatcher
Snowy-throated Kingbird
Dusky-capped Flycatcher
Sooty-crowned Flycatcher
Galapagos Flycatcher
Long-wattled Umbrellabird
White-bearded Manakin
Club-winged Manakin
Pacific Royal Flycatcher
Northern Schiffornis
Slaty Becard
Cinnamon Becard
Black-and-white Becard
One-colored Becard
Rufous-browed Peppershrike
Brown-capped Vireo
Red-eyed Vireo
Lesser Greenlet
Turquoise Jay
White-tailed Jay
Sand Martin
Grey-breasted Martin
Galapagos Martin
Blue-and-white Swallow
Brown-bellied Swallow
Southern Rough-winged Swallow
Barn Swallow
Fasciated Wren
Grass Wren
Whiskered Wren
Speckle-breasted Wren
Superciliated Wren
Bay Wren
House Wren
Mountain Wren
Grey-breasted Wood Wren
Song Wren
Tawny-faced Gnatwren
Tropical Gnatcatcher
White-browed Gnatcatcher
Long-tailed Mockingbird
Galapagos Mockingbird
Espanola Mockingbird
San Cristobal Mockingbird
Andean Solitaire
Swainson's Thrush
Great Thrush
Ecuadorian Thrush
Lesser Goldfinch
Yellow-bellied Siskin
Hooded Siskin
Saffron Siskin
Orange-crowned Euphonia
Thick-billed Euphonia
Orange-bellied Euphonia
Rufous-collared Sparrow
Orange-billed Sparrow
Black-capped Sparrow
Grey-browed Brushfinch
Yellow-breasted Brushfinch
Pale-headed Brushfinch
Common Bush Tanager
Dusky Bush Tanager
Yellow-throated Bush Tanager
Ashy-throated Bush Tanager
Peruvian Meadowlark
Russet-backed Oropendola
Yellow-rumped Cacique
Yellow-tailed Oriole
White-edged Oriole
Giant Cowbird
Shiny Cowbird
Black-lored Yellowthroat
Olive-crowned Yellowthroat
Tropical Parula
Blackburnian Warbler
American Yellow Warbler
Black-crested Warbler
Buff-rumped Warbler
Grey-and-gold Warbler
Russet-crowned Warbler
Three-banded Warbler
Three-striped Warbler
Slate-throated Whitestart
Spectacled Whitestart
Ochre-breasted Tanager
Golden Grosbeak
Green Honeycreeper
Guira Tanager
Black-faced Dacnis
Streaked Saltator
Buff-throated Saltator
Black-winged Saltator
Bananaquit
Green Warbler-Finch
Grey Warbler-Finch
Vegetarian Finch
Woodpecker Finch
Small Tree Finch
Large Tree Finch
Small Ground Finch
Espanola Cactus Finch
Large Ground Finch
Common Cactus Finch
Medium Ground Finch
Blue-black Grassquit
White-shouldered Tanager
Crimson-breasted Finch
Lemon-rumped Tanager
Variable Seedeater
Yellow-bellied Seedeater
Thick-billed Seed Finch
Large-billed Seed Finch
Chestnut-throated Seedeater
Collared Warbling Finch
Superciliaried Hemispingus
Giant Conebill
Blue-backed Conebill
Cinereous Conebill
Plumbeous Sierra Finch
Tit-like Dacnis
Plain-colored Seedeater
Masked Flowerpiercer
Black Flowerpiercer
Fawn-breasted Tanager
Buff-breasted Mountain Tanager
Blue-winged Mountain Tanager
Black-chinned Mountain Tanager
Some common species are lacking like in the GPS-links:

388 Blue-grey tanager
389 Streaked xenops
390 Black vulture
391 Great egret
392 Tropical kingbird
393 Scrub blackbird
394 Turkey vulture
395 Buff-throated foliage gleaner
396 Violet-bellied hummingbird
397 Brown pelican