

AGAMI NATURE TOURS
TRIP REPORT: PIRA AÇU LODGE & AMAZONIA NP



PIRA AÇU LODGE & AMAZONIA NATIONAL PARK

8 – 23 September 2022



Nocturnal Curassow (*Nothocrax urumutum*), Pira Açú Lodge, Amazonas, Brazil

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Introduction:

In 2021, as many countries worldwide began to ease travel restrictions related to the ravages of the Covid-19 pandemic, this trip started to take shape after having been shelved in early 2020. What was originally going to be a trip centred around a visit to Amazonia National Park on the Tapajós river quickly became a two-location trip combining Amazonia NP and the wonderful Pira Açu Lodge, a new birding destination that only hit birders' radars in late 2020 and 2021. The idea was to combine the two sites, both located in the interfluvium between the Tapajós and Madeira rivers, two significant tributaries of the Amazon river. It has come to light over the past decade or so that the Madeira-Tapajós interfluvium is home to a number of endemic species found nowhere else in the Amazon, particularly in the southern reaches of the region where Pira Açu is located. We settled on 8 days at Pira Açu and 4 nights for Amazonia National Park, using Manaus as the hub for the flights to Apuí (Pira Açu) and Itaituba (Amazonia NP), respectively. As it turned out, flight cancellations between Manaus and Itaituba meant we ended up with just 2 nights at Amazonia NP, but remarkably we hardly missed anything as a result. The upshot was that we were able to add a couple of days of birding in the Guianan Shield forests and whitewater river islands in the immediate vicinity of Manaus, adding not only a fair number of new birds to the list, but also a bit of diversity in habitats and birding locales, including an afternoon visit to the excellent canopy tower at the Museu da Amazonia on the edge of Manaus itself.

Visiting in September, we knew that the weather would be quite dry and the forests would likely be stressed and rather quiet as a result. However, the vast majority of the Amazon's birds are resident and highly sedentary; they would still be there, and with patience and a modicum of knowledge about their habits and habitats, we were confident that the ingredients were in place for a memorable trip. September also preceded Brazil's 2022 presidential election, and Amazon deforestation and forest fires were in the news, as has historically been the case in election years. We did have some days that were sadly quite smoky, and while on those days bird activity was notably muted, we nevertheless had great success with the specialties and target birds at both Pira Açu Lodge and Amazonia National Park. The experience of having the tall primary forests at Pira Açu Lodge essentially all to ourselves, with hardly a sign of any other people around, was memorable. The rare, skulking forest birds we encountered there were worth the effort it took to get to the lodge, and worth the inevitable stretches of near silence we had along the trails on some days. Add to the mix our sighting of a long-lost species that had only been recorded once since the only specimen was collected in 1829, and well, it's hard to say that this tour could have been anything but a roaring success.

Itinerary:

September 8th – Flight from Manaus to Apuí (07:30 to 09:00). Travel to Aripuanã river and upstream to Pira Açu Lodge, arriving before lunch. Afternoon birding airstrip. *Night at Pira Açu Lodge.*

September 9th – Morning birding Aripuanã and Paxiuba rivers, Taboquinha trail. Afternoon birding Buiucu track. *Night at Pira Açu Lodge.*

September 10th – Morning birding Agua Linda trail. Afternoon birding river islands in the Aripuanã below the mouth of the Paxiuba river. *Night at Pira Açu Lodge.*

September 11th – Morning birding airstrip and Buiucu trail. Afternoon birding Jatuarana trail. *Night at Pira Açu Lodge.*

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- September 12th – Short morning session on track to runway, rest of the morning birding the Serra do Bréu trail near the mouth of the Guariba river. Afternoon birding Jatuarana trail.
Night at PiraAçu Lodge.
- September 13th – Morning birding Castanhal trail. Afternoon birding Buiucu trail.
Night at PiraAçu Lodge.
- September 14th – Morning on Taboquinha trail. Afternoon boat trip on Buiucu river.
Night at PiraAçu Lodge.
- September 15th – Morning and afternoon birding the Agua Linda trail.
Night at PiraAçu Lodge.
- September 16th – One last try on the Taboquinha trail (and finally, Rondonia Bushbird). Afternoon birding Buiucu trail. *Night at PiraAçu Lodge.*
- September 17th – Travel to Manaus via Apuí. *Night at Novotel Manaus.*
- September 18th – Morning boat trip to Marchantaria river islands in the Solimões river. Afternoon birding Ponta Negra area in Manaus. *Night at Novotel Manaus.*
- September 19th – Morning birding ZF-2 reserve north of Manaus. Afternoon birding MUSA canopy tower after rains passed. *Night at Novotel Manaus.*
- September 20th – Flight from Manaus to Itaituba. Afternoon spent birding the Transamazonica highway through Amazonia National Park.
Night at Pousada Portal do PN da Amazonia.
- September 21st – Morning birding Piçarreira trail and afternoon on Capelinha and Tracoá trails, all within Amazonia National Park.
Night at Pousada Portal do PN da Amazonia.
- September 22nd – Return flight from Itaituba to Manaus. Cultural afternoon in Manaus.
Night at Novotel Manaus.
- September 23rd – Morning birding KM 28 north of Manaus. End of tour.

Daily Summary:

September 8th:

We met up before dawn at the hotel in Manaus. After a long-awaited reunion in the lobby – this trip had been in the works since a successful South-east Brazil trip in November 2019 – we had an early bite of breakfast before taking our transfer to the airport. We checked in at the *Apuí Taxi Aereo* desk, squeaking under the baggage limit and being informed that there could be delays related to forest fires in the southern Amazon. It turned out not to be the case, though, and we ended up taking off only about a half-hour behind schedule, with a total of 14 passengers in an 18-seater Embraer Bandeirante 110P. After flying over the Meeting of the Waters, we cruised comfortably above the haze for 90 minutes before touching down in Apuí, a frontier town in the south of Amazonas state where cattle ranching is the main economic activity.

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Our plane from Manaus to Apuí (left) and our welcoming committee in Apuí (right)

We stepped onto the tarmac to find an impressive turnout at the airport, complete with the Queen of the Rodeo. This turned out to be for the state governor, whose plane was not far behind ours, rather than for our birding group. The governor was in town to open Apuí's signature cultural event, the town rodeo. We stopped at a bakery in the bustling main street (complete with cowboys on parade) for a second breakfast before driving a fast 100 kilometres over the recently graded *Transamazônica* highway to the banks of the Aripuana river, mostly through cattle country – we saw a few bits and pieces typical of such habitat along the way: **Cattle Egret**, **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**, **Smooth-billed Ani**, **Red-breasted Meadowlark**, and **Tropical Kingbird**. At the Aripuanã, Raimundo from the PiraAçu Lodge was waiting for us, and after loading our bags into the boat we started the two-hour trip upriver to the lodge.

The heat was already building in the late morning hours, and accordingly there wasn't too much activity during the ride upriver, but we did see **Cocoi Heron**, **Yellow-billed** and **Large-billed Terns**, **Pied Lapwing**, **Spotted Sandpiper**, **Ringed Kingfisher**, **Neotropical Cormorant**, **Swallow-winged Puffbirds**, **Black Caracara**, and plenty of swallows including the handsome and numerous **White-winged Swallow**, along with smaller numbers of **Black-collared** and **White-banded Swallows**, and **Brown-chested Martins**. A chunky **Nacunda Nighthawk** sitting on a rock in the middle of the river was a nice bonus.

We arrived to the PiraAçu Lodge just in time for lunch. The air-conditioned restaurant provided a nice respite from the searing heat by the river. After lunch we took a short break to unpack and get settled into our cabins before meeting again in mid-afternoon for a walk out to the lodge's landing strip.



Lunch at PiraAçu Lodge

We hadn't gone more than 30 metres from the rooms before we kicked off the afternoon with a nice little flock of **Santarem Parakeets** in trees near the cabins. In the forest behind the lodge we hit a mixed species flock of canopy birds almost immediately, seeing **Fulvous-crested Tanager**, **Red-stained Woodpecker**, **Dusky-capped Woodcreeper**, **Chivi Vireo**, **Buff-cheeked Greenlet**, **Blue Dacnis**, **Opal-rumped** and **Turquoise Tanagers**, **Paradise Jacamars** and a **Scale-breasted Woodpecker**, a very nice start to the afternoon. Even though it was quite hot, there was a steady stream of activity throughout the afternoon: upon reaching the runway we had great views of a flock of low-flying swifts, allowing us to study the **Chapman's** and **Gray-rumped Swifts** present, while some **Short-tailed Swifts** stayed higher up. There were also lots of **Southern Rough-winged Swallows**, with smaller numbers of the striking **White-banded** and **Black-collared Swallows**, two elegant swallows with plumages that are essentially the inverse of one another. At the forest edge we saw **White-lined** and **Silver-beaked Tanagers**, along with a stunning male **Vermilion Flycatcher** low down by "Terminal 1". A fairly shy group of **Ashy Black Titi Monkeys** was working quietly along the forest edge, and with some persistence we obtained reasonable views of these range-restricted endemic primates. A few **Blue-headed Parrots** flew through now and again, as did a lone **Kawall's Amazon** later on in the afternoon. A **White-throated Toucan** crossed the runway in front of us, and a bit later on we called in an **Amazonian Pygmy-Owl** for scope views. A canopy flock was stirred into action by the pygmy-owl, and in it we found both **Short-billed** and **Purple Honeycreepers**, **Opal-rumped** and **Paradise Tanagers**, **Variegated Flycatcher**, **White-browed Purpletuff**, and soon thereafter my attention was drawn to a strange-looking black and white bird working in the lower reaches of a tree set slightly back from the forest edge. It was obviously a tityra, but alarm bells went ringing when we noticed its petite form, small bill, and pure white tail, all characteristics of the lost-to-science **White-tailed Tityra**! I made

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sure that everyone was on the bird, which seemed to remain in a small corner of one particular tree, which made it easy enough to watch for a time in the scope, and after a while I was even able to try a few digi-scoping videos. A screengrab from one of the videos is below:



White-tailed Tityra

We watched the tityra for quite some time, trying to observe as many details and as much behaviour as possible as it foraged on its own, at first rather frenetically hopping about in the foliage and making short, direct flights between branches. It slowed down, though, as the rest of the mixed flock moved on, sticking to a particular area of the lower canopy – the bird even fell asleep for a while! Eventually it disappeared and the area went quiet. We saw a **Gray-lined Hawk**, but not much else.

After a little while the lodge's ATV showed up, bringing back some fishermen from the Buiucu river. There was space in the passenger wagon, so some of us hopped on to ride back to the lodge, but I elected to walk back, having spent hours in bus-plane-plane-plane-truck-boat and just happy to be walking. Two courting **Long-tailed Potoos** at the far end of the runway were a remarkable sight, flying in tandem in slow motion, and also perching on snags for great views as dusk fell. Walking back along the runway in the moonlight, I listened to Tawny-bellied Screech-Owls tooting inside the forest, with a couple of **Common Pauraxes** and a **Blackish Nightjar** seen at the edges. I felt the presence of a creature behind me, and turned just in time to see a **Brazilian Tapir** ambling across the runway not more than 10 metres behind me, catching just a few seconds of it before it walked into the forest. Thrilled with our start at PiraAçu, it was time to head back to the lodge, ready for more over the next week at this spectacular location.

