

**BIGAL RIVER BIOLOGICAL RESERVE**  
**from 25 to 31/01/2014**  
**Noëlle & Hervé JACOB**  
[hnjacob@gmail.com](mailto:hnjacob@gmail.com)

We spent 6 weeks in eastern Ecuador in January/February. We visited several sites well covered on the web, our purpose here is to inform the birders that there is a fantastic reserve with easy access and many trails to be done without guide : Rio Bigal. This reserve is owned by the foundation Sumac Muyu and situated north of Loreto, bordering the Sumaco National Park. Waypoint : -0.53650° -77.42472°

As the camp is basic it is cheaper than the other places but that's just what we wanted to find; there are several trails in a lush forest and many streams, and a dirt road offering good views.

There is an excellent website : <http://bigalriverbiologicalreserve.org/en/> and we took contact with Thierry Garcia, a french naturalist who is one of the founders of this reserve. He speaks english and spanish too. We paid 60\$ each per day, including the transport to the reserve from Loreto (1/2h by car then a 45mn walk with mules carrying the luggage) and back. A cook came everyday to the camp to prepare our meals.

During our 7 nights stay, we were alone with Thierry, and we were free to walk alone while he was working in the camp; we saw 147 species of birds and heard 8 more, of which the Nocturnal Curassow singing every night. We had great sightings of Salvin's Curassows, enjoyed the Pavonine Quetzal; the Blackish Nightjar was along the track, the Oilbirds were seen by night eating in the trees... It was very difficult to choose between the large track where it is easier to see birds and the forest trails, much harder to bird but with so many good species to be found, and we had not enough time for birding all of them. We think that 2 weeks would have been more appropriate to leave the reserve without a feeling of frustration! After dinner it was great to follow Thierry on the trails, who showed us frogs, snakes and insects coming out by night.

All the details are on the website and a birds checklist as well. We visited Sani lodge in Amazonia just before Bigal, and then we stayed 10 days at the Wildsumaco lodge (a great birding place too!), and Rio Bigal Reserve was at mid-elevation (500 to 1000m) between these 2 sites, so definitively interesting. We noticed that during our trip most of the birds were not very active and not responsive, but it is difficult to know which is the best time to come as the answers to this question are somewhat different.

If you prefer to avoid the bus and travel by taxi, you can arrange your trip with German who is taxi driver in Baeza; he can wait for you at Quito airport and take you to Loreto, with stops in all the birdwatching places that he knows (Papallacta, Guacamayos, Loreto road...); he is independant but knows the sites because he often works for San Isidro Lodge. It is much cheaper to book the fares with him than by the lodge. For example he asked \$50 from Guango lodge to Quito airport, or \$30 from Guango lodge to San Isidro lodge; from Baeza to the Guacamayos ridge : \$14, from Wildsumaco lodge to San Isidro lodge : \$70 with stops on the Loreto road for Orange-breasted Falcon and others. His email : [germanduche@hotmail.com](mailto:germanduche@hotmail.com), his tel : 0983017747, or 0989341089. He speaks spanish only.

Birds seen or heard :

***Crypturellus soui* (Little Tinamou)** heard  
***Tigrisoma fasciatum* (Fasciated Tiger Heron)**  
***Coragyps atratus* (Black vulture)**  
***Cathartes aura* (Turkey Vulture)**  
***Buteo magnirostris* (Roadside Hawk)**  
***Chondrohierax uncinatus* (Hook-billed Kite)**  
***Elanoides forficatus yetapa* (Swallow-tailed Kite)**  
***Leucopternis albicollis* (White Hawk)**  
***Herpotheres cachinnans* (Laughing Falcon)**  
***Chamaepetes goudotii tschudii* (Sickle-winged Guan)**  
***Mitu salvini* (Salvin's Curassow)**