September 9th: PiraAçu Lodge – Taboquinha Trail & Buiucu Track

We started our day with a full breakfast spread just before dawn, shortly after which we departed upriver in the boat with Raimundo, to kick things off with a fairly leisurely boat trip up the Aripuanã river. Almost immediately after setting off, we spied a male **Amazonian Umbrellabird** winging his way across the river just upstream from the lodge, looking like a massive black woodpecker in flight – a nice start. We enjoyed cruising up the uninhabited river above the lodge, soon scoring on a big target (quite literally), the first of two wonderful pairs of **Razor-billed Curassows**, followed by a nice **Green Ibis**, and a couple of **Chestnut-eared Aracaris**. The complex of river islands below the mouth of the Paxiuba river offered some productive boat birding, with a pair of **Scarlet Macaws**, at least four **Red-throated Piping-Guans**, and another two or three **Amazonian Umbrellabirds**, the latter species almost certainly leaving from a lek site on one of the islands and heading to the mainland to forage. The smaller rocky islets nearby had **Black Caracaras**, **Pied Lapwing**, plenty of **Black-collared Swallows**, a few **Red-breasted Meadowlarks**, and several **Yellow-billed Terns**, while our first **Osprey** of the trip flew overheard on long, powerful wingbeats.

We soon reached the Paxiuba river, a relatively narrow left bank tributary of the Aripuanã. Given the timing of our visit – the end of the dry season – the water levels of the Paxiuba were quite low. Once Raimundo found an acceptable channel at the mouth of the river, we cruised up slowly, seeing **Green** and **Amazon Kingfishers**, **Greater Ani**, a few **Capped Herons**, and several pairs of **Drab Water Tyrants**. A lovely pair of **Sunbitterns**, a monotypic family unique to the lowlands of South America, showed really well in a nice sighting.

We reached the Taboquinha trail, a short path into transitional *terra firme* forest with stands of slender bamboo in the understorey, and disembarked to begin our search for one of our top targets at PiraAçu. As it turned out, we did not find the Rondonia Bushbird we were looking for (but stay tuned, we tried again!), and on the whole it was a fairly quiet morning. We started things off with good views of a **Uniform Woodcreeper**, a Madeira-Tapajós endemic, and followed that up with scope views of a very cooperative **Cinnamon Neopipo**, a scarce and poorly known species that is easily overlooked across its range.



Cinnamon Neopipo

While we searched the bamboo for the bushbird, we encountered a pair of **Spix's Warbling-Antbirds**, a **Plain-winged Antshrike**, a few **Dot-winged Antwrens** and a responsive **White-eyed Stipplethroat**. After quite some time spent meticulously working through the bushbird territory, playing the tape but also spending long periods just listening carefully for the telltale sounds of the bushbird cracking open dead bamboo stalks, we doubled back a to try another little bamboo stand. In the taller forest between the two areas we found a young male **Pompadour Cotinga**, a **Long-tailed Woodcreeper** foraging low on a nearby trunk, which we followed in quick succession with an **Elegant Woodcreeper**, and a rather forthcoming **Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper** of the *concolor* race. A little group of **White-fronted Nunbirds** came in from a distance to check out the tape, but we couldn't repeat that success with a calling Gould's Toucanet that remained heard-only for the time being. Further efforts to locate the bushbird were for naught, and eventually we gave up for the time being. With eight full days to bird here, we had plenty of time to plot a return visit.

We returned to the river and headed back down the Paxiuba with the engine inclined to keep the propeller from getting stuck in the sandy river bottom. It was slow going, but we finally reached the Aripuanã and headed downstream in the direction of the lodge. By now it was already very hot and there didn't seem to be nearly as much to see along the way. We did stop, though, to watch a family group of five **Giant Otters** that scrambled up onto the river bank and into cover behind a tangle of vines. Two of the otters remained in view to watch us, allowing us to appreciate just how *big* these animals really are – an adult male Giant Otter can attain a size of up to 5 ½ feet long! Continuing downstream we spotted a couple of **Capybaras** with **Giant Cowbirds** in attendance to groom them, and a bit later on, a terrific **Sungrebe** swimming near shore that hopped out of the water to sit beside a log on the shore, where it froze, confident in its camouflage. If we hadn't seen it swimming, it would have undoubtedly gone unnoticed, but in this case we were able to paddle in quite close to the bird for excellent

views, even of its remarkable striped feet. We arrived back to the lodge just before lunch, well pleased with our first morning and excited for what the next week held in store for us.



Sungrebe



Giant Otter

After lunch and a break during the hottest part of the day, we decided to walk out down the landing strip again to check for the White-tailed Tityra before heading for the Buiucu Track, an excellent ATV trail that traverses a terrific stretch of *terra firme* forest. There was no sign of the tityra or the mixed flock that it had been loosely associating with, and on the whole it was very quiet – not the least bit unusual for an afternoon in the Amazon. At the far end of the landing strip we found and scoped a nice **Great Jacamar**. A couple of **Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrants** were calling close by, and we managed to bring them down a bit from the subcanopy for good views. Inside the forest we heard an Alta Floresta Antpitta, but another birder and Nengo, one of the local guides, were in the forest trying to see it (and had been trying it for a couple of days, I believe), so we decided to leave that one for later. A small mixed flock had **Elegant Woodcreeper** and **Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner**, but not much else, or at least nothing else that really hung around long enough for us to look at. A bit further along we found a singing **Hoffmann's Woodcreeper** that appeared to be on its own, a nice pickup and another Madeira-Tapajós endemic. We found a female **Rose-breasted Chat** working high up in a mess of vine tangles, and nearby a **Common Scale-backed Antbird** hopped around in the understorey. We heard a Musician Wren churring in dense undergrowth beside the trail, and a bit of playback spurred it into song, but the bird refused to emerge from the darkest recesses, and although I managed to glimpse it a couple of times, we really didn't get anything resembling a sighting. A trio of **Crimson-bellied Parakeets** flew in above us and kept circling around a particular emergent tree – given the late hour it seems likely they had a roost cavity nearby.

One of the two birders who had been at the lodge since before we arrived had seen the elusive Nocturnal Curassow along the track between the landing strip and the lodge just before dusk a couple of days earlier, so we returned to the lodge in an attempt to swing past the spot at an appropriate hour, however no curassows were to be found.

September 10th: PiraAçu Lodge – Agua Linda Trail & Aripuanã River Islands

Once again we started our day with another generous breakfast, today featuring some delicious little cheese *pastel* treats. We departed soon after dawn, this time heading downstream from the lodge. Yet again we started our day with a flyover **Amazon Umbrellabird**. Our trail this morning was the Agua Linda trail, a classic birding trail traversing upland primary *terra firme* forest for a little more than two kilometres. Together with Raimundo from the lodge, Bruno Rennó and I opened this trail during our initial visit to the lodge in May 2021, and Agua Linda has been one of my favourite trails at PiraAçu ever since we first laid eyes on the first of three deep ravines that the trail crosses. A detour around the contours of the first ravine was a welcome change to the trail, and it was by

this dry stream bed that we had a pair of **Rufous-faced Antbirds**. The female antbird showed very well while her mate hung back, but in this case it was nice to see the female since the plumage differences in the ladies are a major part of the justification for splitting the Spot-winged Antbird complex that the species is a part of. A pair of **Kawall's Parrots** landed in a leafless tree nearby just as we were finishing up with the antbird, and we were able to see them through the scope, although views were somewhat backlit. A male **Snow-capped Manakin** brightened up the dark forest understorey, followed by a sharp **Red-headed Manakin** and a couple of **Rufous-tailed Flatbills**.

After a fruitless try for Rufous-necked Puffbird, we had a fantastic encounter with a large troop of primates, a group comprised of at least ten **Common Woolly Monkeys** and more than twice that number of **Red-nosed Bearded Saki Monkeys**. The woolly monkeys were pretty calm about our presence, but it was apparent that some of the sakis had not seen people before, as a couple of the youngsters peered down at us inquisitively, cocking their heads in curiosity, at least until a large male moved them off and clambered onto a limb above us, screeching his disapproval at our presence for a couple of minutes.



Red-nosed Bearded Saki Monkey

Further one we once again heard the telltale churrs of a **Musician Wren** near the trail, and this time we were able to spot it after a bit of work when it sat up a bit to sing. Musician Wren has been split by the Brazilian ornithological authorities, a move that seems likely to be followed by others in the near future. The birds at PiraAçu are the Madeira-Tapajós endemic *interpositus* race (**Rondonia Wren**), a more faintly-marked form than birds found to the east, or on the Guianan Shield. Just before the reaching the trail's namesake, the Agua Linda stream, we worked on a vocal pair of **Chestnut-belted Gnateaters**, only glimpsing the female a few times while the male sang, but just kept moving away. A bit further ahead a mixed flock was moving through, and we really struggled here to see some of the birds in the canopy, only glimpsing a Black-girdled Barbet and getting brief views of a pair of **Red-billed Pied Tanagers**, a scenario that repeated with a couple of **Yellow-throated**

Flycatchers, and a **Dotted Tanager** that only showed in silhouette. Tired of the difficult conditions looking up into the canopy against the sun, we decided to move on, and a while later we tried for the barbet again at another canopy gap. This time the birds responded pretty well and came in, with one of the **Black-girdled Barbets** perching in view long enough for us to enjoy it at length through the scope. A **Gould's Toucanet** followed suit, which ultimately meant that we largely ignored an **Amazonian Scrub-Flycatcher** that was flitting around in the same area, calling. A Curve-billed Scythebill remained heard-only, flying past us a couple of times but not showing.

Another 100 metres on, we stopped to play for Ferruginous-backed Antbird, but there was no reply. While we waited, listening, we heard the sibilant contact calls of a pair of **Red-and-black Grosbeaks** nearby! The birds didn't show the least interest in a bit of playback, but we managed to spot them anyway as they hopped about in the lower storey between the *Lepidocaryum* palms, and we ended up getting a few clear, unobstructed views of the male. Pleased with that success, I played a bit of speculative tape for one of the trip's top target birds... and received a near immediate reply from a *Skutchia*! We positioned ourselves and played the tape again softly, and soon enough at least three **Pale-faced Bare-eyes** were showing very well as they rather calmly circled around our position, much to everyone's delight. Dana was particularly pleased to see the bird that had once been placed in the monotypic genus *Skutchia*, having been friends with Alexander Skutch, the great naturalist and master of the life history of Neotropical birds.

There wasn't much that would have topped the bare-eye, but we decided to keep birding anyway. A good mixed flock had **Saturnine Antshrike**, **Spot-throated Woodcreeper**, **Plain Xenops**, **Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner**, **Chestnut-winged Hookbill**, and **Gray Antwren**, in addition to a few other birds that slipped away before we could call them in, including a hyperactive **White-winged Shrike-Tanager** that kept blasting back in forth above our heads. A male **Black-necked Red-Cotinga** put in a few brief appearances, and a **White-crested Spadebill** showed pretty well near the trail itself. We had nearly reached the Grota Funda ravine, and it was fairly late in the morning, so we turned around and worked our way back to the river. We had nearly reached the trailhead again when we hit another flock that had **Red-crowned Ant-Tanagers** in the understory, and **Tooth-billed Wren** singing in the canopy, but we ended up switching horses mid-stream when I heard the soft calls of **Crimson-bellied Parakeets** in the subcanopy nearby. It didn't take us long to locate a half dozen of these beautiful parakeets, getting brief scope views before they scuttled away giving screechy calls.

After another nice lunch – we were understandably euphoric having nailed *Skutchia* so early in the trip – and a short break during the early afternoon, we departed upriver with Raimundo. After a long morning session in the forest, the plan for the afternoon was a boat trip up to a set of river islands in the Aripuanã a short distance downstream from the mouth of the Paxiúba river. We started off watching a few birds on the small islets just upstream from the lodge, and the afternoon light was perfect as we enjoyed lovely **Pied Lapwings**, a little group of **Red-breasted Meadowlarks**, **Green Ibis**, both **Solitary** and **Spotted Sandpipers**, a **Tropical Kingbird** and a trio of **Fork-tailed Flycatchers**. A couple of **Giant Cowbirds** riding a top a **Capybara** was a nice sighting, and we added a few **Greater Anis** nearby. After a lone **Razor-billed Curassow** blasted up the bank out of view as soon as it noticed us, we later found a really cooperative pair that showed extremely well and didn't seem at all concerned by our presence. Upon reaching the larger river islands, we navigated a quiet channel between an island and the mainland, finding a **Red-throated Piping-Guan** drinking at water's edge, another **Sungrebe**, and a nice mix of swallows and swifts dipping down to drink. Here we also had a pair of **Paradise Jacamars**, heard a flyover Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet, and saw another **Amazonian Umbrellabird**.



Razor-billed Curassow

We stopped at a long sand and gravel island with a few scattered bushes that would be completely submerged during the high water season from December to April. A few dozen **Brown-chested Martins** were gathering here to roost, and we spotted a **Little Ground-Tyrant** – a migrant from the Andres – that was running around near a small pool surrounded by boulders. Several pairs of **Pied Lapwing** were present, and after a bit of searching we found a **Ladder-tailed Nightjar** roosting on a rock. There were one or two **Yellow-bellied Seedeaters** together with a handful of **Chestnut-bellied Seedeaters**, but on the whole there were fewer passerines on the island than expected. We contented ourselves with great views of a couple of river stingrays feeding in the shallow water alongside the quiet beach, the tranquility of the moment only momentarily interrupted by the raucous squawks of a half dozen **Scarlet Macaws** that flew overhead. Before returning to the boat we stopped to view a **Green-tailed Goldenthrout** that really didn't want to sit still, and upon closer inspection we found that at least four individuals were chasing one another around between the bushes. The sunset was dominated by impressive angry red hues, lending the inescapable impression that Mother Nature was not at all pleased with the smoky haze that was hanging over the river as the afternoon waned.

September 11th: PiraAçu Lodge – Buiucu Track & Jatuarana Trail

Compared to yesterday's success, today was a tough morning. Just after breakfast, as we were preparing to depart downriver, word came that a pair of Nocturnal Curassows had just been seen along the path between the lodge

and the landing strip! We dropped everything and rushed to the spot, but the birds had already slipped into the forest – close, but no cigar. We did manage to call in a **Blue-necked Jacamar** as a minor consolation prize (great bird and all, but a far cry from what we had been looking for). We continued on to the landing strip, where it became obvious that a significant amount of smoke from forest fires in the region had settled over the forest. It was under this haze that we started things off with our first **Gray-chested Greenlet** of the trip, along with a **Buff-throated Saltator** and another immature **Pompadour Cotinga**. We called in a singing **White-fringed Antwren**, a handsome male that showed very well, and followed that up with the cute **Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher** and a **Long-tailed Hermit** that stopped briefly to visit some nearby passionflower vines. A short distance farther along we found a nice **Needle-billed Hermit** feeding in a more extensive patch of *Passiflora* vines. There were possibly two birds in the area, and a bit of work with the tape convinced one individual to stay put on a perch in clear view, even allowing us to take a few pictures. A pair of flyover **Kawall's Parrots** showed the white feathers around the base of the bill pretty well, a feature that hadn't been entirely evident the previous morning when we had them in the scope. The smoke seemed to have thickened by the time we reached the end of the runway, where we found a hulking **Red-necked Woodpecker** drumming on a snag. What had been a quiet morning up to this point seemed to go deathly silent. Still, we persevered and were rewarded for our persistence with nice views of a **Pavonine Quetzal**, a male **Green-backed Trogon**, and a female **Black-necked Red-Cotinga** that came in from some distance to check out the tape.

We worked our way slowly along the Buiucu Track, trying for a number of species, both at known territories and in some cases, just speculatively in the best stretches of habitat. Nothing was answering, and nothing was singing. We did get a distant reply from a Collared Puffbird, but it sang just once and then seemed to shut up. Another couple of hundred metres down the track we tried again, and this time the bird sang from beside the trail. Thrilled to have encountered a bird, any bird, we quickly found the **Collared Puffbird** sitting quietly in the subcanopy, where it showed nicely for prolonged scope views. Things started to pick up a little from here: a mixed flock had **Gray** and **Dot-winged Antwrens**, **Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner**, **White-eyed Stipplethroat**, and **Elegant Woodcreeper**. A calling **Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner** came in close in the lower growth beside the trail. Not long after we found another nice troop of **Common Woolly Monkeys** and **Red-nosed Bearded Sakis** feeding at fruiting *copaiba* trees. A distant Ferruginous-backed Antbird didn't approach, but we did see a **Blue-necked Jacamar** male as we walked down toward the Buiucu river, a **Screaming Piha** at a fruiting tree, and a handsome **Yellow-throated Woodpecker** nearby.

There were a few **White-winged** and **White-banded Swallows** at the Buiucu river. Turning back, we found **Black-bellied Cuckoo** and a pair of **Amazonian Trogons**. The Ferruginous-backed Antbird was singing closer to the trail now, so we tried again, and eventually Michael spotted the bird walking quietly on the forest floor nearby. We ended up having great views of this spectacular terrestrial antbird as it strolled, mostly silently, past us just a few metres away. Just as the lodge's ATV arrived to ferry us back to for lunch after a tiring morning, a Pearly Antshrike gave a few contact calls from the undergrowth nearby; stellar views of a male **Pearly Antshrike** ensued, easily one of the morning's most cooperative birds.



Pearly Antshrike

In the afternoon the sweltering heat was broken by the passage of a torrential rain shower that came just minutes before we were scheduled to depart. We waited out the rain for a half hour or so, then headed downstream on the Aripuanã. We arrived to the mouth of the Jatuarana creek under overcast skies, and it was already fairly dark inside the forest. A big school of *matrinxã*, a trout-like fish in the genus *Brycon*, zipped out of the clearwater Jatuarana into the murky waters of the Aripuanã. Our plan here was to try for a few species that prefer seasonally-flooded forests, including the rare Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher. That target species wasn't around, but we did see a few things including **Striped Woodcreeper**, a female **Black-chinned Antbird**, and a trio of **Red-necked Aracaris**. We heard both Collared Trogon and Euler's Flycatcher, and spent a good chunk of our time trying to find the tody-flycatcher, to no avail. We wanted to get back to the lodge before dusk to have a look for the Nocturnal Curassow again, so as the light waned inside the forest we returned to the boat and motored back upstream the lodge, seeing a total of eight **Razor-billed Curassows** along the way! That turned out to be the best we could the curassow department, though, as the Nocturnal eluded us once again.



Razor-billed Curassow

September 12th: Nocturnal Curassow, Serra do Bréu & Jatuarana Trail

We rushed through breakfast this morning, eager to head for the track to the runway to see if we could catch the Nocturnal Curassow at dawn. It was already getting light by the time we were walking the track at roughly ten minutes to six. We slowly walked most of the way down to the runway. Since the best stretch for the curassows was the stretch now between us and the lodge, I suggested that I walk ahead to check in the direction of the runway, while the others work their way back toward the lodge. There was nothing on the track or the runway, but as I walked to catch up with the others I heard a hoot— and then a whoop— both sounds made by a human. I quickened my pace and rounded the bend to see Dana and Mike with binoculars raised, watching something intently! I joined them and saw a pair of **Nocturnal Curassows** strutting nonchalantly down the track in our direction. The birds were completely unconcerned with our presence, walking slowly along the track, occasionally stopping to investigate fallen fruit, peck at the ground, or to preen a tail feather. We were simply blown away as they strode in our direction, with one of the pair walking right up to us, down to a distance of four metres before it turned back and joined its mate. For such a secretive, mythical bird, it was mind-boggling to have them behave so boldly, even though almost all accounts one hears from hunters and others who encounter them in the forest all say the same thing – the Nocturnal Curassow is apparently fearless if encountered during the day as it forages, and yet somehow it is extremely secretive and almost never encountered during the daytime; a seemingly odd contradiction, but one that fit our observation exactly. Finally the birds turned and walked off the track, disappearing into the forest.



Nocturnal Curassow

For a moment we seriously considered calling it a day and heading for the bar, secure in the knowledge that we couldn't top a daytime sighting, at point-blank range, of Nocturnal Curassow. However, we were still in a fabulous location in the remote Brazilian Amazon, and that fact dawned on us again, so we got on with the day's plan. To that end, we met up with Raimundo and hopped into our boat to head downstream on the Aripuanã. In rocky rapids downriver from the lodge we had a female **Muscovy Duck** and **Green Ibis**, followed shortly thereafter by a migrant **American Golden Plover**. We also saw **Great Black-Hawk** and **Osprey**, a few swallows including **Black-collared**, **White-winged** and **Brown-chested Martin**. Another nice pair of **Razor-billed Curassows** was noteworthy. Further on, we spied a pair of **Gray-cowled Wood-Rails** on the riverbank, and we stopped to watch a two or three **Pink River Dolphins** as they swam around the boat, breaching now and again and actually showing pretty well. While we watched the dolphins we heard Cinnamon Attila and Speckled Chachalacas, and saw a flyover pair of **Scarlet Macaws**.

Our destination this morning was the Serra do Bréu, a hill just downstream from the mouth of the Guariba river, on the east bank of the Aripuanã near the Bela Vista do Guariba village. The stunted forest atop the hill is home to a handful of species not (yet) found elsewhere around PiraAçu. After navigating the rocky shoals near the trailhead, we clambered up the Serra do Bréu into the low forest. As we reached the top of the first hill, we almost immediately found a pair of **Natterer's Slaty-Antshrikes**, and followed that up with good views of the striking **Yellow-browed Antbird**. The latter species is part of an unnamed population of uncertain taxonomic status. There were several **Reddish Hermits** calling around a patch of native dwarf pineapples; the vegetation on the hilltop is quite different from everywhere else at PiraAçu: white sandy soils are overlaid with a thick cushion of lichens, tree roots and slowly decomposing leaf litter that provide a substrate for many terrestrial bromeliads such as the aforementioned pineapples. Many of the tree species here have characteristics of those found in *cerrado* and other savanna habitats; they are stunted with thick, corrugated bark and twisted trunks, and many of them are adorned with philodendrons and other drought tolerant hemiepiphytes. It was in the first stretch of stunted forest that we found a mixed group of primates, mostly **Bare-eyed Squirrel Monkeys** but with a few **Brown Capuchins** in their midst.

At the far end of the short Serra do Bréu trail we found a **Common Potoo** on a day roost. In this same area we called in a couple of **Bronzy Jacamars**, a **Bar-breasted Piculet** and a **Rusty-winged Antwren** that flicked about

nervously in the canopy. Some distant **Yellow-throated Flycatchers** were easily convinced to come in closer, and as flock leaders they brought in a few others with them, including **Purple Honeycreeper**, **Rufous-bellied Euphonia**, **White-lored Tyrannulet**, and best of all, the recently described endemic **Chico's Tyrannulet**. Our views of Chico's weren't the greatest, but we were able to discern the small bill, half-cocked tail, and yellow wing margins before it flitted out of views, not to return. We also called in a **Spotted Puffbird** that showed nicely through the scope, and a **Snethlage's Tody-Tyrant** that came in quite close for good studies, while a nearby female **White-crowned Manakin** caused a bit of confusion before it was identified. Stunted forests on sandy soils in the Amazon tend to go quiet pretty early on in the day, and our morning atop the Serra do Bréu was no different, so by late morning we were already making our way back down to the boat. Raimundo skillfully navigated back through the shallow rocky shoals, returning us to the lodge in time for yet another of Dona Francisca's wonderful lunches.