***Nothocrax urumutum*** (Nocturnal Curassow) heard  
***Odontophorus gujanensis*** (Marbled Wood-Quail) heard  
***Odontophorus speciosus*** (Rufous-breasted Wood-Quail) heard  
***Psophia crepitans*** (Grey-winged Trumpeter)  
***Laterallus melanophaius*** (Rufous-sided Crake) heard  
***Columbina talpacoti*** (Ruddy Ground Dove)  
***Patagioenas plumbea*** (Plumbeous Pigeon)  
***Patagioenas subvinacea*** (Ruddy Pigeon)  
***Amazona farinosa*** (Mealy Amazon)  
***Ara macao*** (Scarlet Macaw)  
***Ara militaris*** (Military Macaw)  
***Ara severa*** (Chestnut-Fronted Macaw)  
***Aratinga leucophtalmus*** (White-eyed Parakeet)  
***Pionus menstruus*** (Blue-headed Parrot)  
***Crotophaga ani*** (Smooth-billed Ani)  
***Piaya cayana*** (Squirrel Cuckoo)  
***Pulsatrix melatona*** (Band-bellied Owl) heard  
***Caprimulgus nigriscens*** (Blackish Nightjar)  
***Steatornis caripensis*** (Oilbird)  
***Chaetura brachyura*** (Short-tailed Swift)  
***Streptoprocne zonaris*** (White-collared Swift)  
***Campylopterus villaviscensio*** (Napo Sabrewing)  
***Doryfera johanna*** (Blue-fronted Lancebill)  
***Heliodoxa aurescens*** (Gould's Jewelfront)  
***Phlogophilus hemileucurus*** (Ecuadorian Piedtail)  
***Thalurania furcata*** (Fork-tailed Woodnymph)  
***Eutoxeres aquila*** (White-tipped Sicklebill)  
***Eutoxeres condamini*** (Buff-tailed Sicklebill)  
***Phaethornis guy*** (Green Hermit)  
***Phaethornis malaris*** (Great-billed Hermit)  
***Threnetes leucurus*** (Pale-tailed Barbthroat)  
***Trogon collaris*** (Collared Trogon)  
***Trogon curucui*** (Blue-crowned Trogon)  
***Trogon violaceus*** (Violaceous Trogon)  
***Trogon viridis*** (Amazonian White-tailed Trogon/ Green-backed Trogon)  
***Pharomachrus pavoninus*** (Pavonine Quetzal)  
***Baryphthengus martii*** (Rufous Motmot)  
***Momotus momota*** (Blue-crowned Motmot) heard  
***Galbula pastazae*** (Coppery chested Jacamar) heard  
***Monasa morphoeus*** (White-fronted Nunbird)  
***Capito auratus*** (Gilded Barbet)  
***Eubucco richardsoni*** (Lemon-throated Barbet)  
***Pteroglossus castanotis*** (Chestnut-eared Araçari)  
***Pteroglossus pluricinctus*** (Many-banded Araçari)  
***Ramphastos tucanus*** (White-throated Toucan)  
***Selenidera reinwardtii*** (Golden-collared Toucanet)  
***Piculus flavigula*** (Yellow-throated Woodpecker)  
***Piculus leucolaemus*** (White-throated Woodpecker)  
***Picumnus rufiventris*** (Rufous-breasted Piculet)  
***Melanerpes cruentatus*** (Yellow-tufted Woodpecker)  
***Automolus rubiginosus*** (Ruddy Foliage-gleaner)  
***Hyloctistes subulatus*** (Eastern Woodhaunter)  
***Lochmias nematura*** (Sharp-tailed Stream Creeper)  
***Philydor ruficaudatus*** (Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner)  
***Premnoplex brunnescens*** (Spotted Barbtail)  
***Sclerurus mexicanus*** (Tawny-throated Leaf-tosser)  
***Xenops milleri*** (Rufous-tailed Xenops)  
***Campylorhamphus trochilirostris*** (Red-billed Scythebill)  
***Dendrocincla merula*** (White-chinned Woodcreeper)  
***Dendrocopates picumnus*** (Black-banded Woodcreeper)  
***Glyphorhynchus spirurus*** (Wedge-billed Woodcreeper)  
***Sittasomus griseicapillus*** (Olivaceous Woodcreeper)  
***Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus orenocensis*** (Strong-billed Woodcreeper)  
***Xiphorhynchus guttatus*** (Buff-throated Woodcreeper)  
***Xiphorhynchus ocellatus*** (Ocellated Woodcreeper)  
***Cercomacra serva*** (Black Antbird)