In the afternoon we elected to return to the Jatuarana trail to look for Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher and Rufous-necked Puffbird again. Neither of those targets deigned to show (or vocalize), and in truth the forest was still and very quiet on the whole: a singing **Collared Trogon**, a pair of **Amazonian Streaked Antwrens**, **Yellow-rumped Cacique** and a shy **Golden-crowned Spadebill** was about all we could muster during our hour and a half along the trail.

September 13th: PiraAçu Lodge – Castanhal Trail & Buiucu Track

Curiosity got the better of us first thing this morning, as we decided to quickly check the track to the runway to look for Nocturnal Curassow after breakfast. There was no sign of the birds, though we did see a **Ruddy Quail-Dove** foraging on the track in the dawn twilight. We also heard Dotted Tanager, and saw a couple of **Red-nosed Bearded Sakis** having their own breakfast in a fruiting tree. Back by the lodge we saw a few bits and pieces before hitting the river: **Gray-breasted Sabrewing**, **Boat-billed Flycatcher**, **Fork-tailed Flycatcher** and **Short-crested Flycatcher** were all in trees near the kitchen. We greeted Raimundo and boarded our trusty boat for the trip upstream to the Castanhal trail, a path in *terra firme* forest about 15 minutes upriver from the lodge. Along the way some shrieking cries revealed the presence of a party of four **Red-throated Caracaras** in the canopy, rather backlit at first, but seen well as they crossed the river. A pair of **Sunbitterns** greeted us at the trailhead. I was the first one up the riverbank at the start of the trail, and the minute I poked my head over the top, two **Starred Wood-Quail** ran out from behind a log and scurried away before the others made it up the bank.

The Castanhal trail has been a bit of an enigma during its short existence as a birding trail. When we opened the trail in May 2021, it seemed to have tremendous potential: we encountered trumpeters, antpittas, and forest-falcons along a transect through beautiful *terra firme* rainforest with many large emergent trees including a number of majestic Brazil Nut trees. Subsequent visits have been underwhelming, though across most of the southern Amazon in Brazil even the best trails can have slow days, often inexplicably so. What was in store for us today?

The best description would be mixed results. The first half kilometre or so was very quiet; it was another smoky morning, and I had expected things to be quiet on the whole as a result. The piercing calls of a raptor could be heard in the distance, and once we were close enough, we called in a striking adult **White-browed Hawk** for good views through the scope. After we had our fill of the hawk, we called in **Bright-rumped Attila** and **Gray Antbird** for views in the middle storey and subcanopy, respectively. We also hit a small, fast-moving mixed flock that had **Spot-winged Antshrike**, **Cinereous Antshrike**, **Long-winged Antwren**, **Amazonian Trogon** and **Plain Xenops**. A bit farther along we encountered a **Cinereous Mourner** off on its own. A calling pair of Slaty-backed Forest Falcons didn't want to play ball, approaching a bit in response to playback but refusing to pass some invisible barrier to come in for a look. Another flock – again with only a handful of birds – moved

through, and here we had **Dot-winged Antwrens**, **Plain-throated Antwren** and a couple of **Spix's Warbling-Antbirds**. A larger flock, mostly with larger birds in it, was active not much farther on, and here we had a few **Olive Oropendolas**, **White-fronted Nunbirds**, **Elegant** and **Buff-throated Woodcreeper**, both **Rufous-rumped** and **Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaners**, a pair of **Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireos**, and in the understorey, one or two **White-eyed Stipplethroats** appeared to be following along.

Along the trail a brown shape suddenly dropped, seemingly down to the ground, from its perch over the trail, leaving only a swinging woody vine and an open-mouthed me in its wake. It took a moment to consider what this might have been, and I must say we were rather fortunate that the **Mottled Owl** that had been roosting over the trail didn't actually fly very far. It took a bit of careful explanation to get everyone on the bird, though it was a bit easier once we put the scope on the bird. We had 'walk-away views' of this cool owl, which showed a surprising amount of rusty colouration on its face. It may have been a juvenile or subadult bird. Having walked at least a couple of kilometres into the forest from the river's edge, we had traversed a really lovely stretch of quality *terra firme* forest with massive emergent Brazil Nut (*Bertholletia excelsa*), copaíba (*Copaifera* spp.), and jequitibá (*Cariniana* sp.) trees shading a rather open understorey with some patches of dense vine tangles and successional thickets around treefalls. Still, one couldn't shake the feeling that our morning had been quieter than it should have. We started to make our way back to the boat, finally hitting a canopy flock that was moving between the emergent, high up and mostly backlit; we did manage to pull a pair of **Tooth-billed Wrens** out of the flock for surprisingly good views – showing their barred tails and gnatcatcher-like shape – but most of the other birds present didn't show nearly as well. This included **Paradise**, **Opal-rumped** and **Turquoise Tanagers**, **White-lored Tyrannulet**, **Gray Elaenia**, **Buff-cheeked Greenlet**, and a **Sclater's Antwren** that was a bit lower down. In the undergrowth nearby, we managed to call in a pair of **Spot-backed Antbirds**, with the male sitting up nicely in the open on a thick horizontal vine – a real cutie.

In the afternoon we again returned to the Buiucu track. Once again, we had a quiet afternoon. A mixed species flock was led by a couple of **White-fronted Nunbirds** and had a number of the usual suspects, but with the addition of our first **Curve-billed Scythebill** of the trip. We tried for Cryptic Forest-Falcon and got an answer from a pair rather promptly, and while one of the two birds came in to perch right beside the trail, we couldn't quite get into a position to see the bird before we flushed it, and we had a bit of bad luck when the lodge's ATV came by just as we were about to try for it again, heading to the Buiucu river to pick up a couple of fishermen. The bird didn't answer again, perhaps justifiably. We walked on, stopping to call in a male **Black-faced Antbird**, and then watching as it took pause from singing to drop down to the ground and take a bathe in a bit of water that had accumulated in a dead leaf. Near the far end of the track we called in a pair of **Uniform Woodcreepers** in the waning daylight. We waited for the arrival of dusk to try for Rufous Potoo at a territory, but had no reply from the birds. The lodge's ATV returned again to pick us up, and we rode back along the track and the landing strip under heavy clouds and threatening skies, the forest canopy coming alight intermittently with the lightning flashes. A **Blackish Nightjar** alongside the runway seemed to be the only bird out and about.

September 14th: PiraAçu Lodge – Taboquinha Trail & Buiucu River

For this morning we had scheduled our rematch with the Rondonia Bushbird, so we headed upstream to the Paxiuba river again, seeing some of the usual suspects along the way: **Red-throated Piping-Guan**, **Black Caracara**, **Yellow-billed Tern** and **Pied Lapwing**. Up the Paxiuba we saw **Osprey**, **Sungrebe** and **Sunbittern**. We arrived at the trailhead, determined this time to find our quarry. The bushbird was very high on the list of targets for the trip, which made the deafening silence we were to encounter in the patches of bamboo along the Taboquinha Trail all the more frustrating. We alternated short bouts of playback with long periods of loitering in the bird's territory, once again listening for some sign of the species. Zilch. We heard a few interesting birds,

including White-browed Hawk, and saw a trio of **Spix's Guans**, but otherwise this proved to be one of the quietest mornings of the trip. Back at the river's edge, we found a little flock of birds moving through the seasonally flooded *igapó* forest: this group included a pair of **Amazonian Antshrikes**, a female **Flame-crowned Manakin**, an **Amazonian Streaked-Antwren** and **Black-chinned Antbird**. As we sorted through this bunch we heard a short series of odd trills from behind us, and after a bit of work we were finally enjoying nice views of the endemic (and really quite poorly-known) **Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher**!

In the afternoon we rode in the lodge's ATV through the primary forest of the Buiucu track, all the way to the edge of the Buiucu river. En route, just before reaching the landing strip, we stopped to check out a fabulous troop of **Gold-and-white Marmosets** – spectacular little primates, and endemic to the Madeira – Tapajós basin to boot! It was a beautiful afternoon to cruise up the narrow, pristine Buiucu river. Raimundo skillfully navigated several very shallow stretches, carefully finding the narrow seams between the jagged rocks that were strewn haphazardly across our course.



Golden-white Tassel-ear Marmoset



Low water levels in the Buiucu river

The afternoon heat had not yet broken when we began our cruise, so it was a bit quiet at first. We started things off with a couple of **Cream-coloured Woodpeckers** that blasted across the river above us a few times before they settled down a bit to perch in view – a nice start. A sputtering **Silvered Antbird** soon started to sing, winding itself up into a bit of a frenzy but staying mostly in a small patch of riverside vines where we could see it rather well, even its long pink legs. A spectacular **Long-billed Woodcreeper**, a classic species of riverine forests in the Amazon, made an appearance and impressed us all, as is always the case. Another **Razor-billed Curassow** was a welcome sight, great to see so many of these oft-hunted game birds during our stay at PiraAçu. September is typically a good month to see big numbers of **Greater Anis** in the southern Amazon, and I had been a little surprised not to encounter any big flocks of these apparently migratory birds yet; that situation was rectified this afternoon as we counted at least 45 of them working along the river's edge, where they seem to prowl in search of caterpillars. We cruised as far as an overgrown oxbow that was overrun with a nervous group of the bizarre **Hoatzin**, a prehistoric-looking bird that always seems unsure of itself, coughing madly as it clambers in and out of dense riverine thickets, never really sitting particularly still. There were maybe 15 or 16 Hoatzins in view, but from the sound of the hoarse coughs in the background, there could easily have been twice that many present.

Other nice sightings included a pair of **Gray-cowled Wood Rails**, a couple of **Capped Herons**, and small numbers of all three of the area's large macaws: **Blue-and-yellow**, **Scarlet**, and **Red-and-green Macaws**. The

low water levels meant we needed to return to our starting point before dark, which in turn meant we it might be too early to try for one of our targets on the Buiucu, the crepuscular Zigzag Heron. Nevertheless, we resolved to try it anyway, and Raimundo pulled us up to the mouth of a small oxbow and switched off the motor as I readied the tape. Rather than trying the loud advertising call, we started with a recording of the soft chuckles Zigzag Herons use when in close contact with one another... and the response was almost immediate, a soft *whoaaa?* call from within the tangles to our left. A second play of the tape brought the bird right in to the edge of the oxbow, landing just inside the vegetation's edge, perched a couple of metres over the water, its tail twitching nervously from side to side as it stared at us with its pale eyes. Unfortunately, the bird was in a position where it was not visible to all occupants of the boat at the same time, so we carefully manoeuvred both ourselves and the boat into a position where we could each enjoy this fantastic **Zigzag Heron** one at a time. What a great way to end the day – as an aside, however, we did try for Rufous Potoo along the Buiucu track on the way back to the lodge, without success.



Zigzag Heron

September 15th: PiraAçu Lodge – Agua Linda Trail

This morning we returned to the Agua Linda trail, starting our day with the customary **Amazonian Umbrellabird** flying across river downstream from the lodge. We had only just passed the first stream bed near the beginning of the trail when an antbird snarl emanating from the undergrowth nearby had us thinking **White-breasted Antbird**. A bird rocketed in immediately upon hearing the first blast of tape! – but wait, this antbird was a bit too big, and a bit too golden-brown... a **Pale-faced Bare-eye**! Thrilled to find this Amazonian rarity again, we worked on them for a while as a pair circled our position, giving up only brief glimpses. Eventually, one of the two birds calmed down a bit and finally sat calmly on the open for several minutes. We even had the opportunity to photograph the bird and study it through the scope – the views were excellent, but the photographers quickly realized just how dark it still was in the forest understory.

Just after the bare-eye finally melted away into the ether, the high-pitched song of a **Banded Antbird** reached our ears. A few whistled notes soon had the **Banded Antbird** at our feet, though as ever it was a bit difficult to pick up on at first as it wandered along the forest floor, picking at the ground occasionally, hopping over fallen logs, and sometimes stopping in its tracks to sing, or to slowly sway its hind end from side to side. What an amazing bird.



Banded Antbird



Pale-faced Bare-eye

A **Chestnut-belted Gnateater** was once again singing at the same territory as on Sept. 10th, and this time a male popped up for the briefest of views before slipping away, much in the same fashion as the other day. Beyond the Agua Linda stream we encountered a nice mixed flock that held **White-winged Shrike-Tanagers**, **Elegant Woodcreeper**, **Black-tailed Trogon**, **White-fronted Nunbirds**, **Spot-winged Antshrike**, and **Long-winged Antwren**. Nearby we flushed two or three **Spix's Guans** from the forest floor; I thought for a moment that perhaps they might be attending an antswarm, but upon closer inspection it seemed they had been feeding on fallen fruits. More mixed flocks were encountered, with **White-fronted Nunbird**, **Yellow-throated** and **Red-stained Woodpeckers**, **Chestnut-winged Hookbill**, **Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner**, and an array of woodcreepers including **Amazonian Barred**, **Elegant**, **Buff-throated**, **Wedge-billed** and the endemic **Hoffmann's Woodcreeper**. A nice pair of **Blue-necked Jacamars** popped up at mid-levels near the trail, and we admired them, thinking they'd be just the sort of bird you'd like to put on a hat. At the far end of the trail, just before the steep slope down to the Grota Funda stream, we had a **Plumbeous Kite** circling overhead. We stopped to call in a male **Plain-winged Antshrike**, a species we had been hearing daily since arriving at PiraAçu. We also finally put **Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin** on the seen list. Re-tracing our steps back toward the river, we

encountered one or two of the same mixed-species flocks, and at least one that we probably hadn't encountered the first time through, with **Saturnine** and **Cinereous Antshrikes**, both **Long-winged** and **Gray Antwrens**, and best of all, a **Pará Foliage-gleaner** that came in silently (at first) in response to a speculative blast of tape. Two **Brown-winged Schiffornis** (Schiffornises? Schifforni?) sitting quietly together on the same branch was a sight I had never seen before. A late morning flock had a cracking **Black-girdled Barbet**, **Scale-breasted Woodpecker**, **Red-crowned Ant-tanager**, **Cinereous Antshrike**, **Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner** and a couple of **Buff-cheeked Greenlets**.

We stopped for a spell as Mike wanted to double back to photograph a plant. Idly, I whistled my Amazonian Pygmy-Owl imitation, almost immediately attracting a horde of tanagers, led by four or five **Paradise Tanagers**. We soon noticed the nervous form of a **Klages' Gnatcatcher** in the canopy, and the floodgates opened with **Tooth-billed Wrens**, and a parade of tanagers including **Paradise**, **Bay-headed**, **Flame-crested**, a terrific male **Dotted**, **Spotted**, and a striking **Green-and-gold Tanager**, along with a pair of **Black-faced Dacnis**, and three honeycreeper species (**Short-billed**, **Green**, **Purple**), **Rufous-bellied Euphonia**, **Buff-cheeked Greenlets**, **Pygmy** and **Sclater's Antwrens**. Wow. During one stretch of this madness, one species after another dropped into a little patch of vines in the subcanopy where we could see them in perfect light, one at a time, the highlight certainly being the much-desired **Dotted Tanager**. Mike never did re-find the plant he had noticed, but we were grateful for the pause and the birds it delivered.

Thinking that was the end of a good morning, we rounded the bend only to be greeted by the telltale snarls of obligate army-ant following birds. An army ant swarm, and **White-breasted Antbirds**, at long last! However, as is often the case, different viewing angles of the thick undergrowth meant that some of us had terrific views of the antbirds, while others saw only shaking branches. We worked on the antbirds for quite a while as the swarm fanned out across the forest floor, with many columns of the raiding ants climbing up tree trunks in search of prey. **Common Scale-backed Antbird** and **Spix's Warbling-Antbirds** kept flitting in to grab tasty morsels flushed by the ants, but the pair of **White-breasted Antbirds** retreated to the bottom of a nearby gully. Mike and I waded off-trail to try to improve his views, but we really only managed to get the back of the bird a few times as it retreated into a thicket at the bottom of the ravine. By now it was already well past noon, so we resolved to return in the afternoon to check out the antswarm and try the antbird again.

The last fishing group of the season had departed in the morning, so we had the lodge to ourselves for lunch, which was a rather quiet affair.

After a short break, we returned to the beginning of the Agua Linda trail again. It didn't take very long to find the ants again. At first glance, there didn't seem to be any birds around, but soon enough we heard soft *chirrrr* calls and snarls in the undergrowth. The **White-breasted Antbirds** were around, but played hard to get again, popping up in clear view only at the least opportune moments and essentially going unseen again. I ventured off trail in search of the epicentre of the swarm, but the ants were pretty well dispersed. While I was away from the others, they saw **Hoffmann's Woodcreeper**, and we heard a **White-chinned Woodcreeper** nearby. I also bumped into another pair of **Red-and-black Grosbeaks**, but they disappeared quickly. Looking for a change of pace, we returned to the river's edge. From the bank overlooking the water we were treated to an amazing show as two adult **Pink River Dolphins** swam close to the shore together with a calf, surfacing frequently and also swimming just below the surface, often in clear view beneath the water's surface. The three dolphins hung around for quite a while, and we watched, transfixed. What a sighting. A pair of **Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatchers** buzzed through, distracting us briefly, but they didn't stick around for long.

September 16th: PiraAçu Lodge – Taboquinha Trail & Buiucu Track

AGAMI NATURE TOURS
TRIP REPORT: PIRA AÇU LODGE & AMAZONIA NP

Today was our final full day at Pira Açú, and while we hadn't covered all of the available trails, we opted against visiting the Jauarizal Trail on the Guariba river as it would have entailed quite a long boat ride given the very low water levels. Moreover, we still hadn't seen a Rondonia Bushbird! During our scouting trips we saw evidence that suggested the bushbird is present in a patch of bamboo on the Jauarizal trail, but we didn't actually see the birds there, only the telltale signs of their foraging activity. Instead, we elected to return once more to the Taboquinha trail on the Paxiúba.

After yet another excellent breakfast, we departed together with Raimundo, heading upstream to the Paxiúba river. Along the way we spotted a big adult **Capybara**, one of the usual **Ospreys**, and a **Red-throated Piping-Guan**. The Paxiúba was getting lower by the day, and this morning I had to hop out of the boat and pull us over the sandbar at its mouth until we could get into the main channel. We motored slowly upstream along the narrow river, seeing our first **White-necked Jacobins** of the trip, at least two different birds gnatcatching over the water's surface, getting their protein fix. Raimundo pointed out a **Sungrebe** sitting quietly on a log, and we also found three different **Sunbitterns**, the second of which was extremely confiding when we cut the engine and paddled in close to it.



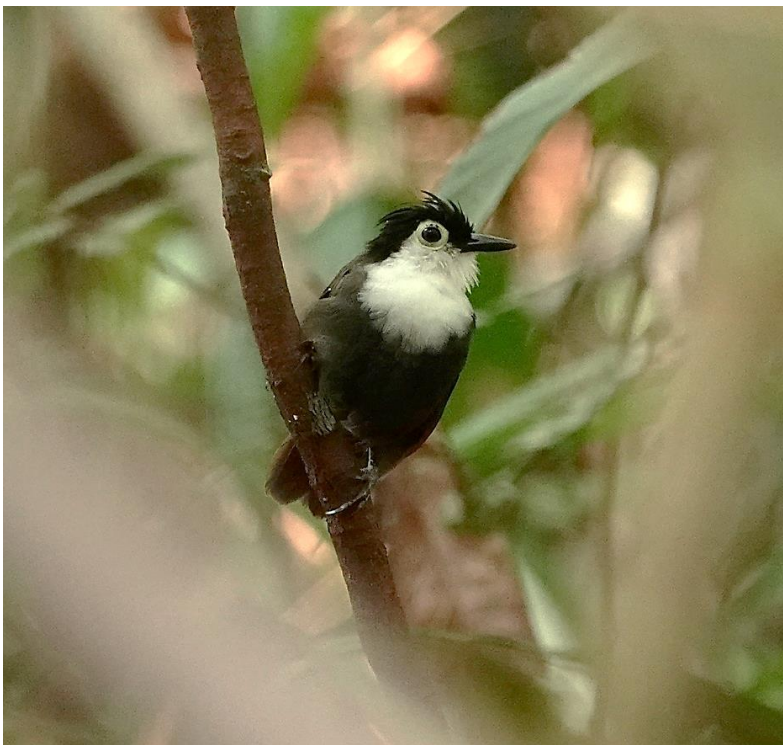
Sunbittern

A pair of **Chestnut Woodpeckers** flew back and forth across the river a couple of times, mostly refusing to perch in the open but eventually stopping long enough for a look. We pulled in to the trailhead, optimistic that “third time’s the charm” would be the appropriate idiom this morning. At first listen, it seemed that there was a bit more activity along the trail this morning, as Amazonian and Green-backed Trogons were singing, along with Spix’s Warbling-Antbirds, Broad-billed Motmot, Amazonian Barred Woodcreeper and the same Slate-colored Grosbeak we had seen on our previous visit. We ignored all of those, though, and pressed on to reach the bushbird zone.

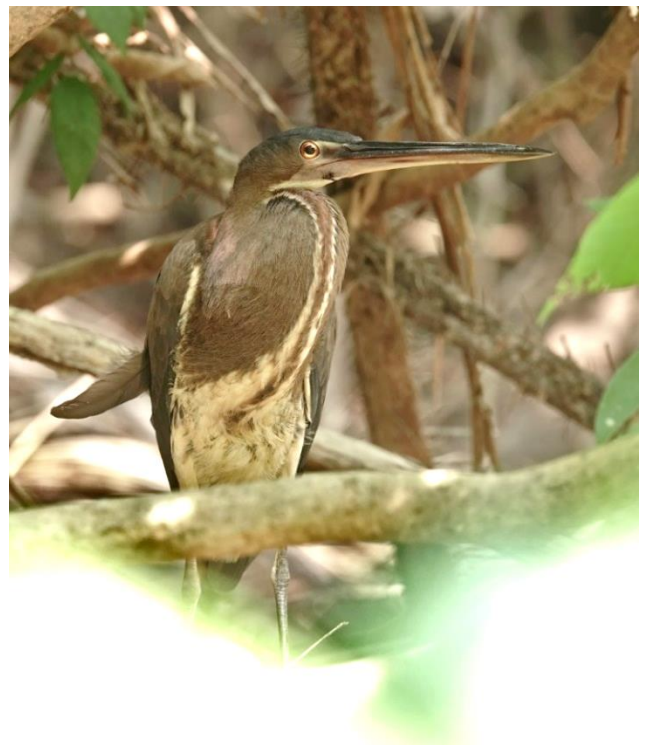
Our strategy this morning wasn't much different. We played a bit of tape, and then a bit more, and waited, and waited. Eventually we clearly heard the song of the Rondonia Bushbird from behind us along the trail. We turned around and walked back in the direction of the song, encountering Raimundo beckoning to us urgently: the bushbird had landed just above his head over the trail! We arrived in time to see the dark shape of the male fly across the trail into a dense bamboo thicket; a certain sense of desperation took hold as we scanned the area, and once again it was Raimundo who spotted the bird, a male **Rondonia Bushbird** sitting in the open on a horizontal

bamboo stalk. It didn't stay for long, though, disappearing almost as quickly as it had appeared. We shuffled a few metres down the trail and found the bird again, once again sitting at head height on a horizontal dead bamboo stalk, unfortunately depending on one's angle it was either entirely in the open, or entirely obscured by twin bamboo trunks. The bird hopped to the right a bit, this time showing its head and bill for everyone, before hopping away again into the ether. Shortly, we found it again, first hearing the bird tearing open a bamboo stalk, but it moved on quickly once more. The bird sang a bit, somewhat meekly, but it was well off trail by now. A bit frustrated with the sequence, we gave it a moment, walked on a bit and stumbled across an antswarm crossing the trail. A **White-breasted Antbird** called nearby, and we started working to see it when the **Rondonia Bushbird** suddenly was behind us again, lower down and near the trail. It flew heavily across the path, landing in the open, and over the next minute or so we watched it move from perch to perch, getting decent if somewhat distant views as it went about its business.