***Dysithamnus mentalis napensis*** (Plain Antvireo)  
***Gymnopathys leucaspis*** (Bicolored Antbird)  
***Hylophylax naevia*** (Spot-backed Antbird)  
***Hylophylax poecilinota*** (Scale-backed Antbird)  
***Hypocnemis cantator*** ( Warbling Antbird)  
***Myrmeciza fortis*** (Sooty Antbird)  
***Myrmotherula axillaris*** (White-flanked Antwren)  
***Myrmotherula behni*** (Plain-winged Antwren)  
***Myrmotherula longipennis zimemri*** (Long-winged Antwren)  
***Cymbilaimus lineatus*** (Fasciated Antshrike)  
***Frederickena fulva*** (Fulvous Antshrike) heard  
***Thamnophilus aethiops*** (White-shouldered Antshrike)  
***Thamnophilus doliatus*** (Barred Antshrike)  
***Thamnophilus schistaceus*** (Plain-winged Antshrike) heard  
***Myrmothera campanisona*** (Thrush-like Antpitta)  
***Grallaria haplonota*** (Plain-backed Antpitta)  
***Colonia colonus*** (Long-tailed Tyrant)  
***Contopus cooperi*** (Olive-sided Flycatcher)  
***Contopus nigrescens*** (Blackish Pewee)  
***Lathrotriccus euleri*** (Euler´s Flycatcher)  
***Lophotriccus vitiosus*** (Double-banded Pygmy-Tyrant)  
***Mionectes olivaceus*** (Olive-striped Flycatcher)  
***Myiarchus tuberculifer tuberculifer*** (Dusky-capped Flycatcher)  
***Myiotriccus ornatus*** (Ornate Flycatcher)  
***Myiobius villosus*** (Tawny-breasted Flycatcher)  
***Pachyramphus marginatus*** (Black-capped Becard)  
***Poecilotriccus calopterus*** (Golden-winged Tody Flycatcher)  
***Snowornis/Lathria subalaris*** (Gray-tailed Piha)  
***Zimmerius chrysops*** (Golden-faced Tyrannulet)  
***Cephalopterus ornatus*** (Amazonian Umbrellabird)  
***Lipaugus vociferans*** (Screaming Piha)  
***Chloropipo holochlora*** (Green Manakin)  
***Dixiphia pipra*** (White-crowned Manakin)  
***Cyanocorax violaceus*** (Violaceous Jay)  
***Catharus ustulatus*** (Swainson´s Thrush)  
***Myadestes ralloides*** (Andean Solitaire)  
***Turdus albicollis*** (White-necked Thrush)  
***Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*** (Southern Rough-winged Swallow)  
***Campylorhynchus turdinus*** (Thush-like Wren)  
***Cyphorhinus arada*** (Musician Wren)  
***Henicorhina leucosticta*** (White-breasted Wood-Wren)  
***Henicorhina leucoprphys*** (Gray-breasted Wood-Wren)  
***Microcerculus bambla*** (Wing-banded Wren)  
***Myioborus miniatus*** (Slate-throated Whitestart)  
***Wilsonia canadensis*** (Canada Warbler) 25+26/01 road, 26/01 camp  
***Cissopis leveriana*** (Magpie Tanager)  
***Chlorophanes spiza*** (Green Honeycreeper)  
***Chlorospingus flavigularis flavigularis*** (Yellow-throated Bush-Tanager)  
***Cyanerpes caeruleus*** (Purple Honeycreeper)  
***Dacnis lineata*** (Black-faced Dacnis)  
***Euphonia minuta*** (White-vented Euphonia)  
***Euphonia xanthogaster*** (Orange-bellied Euphonia)  
***Lanio fulvus*** (Fulvous Shrike-Tanager)  
***Piranga olivacea*** (Scarlet Tanager)  
***Tachyphonus surinamus*** (Fulvous crested Tanager)  
***Tangara arthus*** (Golden Tanager)  
***Tangara chilensis*** (Paradise Tanager)  
***Tangara gyrola*** (Bay-headed Tanager)  
***Tangara nigrocincta*** (Masked Tanager)  
***Tangara schrankii*** (Green-and-gold Tanager)  
***Tangara velia*** (Opal-rumped Tanager)  
***Tersina viridis*** (Swallow Tanager)  
***Thraupis episcopus*** (Blue-gray Tanager)  
***Thraupis palmarum*** (Palm Tanager)  
***Clorophonia cyanea*** (Blue-napped Chlorophonia)  
***Cyanocompsa cyanoides*** (Blue-black Grosbeak)

***Saltator coerulescens* (Grayish Saltator)**  
***Saltator maximus* (Buff-throated Saltator)**  
***Ammodramus aurifrons* (Yellow-browed Sparrow)**  
***Arremon aurantiirostris* (Orange-billed Sparrow)**  
***Sporophila luctuosa* (Black-and-white Seedeater)**  
***Cacicus cela* (Yellow-rumped Cacique)**  
***Icterus chrysocephalus* (Moriche Oriole)**  
***Psarocolius angustifrons* (Russet Backed Oropendola)**  
***Psarocolius decumanus* (Crested Oropendola)**  
***Psarocolius viridis* (Green Oropendola)**  
***Tityra cayana* (Black-tailed Tityra)**  
***Tityra semifasciata* (Masked Tityra)**