The antswarm yielded point-blank views of **Common Scale-backed** and **Spix's Warbling-Antbirds**, both oblivious to our presence. A pair of **White-breasted Antbirds** were more circumspect, but Mike did finally get the views we had been seeking now for a couple of days. A **Black-spotted Bare-eye** also wasn't very forthcoming, but did show a couple of times. We worked the antswarm for quite a while, during which time we did occasionally hear the bushbird foraging well off trail, but further use of the tape didn't attract any interest.



White-breasted Antbird



Agami Heron



Golden-winged Parakeets

With the Rondonia Bushbird finally under the belt, we headed back to the river to cruise upstream in the late morning heat, seeing a **Rufescent Tiger-heron** before spying an immature **Agami Heron** stalking along the beach under overhanging vegetation. The bird clambered up onto a fallen log amidst a mass of leaves, doing its best bittern impression in extending its neck and ‘freezing’ in place. Upstream we were forced to turn back as the river became too shallow to navigate, and as we turned about we spotted a nice **Red-capped Cardinal** and a few **Giant Cowbirds**.

We closed out the morning session with a neat sighting of a trio of **Giant Otters** that lumbered across the sandy beach of a river island in the Aripuanã before disappearing into a sheltered cove on the other side.

For our final afternoon session at PiraAçu we returned again to the primary forest along the Buiucu track. All was extremely quiet early on, and the forest was eerily *still* to begin with. The only signs of life, aside from the occasional call of a tree frog, were the ethereal songs of a trio of tinamous: White-throated, Variegated, and Brazilian Tinamous. The latter of the three seemed to be nearest the track, and we worked on it for a while, but after some time it was fairly obvious that the bird had no plans of budging. We tried to call in one of two vocal Zimmer’s Tody-Tyrants, to no effect. A distant Rufous-capped Anthrush quickly became a nearby **Rufous-capped Anthrush** when it shot in to perch on an open branch, singing with vigour for some time while we enjoyed it through the scope. A bit further along, the hoped-for Alta Floresta Antpitta finally sang back to us, and once we decided more or less where it must be, we walked off the trail into the forest to get closer to the bird. Soon enough we were standing in a nice bit of tall *terra firme* forest with a rather open understorey, with the song of the antpitta emanating from a dense thicket around the base of a massive emergent. I was about to suggest to the others that we keep an eye on a very long fallen log not far in front of us, when suddenly the bird was there, standing at the left hand end of the log! The **Alta Floresta Antpitta** stood calmly atop the fallen log, singing and moving slowly right along the log until he was finally in view for all. What a great sighting, and what a bird!



Alta Floresta Antpitta

Back on the trail a **Fasciated Antshrike** put in an appearance in vine tangles above our heads. A singing Wing-barred Piprites refused to show itself. Closer to the lodge after dusk we stopped to call in a **Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl** that showed for scope views as it perched quite high in the subcanopy over the track. It was much higher up than the species often sits, but we had good views nonetheless.

Dinner tonight was rather celebratory. A delicious piranha soup starter and a farewell barbecue made for a fitting send-off, and as we ate we reflected on our terrific experience at PiraAçu. Although the forest had seemed to be awfully quiet (and smoky) on many an occasion, we really did have great good fortune with the birds, the mammals, and even the weather. The lodge staff was obviously pleased at the prospect of having a well-deserved break after a very busy sport-fishing season; we were the last group of the season, and the staff would have the next month and a half off before the fishing groups returned for more.

September 17th: Travel to Manaus via Apuí

Today was a long travel day. Before our last breakfast at the lodge we took one last look at the track to the runway, wondering if lightning might strike a second time in the form of Nocturnal Curassow. No luck there, but we did count 17 **Kawall's Parrots** and saw a **Razor-billed Curassow** and a **Crimson-crested Woodpecker**. After breakfast we loaded into the boat with Raimundo and started off downriver on the Aripuanã. The water levels had dropped noticeably since our arrival a week earlier, and Raimundo had to carefully navigate the narrow channels, rocky shoals and one or two sets of rapids as he brought us safely to the ferry landing at Mata Matá, where a pickup truck was waiting to take us to Apuí, 100 kilometres to the east. Of note was a flock of at least 70 **Swallow-tailed Kites** we saw circling over the river near the confluence of the Aripuanã with the Roosevelt river. We had left plenty of time for the river trip, and accordingly we arrived to Apuí a bit early. After lunch, ice

cream, and a short tour of the town (including a visit to the fair grounds, where the largest wooden spectator grandstand in Latin America was duly admired), we headed for the tiny airport to wait for our flight. As it turned out, the plane was quite late in arriving, and we finally boarded well past our scheduled departure time. The flight was full but uneventful, and by the end of the day we were comfortably settled at the Novotel in Manaus.

September 18th: Manaus – Solimões river islands & Alphaville urban birding

During our time at PiraAçu I had received a message from the airline that operated the only flight from Manaus to Itaituba that our flight had been cancelled, just a week before we were due to fly. This meant that rather than flying to Itaituba on the 18th, we would instead only be able to arrive to Amazonia National Park on the 20th, cutting our time there to just two and a half days. It also meant that we would have to fill a couple of days in Manaus. Thankfully, there is plenty of birding to be had in the Manaus area! We were up well before dawn once again, starting with breakfast at the CEASA port on the south side of Manaus before meeting our boat driver for the morning's trip up the Solimões river. Our destination this morning was a complex of river islands to bird a variety of habitats, from extensive sandbars, to early-stage successional growth, and up to more mature island woodlands dominated by cecropia and *munguba* trees. By mid-September the water levels on the Solimões are dropping rapidly. Dozens of fishermen were in the river around the islands, casting their nets after fish that had been forced into the main channels as water levels dropped. It took us a couple of attempts before we found a decent spot to land our boat. We made our first stop at a small plot that had been recently cleared for agriculture; during the short dry season, local produce farmers plant vegetables on the ephemeral dry land of the river islands, where the soils are quite fertile due to the deposition of rich sediments washed down from the headwaters of the Amazon in the Andes. One or two pairs of **Black-bellied Whistling-Ducks** were in trees nearby, likely having recently completed nesting on the islands. Several species flew over the island during our visit, including a couple of **Pale-vented Pigeons**, a handful of **Large-billed** and **Yellow-billed Terns**, a lone **Black Skimmer**, **Osprey**, a few vultures (both **Turkey** and **Lesser Yellow-headed**), and very briefly, a couple of **Sand-coloured Nighthawks**. A **Snail Kite** was perched low in a marshy area, and in the same patch we admired the odd **Black-capped Donacobius** and its staring yellow eyes. Without even leaving the produce patch we started in on the river islands specialists, seeing the spritely **River Tyrannulet** right off the bat, and continuing the theme of cute little flycatchers with a bold **Spotted Tody-Flycatcher** that came in very close. As is always the case on these islands, the chattering calls of spinetails emanated from the brush all around us, and soon enough we had seen both **White-bellied Spinetail** and **Dark-breasted Spinetail**, the latter coming to stand atop the Bluetooth speaker. A lovely pair of the pied **Black-and-white Antbird** worked their way in from the back, eventually coming almost as close as the spinetail had, affording us great views of this island specialist. Stepping behind the vegetable patch, we found **Yellow-chinned Spinetails** (including one that became briefly entangled in the netting surrounding the produce garden), a **Masked Yellowthroat**, **Bicoloured Conebill**, and a few more common bits and pieces such as **Tropical Kingbird** and **Streaked Flycatcher**. A little patch of trees held a subtly-plumaged pair of **Riverside Tyrants**, and after a bit of work we also coaxed a **Red-and-white Spinetail** into view in the same area. A much more cooperative pair of **Parker's Spinetails** showed very well, and we also finally saw the **Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant** that had been singing in the back for a while. There were a couple of dozen **Tui Parakeets** cavorting in nearby trees, and we scoped one or two of them as they picked at the ripening red fruits of the *munguba* trees. Some sharp bisyllabic calls announced the arrival of a couple of **Short-tailed Parrots** in the same area, and we quickly got one of them into view through the scope as well. Before moving on from this spot, we also had nice views of both **Little** and **Spot-breasted Woodpeckers**.

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clockwise from top left: Parker's Spinetail, Black-and-white Antbird, Riverside Tyrant (female), (male)

After a fruitless walk in taller forest at the upstream end of the island, we hopped back into our boat and ferried over to an adjacent and very extensive sandbar where we could see dozens of skimmers and terns. A few locals were out collecting eggs here, and a couple of families played on the beaches, enjoying the overcast morning. What the island lacked in diversity, it made for in numbers as we counted almost two hundred **Black Skimmers**, three hundred or more **Large-billed Terns**, and smaller numbers of **Yellow-billed Terns**. All three species were nesting, and we had to remain watchful to avoid stepping on the tern and skimmer eggs laid directly on the sand. We only walked a short distance to avoid disturbing the bulk of the nesting birds that were mostly concentrated in the middle section of the island. A couple of flocks of **American Golden-Plovers** were around, and we counted about a dozen **Collared Plovers** and a singleton **White-rumped Sandpiper**. Perhaps best of all were the handful of **Sand-coloured Nighthawks** we found sleeping on the sandy island surface, confident that their camouflage would keep them safe from prying eyes. We were watching the nighthawks when a local birder came by to greet us; turned out to be Mario Cohn-Haft, curator of the bird collection at INPA in Manaus. During this quick catch-up with Mario, we excitedly informed him of our White-tailed Tityra sighting from PiraAçu, and he filled us in

on the details of the Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant that had recently been found north of Manaus, a bird we had been thinking about going to look for the following day.



Sand-coloured Nighthawk

We then cruised upriver, spotting four **Gull-billed Terns** along a beach, a rare bird this far upstream on the Amazon. With the late morning heat already reaching extremes, we made one last short stop on an island dominated by cecropia trees. While we didn't find the hoped-for Brownish Elaenia, we did pick up our only **Lesser Hornero** of the trip, a few **White-winged Parakeets**, both **Bicoloured** and **Pearly-breasted Conebills**, and at least thirty **Chestnut-bellied Seed eaters** feeding on seeding grasses. Some mudflats had a few **Solitary Sandpipers** and a **Lesser Yellowlegs**, along with several **Wattled Jacanas** and a **Black-collared Hawk**. The best sighting on this island was likely the striking male **Ladder-tailed Nightjar** that flushed from in front of us and perched in plain view, content to distract our attention from a nearby female that had also flushed up off of two eggs in a little scrape in the sand. As we turned to leave, we had our only **White-throated Kingbird** of the trip, a sighting that was quickly eclipsed by a showy pair of **Oriole Blackbirds**.



Gull-billed Terns



Ladder-tailed Nightjar

We had lunch at a floating restaurant at the mouth of the Janauari Lake, just beating the crowds of day-tripping tourists from Manaus that started to arrive in droves as we were finishing up. After lunch we cruised along the Xiborena channel under intermittent showers that threatened to break the searing heat. A glance downstream on toward the Solimões, however, revealed incoming black thunderheads. We wanted to have a quick look at the Meeting of the Waters at the confluence of the Solimões and Negro rivers, and Herculano our boat driver suggested that we needed to do so in haste if we hoped to beat out the storm. He was not wrong – we rushed to the Meeting of the Waters and had the quickest of looks at the collision of the coke-coloured waters of the Negro and the café au lait of the Solimões, but we didn't dally; the wind was stirring, and the clouds raced upstream towards us. We beat a quick retreat to the nearby CEASA port, arriving just in time to beat out the storm. We thanked Herculano hastily, and rushed back to the car to return to the hotel under a torrential downpour.

In the late afternoon we drove over to the northwestern edge of the city near the Ponta Negra neighbourhood to look for the endemic Brazilian Bare-faced Tamarin, or Pied Tamarin as it is also known. The tamarin's range is tiny and almost entirely restricted to the greater Manaus area. Troops of the gremlin-faced little monkey can often be found in woodlots in and around some of the Manaus's gated communities, but today we came up empty in our search for the little urchins. We did see a few things, though, including a half dozen **Green Aracaris**, **Black-necked Aracari**, both **White-throated** and **Channel-billed Toucans**, a pair of **Scarlet Macaws**, a couple of flocks of **Blue-headed Parrots**, **Crested Oropendola**, and a **Blue-gray Saltator** foraging on the pavement at a stop sign.

September 19th: Manaus – ZF-2 & MUSA Tower

Following Mario's tip, we decided to spend our morning along the ZF-2 road nearly 60 kilometres north of the Manaus. After having a cup of coffee at the hotel, we stopped at a convenience store / 24-hour bakery along the way for a pastry and a *pão de queijo*. The ZF-2 track runs through many kilometres of *terra firme* Guianan Shield forest, and authorization is needed from INPA in order to enter the reserve. Literally the first bird we heard upon stepping out of the car was the Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant, our morning's target and a life bird for all of us. As it turned out, though, hearing a Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant and *seeing* a Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant are two entirely different propositions. We worked for at least an hour, getting brief glimpses of the bird as it ghosted about amongst the vine tangles, popping into view for a couple of short periods. We got excited for a moment when a **Double-banded Pygmy-Tyrant** rocketed in down low and very close, but there was a letdown once we realized it was the wrong tiny flycatcher. A few other bits and pieces were about, including **Black Nunbird**, a few **Fulvous-crested Tanagers**, **Gray-breasted Sabrewing**, and a small flock that contained **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**, **Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper**, the nominate form of **Curve-billed Scythebill** and a **Grayish Mourner**. Not entirely satisfied with our poor views of the tody-tyrant, we walked on a short distance to see if we could find another one (Mario had mentioned that at least two different territories had been found quite close to one another). And that we did, finding another **Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant** just three or four hundred metres down the road. This second bird was almost as active as the first, but in general it was much more forthcoming as it flitted about closer to the road, almost always remaining in view and even allowing us to at least attempt (if not succeed) a few photographs. A successful twitch, and certainly not a bird we had expected to see on this itinerary (in large part since we didn't actually plan to spend so much time in the Manaus area).

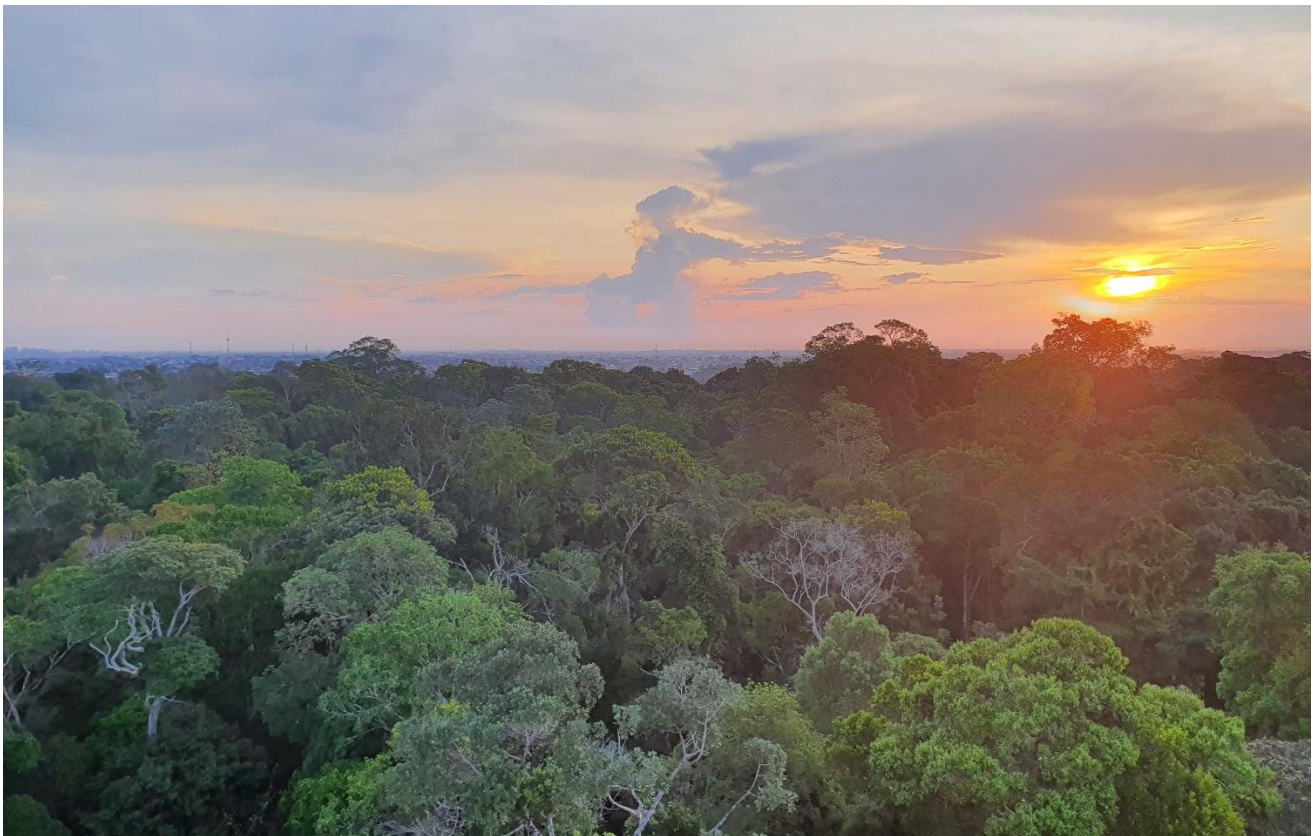
Other notable sightings along the ZF-2 road included a nesting pair of **Blackish Nightjars**, a handsome **White Hawk** watching the road from its perch at the forest edge, and best of all, sightings of three different **Black Curassows** along the quiet road, indication of the forest quality and lack of hunting at this particular site.

We returned to Manaus in time for lunch where we had possibly the best meal of the trip, a delicious fire-roasted *tambiqui na brasa*. There was time for a short afternoon break before heading to the MUSA canopy tower, so

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we returned to the hotel. Lamentably, during this break I received an email from the Passaredo airline, informing that they had cancelled the return leg of our internal flight to Amazonia National Park! The only option left to us was to return a day earlier, further cutting our time in the park to just a day and a half, a far cry from the three and a half days we had originally planned to enjoy at the park. With no other airlines operating the route and no other way to quickly reach Itaituba, we had no choice but to accept this new flight.

In the afternoon we headed over to the Museu da Amazônia botanical garden situated at the northern edge of Manaus. The plan was to visit the terrific canopy tower here, a rock-solid 42-metre steel tower overlooking mature *terra firme* Guianan Shield forests. Another cloudburst delayed us a bit, but during the rain we were able to enjoy some of the exhibits on Amazonian natural history, including a neat exhibit on arachnids that was well-explained by the museum staff. As the rain petered out we walked the short trail to the tower, and soon enough we were on the upper platform with the 10,000 hectare Adolpho Ducke Reserve stretched out in front of us, and the skyline of Manaus behind us. We scanned the treetops for birds perching up after the rain, seeing a variety of parrots including **Blue-headed Parrot**, **Red-bellied Macaw**, **Mealy Parrot**, **Red-and-green Macaw**, the spectacular **Red-fan Parrot**, and a flock of five **Red-lored Parrots**. There were a few **White-throated Toucans** up in the canopy, and we also found a couple of **Channel-billed Toucans** for a good comparison between the two large toucans. A single **Black-necked Aracari** also popped up for a look. In spite of efforts to attract a canopy flock, nothing really materialized in that department, though we did see a few of the usual flock members in the form of **Guianan Tyrannulet**, **Golden-bellied Euphonia**, **Blue Dacnis**, and a really handsome pair of **Glossy-backed Becards**, a scarce specialty found mostly in the Guianas. We heard others such as Yellow-throated Flycatcher, Guianan Woodcreeper and Painted Tody-Flycatcher, but they kept their distance. There were a few **Band-rumped Swifts** flying around, with one or two **Fork-tailed Palm-Swifts** amongst them. Toward the end of the afternoon a few late visitors had trickled in to climb the tower and take a selfie or two, and we all enjoyed a lovely post-storm sunset as the day drew to a close.



September 20th: Travel to Amazonia National Park & Golden Parakeets

Finally, in spite of Passaredo's best efforts to keep us from getting there, we were on our way to Amazonia National Park. The plane from Manaus to Itaituba departed and arrived more or less on time, and our local guide Gilberto was waiting for us at the airport. We loaded into our vehicle and drove south out of Itaituba, following the course of the Tapajós river toward Vila Rayol, a little village just outside the limits of Amazonia National Park. This trip took us a little over an hour, and we arrived at our pleasant family-run lodge overlooking the mighty Tapajós in time to check in to our rooms before having a tasty lunch. Since our time in the park had been reduced to just a day and a half thanks to Passaredo's ineptitude, we had no time to waste and soon we were ready to head out in search of the region's key specialty birds.

Amazonia National Park protects just over 1 million hectares (ca. 2.5 million acres) of Amazon rainforest in the lower Madeira-Tapajós basin, about halfway between the cities of Manaus and Belem, south of the Amazon river itself. The only access to the park is along the Transamazonica highway which runs north-south through the park for 74 kilometres, linking the small city of Itaituba with the much smaller town of Jacareacanga and numerous tiny gold-mining settlements. We headed out into the blazing early afternoon heat, riding down the dusty Transamazonica with Gilberto and José, the driver of our four-wheel drive vehicle. Gilberto directed José to pull over at a seemingly random location near a tree that had fallen almost all the way across the road, leaving space for just a single vehicle to pass at a time. Of course there was nothing random about the spot, as Gilberto had located the display perch of a male **White-tailed Cotinga**, and we got off to a roaring start as the bird popped up just where he was supposed to – the first of the endemics already under the belt.

Moving on, we stopped again along the road to try for another specialty. After a bit of a wait, a pair of **Brown-chested Barbets** appeared, showing well through the scope as one of the birds bowed its head solemnly to belt out its ventriloqual tooting song. Using the reliable trick of whistling pygmy-owl imitations, we attracted a few other birds including **Dusky-chested Flycatchers**, a female **Pink-throated Becard**, and a **Flame-crested Tanager**. The soft but distinctive calls of the **Fiery-tailed Aowlbill** came from the canopy, and we quickly found one, a male seen through the scope no less! Not long after we also found a female – scope views yet again – and we were even able to discern the subtle awl-shaped bill on both birds. What a start!

Gilberto and I had decided that the best course of action this afternoon would be to travel to the far side of the park and beyond to visit a site where Golden Parakeets roost in the evenings. Normally this is a last-ditch option only taken near the end of a visit to Amazonia NP in the event that the species has not shown during the first few days. However, given the nomadic, unpredictable nature of the parakeet and the fact that we had just one afternoon and one full day to bird the park, we figured the best course would be to go straight to the spot where the birds were almost guaranteed to show up. It was a long drive, all the way through the 74 kilometres of the dusty Transamazonica into the heart of the park and beyond, followed by nearly another hour's drive through cattle ranches and gold-mining villages.

We arrived at our destination around 5 PM, greeting the homesteader who lived there before we settled in to wait for the parakeets. There were a few birds around a palm swamp including **Sulphury Flycatcher**, **Palm** and **Silver-beaked Tanagers** and a pair of **Yellow-bellied Elaenias**. Occasionally a vehicle would pass by, lifting a long plume of dust into the still air, blanketing the roadside vegetation. A short foray into a nearby patch of riparian forest yielded a very showy **Buff-breasted Wren**, while a **Moustached Wren** was a bit skulkier but still gave itself up. A tail-wagging **Cinnamon Attila** came through a couple of times, but the hoped-for Glossy Antshrike did not materialize. **Yellow-rumped Caciques** came and went throughout the afternoon, attending their colony of hanging woven nests in the large *pequizeiro* (*Caryocar* sp.) tree where the parakeets roost. As the afternoon moved closer to dusk, we had a parade of parrots including flyover **Scarlet** and **Red-and-green**

Macaws, a lone **Red-bellied Macaw**, and **Orange-winged** and **Blue-headed Parrots**. The question on everyone's mind, though: Where was the main attraction? A pair of **Blue-and-yellow Macaws** cruised in behind the homestead, and Gilberto headed over in that direction to photograph them, as the species isn't particularly common in the park. Then we heard them: the raucous screeching cries of a flock of **Golden Parakeets**. The birds were distant, and we saw them ever-so-briefly, swirling gold against the green background of the forest canopy along a distant ridge before they dove down into a valley and disappeared. The tension mounted as the minutes ticked by, the late afternoon light began to wane, and there was no further sign of the parakeets. Would they come to their roost tree, or not? Finally, at about 6:45 PM, the flock was suddenly there, screaming its way across the overgrown pasture, heading straight for the roost tree. There were maybe 25 or 26 birds total, and right away they started to file into several different cavities in the tree. Some entered immediately and poked their heads back out, calling, while others cavorted up and down the tree's largest dead limbs. We enjoyed all this activity through the scope, and to say Gilberto and I were relieved would be an understatement. After the last of the parakeets had filed into the roost cavities, we quickly packed up our gear and loaded into the vehicle. José capably returned us along the darkened Transamazonica to the lodge, where we arrived in time for a late dinner and bed.



Golden Parakeets

September 21st: Amazonia NP – Piçarreira, Capelinha & Tracoá Trails

Today was a red letter day for us, as it was to be our only full day of birding in Amazonia National Park, thanks to... “events”. In the end it turned out to be a wildly successful day, but it wasn't without some trepidation that we pulled up to the trailhead to the Piçarreira trail first thing in the morning. Gilberto led us down the narrow trail into the early morning gloom, he and I both sifting through the dawn chorus listening for any target birds. It didn't take long for us to connect with the hoped-for **Rufous-necked Puffbird**, which stuck around long enough for us to get nice views through the scope. The morning's birding was a bit slow to develop early on, but we did hit a couple of good mixed flocks with **Saturnine Antshrikes**, **White-eyed Stipplethroat**, **Gray**, **White-flanked**

and **Long-winged Antwrens**, **Red-stained Woodpeckers**, **Olivaceous Woodcreeper**, **Wedge-billed Woodcreeper**, **Hoffmanns' Woodcreeper**, **Elegant Woodcreeper**, **Curve-billed Scythebill**, **Chestnut-winged Hookbill**, **Tawny-crowned Greenlet** and **Red-crowned Ant-Tanagers**. A **Chestnut Woodpecker** was nice, as was a male **Red-headed Manakin** and we also saw a little flock of a half dozen **White-fronted Nunbirds**. We heard a distant **Rusty-belted Tapaculo** singing, so we settled in at a bend in the trail to see if we could call it in. After a while it seemed that the bird wasn't coming any closer, but suddenly Gilberto beckoned to us, pointing ahead of him on the trail... we tried to inch forward to see what he was indicating, but by the time I reached him the retreating hind end of an **Ocelot** was already disappearing around the corner and out of view. The tapaculo sang again a short distance down the trail, and we re-positioned ourselves for another try. Once again the bird kept its distance, but we were instead treated to a short sighting of a bouncy **Black-faced Antthrush** that circled around us on the forest floor. Finally, the tapaculo itself piped up nearby, immediately behind us, and it didn't take too long for us to spot the **Rusty-belted Tapaculo** when it hopped up onto a fallen log and showed us its best side.



Rusty-belted Tapaculo

We stopped at a small treefall gap mid-way along the trail where one can see out across a small valley. I was pleased to note that the same **Amazonian Scrub Flycatcher** that we had seen here about three weeks earlier was still on territory. A **Brown-chested Barbet**, one of several heard during the course of the morning, gave its rattling song from the canopy nearby, and a noisy **Dusky-chested Flycatcher** made its braying calls in the distance. Some pygmy-owl imitations drew in a **Pygmy Antwren**, **Fork-tailed Woodnymph**, and a **Gray-breasted Sabrewing**. Still no sign of our number one target, Harlequin Antbird, though, so we carried on.

Possibly the most frustrating moment of the morning (though the Ocelot was a close second) came when we paused near a spot where Gilberto had recently noticed a Vulturine Parrot entering a nest cavity. However, a branch was obscuring the cavity from our vantage point, which momentarily confused Gilberto; stepping forward,

though, he re-located the cavity just as an adult **Vulturine Parrot** dropped out of the cavity and flew away just below canopy height! A bit downcast at this, we found ourselves a spot where we could scope the nest cavity and remain hidden, and settled in for a wait. However, as many birders reading this report will know, a watched pot never boils, and a watched nest is rarely returned to. From here we took a decision: Gilberto would cut a narrow path straight back to the road from the nest site, allowing us to return for a look later in the day, while we would carry on along the trail and meet him at the other end.

At the bottom of a gully we found a singing male **Ihering's Antwren** of the endemic nominate form, and were pleased that it showed well for us in a vine tangle above the trail (the very same tangle where I had seen the bird during two different trips earlier in the year). Our attention was drawn from the antwren, however, by the distant *chack* calls of a group of Dark-winged Trumpeters. This was a big target, and a species we had missed at PiraAçu, so we stealthily crept along the trail in the direction of the calls. The birds seemed to be moving through a swampy area bordering a forest stream that runs through the valley bottom of the Piçarreira Trail, so we set up in a spot where we were hidden by a recent treefall, and I played the tape for the trumpeters. Unfortunately, although the birds seemed interested enough to move closer to our position at first, they either suspected something was up and kept their distance, or they decided they weren't all that interested after all. In the end, we didn't see a single feather, nor any movement at all. We couldn't really follow the birds into the swamp, and our movements were further limited by the fallen tree across the path.

Feeling a bit down after successive misses on the parrot and the trumpeter, we climbed the short hill at the other side of the gully, headed for the road. On the way out, though, the distinctive snarls of obligate ant-following antbirds piqued our interest. A quick blast of the tape for Harlequin Antbird yielded a prompt response, and we were in business. Frustratingly, the bird gave us a quick once-over and then blasted away into the undergrowth, not to return. We worked our way back to another side trail that would take us around to where the bird seemed to have gone, and this turned out to be a good choice. Soon we found a decent-sized army ant swarm that was being attended by **Black-spotted Bare-eye**, **Plain-brown Woodcreeper** and **Hoffmanns's Woodcreeper**, but best of all, we finally locked in terrific views of at least two **Harlequin Antbirds**. The Harlequin Antbird is endemic to the lower reaches of the Madeira – Tapajós interfluvium, and together with Golden Parakeet always ranks either #1 or #2 amongst the top target species at Amazonia National Park.



Harlequin Anthbird



Curve-billed Scythebill

Thrilled with our success in finding the morning's top target, we returned to the lodge for lunch. After a nice meal in the open-air restaurant beside the Tapajós river, we hopped back into the truck and headed back to the Piçarreira Trail, this time taking the little path that Gilberto had marked from the Transamazonica straight in to the Vulturine Parrot nest cavity. We had time for a short vigil before we needed to move on to other targets; unfortunately there was nobody home. We double-timed it back to the truck, and continued south for another 20 minutes to the trailhead for the famed Capelinha Trail.

It was quite hot and the forest was very quiet. We walked quickly out into the tall *terra firme* forest, mostly ignoring the few common species that piped up along the way. A remarkable sighting was a pair of **Nocturnal Curassows** that we disturbed from alongside the trail, although only Gilberto and I saw them as they sidled off to the right hand side of the trail and melted into the undergrowth. This extremely brief sighting would have been hugely frustrating had we not seen the species so well at PiraAçu – this was Gilberto's first observation of the curassow in the park since 1993! Eventually we reached the territory for another major target species, and it didn't take long before a brilliant pair of **Black-bellied Gnateaters** were bouncing along a horizontal branch in front of us for fantastic views! Having nailed it with the gnateater, we turned tail and walked briskly back to the road where José had turned the vehicle around and was waiting for us. On the way back to the guard post near the bridge over the Tracoá stream, we kicked up a pair of the endemic **White-crested Guan** that had been dustbathing alongside the road. This was a relief, as it had been looking as though ongoing roadwork along the dusty "highway" might cause us to miss this specialty of the eastern Amazon.

At the Tracoá guard post we enjoyed a **Green-tailed Jacamar** that zipped back and forth a couple of times before finally showing well. After delivering our authorizations to the park guards, we headed a short distance down the Tracoá trail into a dense riverine thicket heavily laden with vine tangles. Gilberto set up a blind for us and stepped deeper into the thicket to arrange a banquet of worms atop a log and on a thick woody liana. We played the tape softly once or twice, and suddenly there was an **Amazonian Antpitta** on the ground behind the log! The bird picked at a worm or two from down below, before finally hopping on onto the liana to pluck a staked-out worm and bounce back down to the ground. It returned a moment later for another worm, and we were able to really

enjoy this shy antpitta, typically a denizen of the densest thickets one can find. With yet another success under our belts, we moved a bit further down the trail to call in a pair of **Glossy Antshrikes**, an endemic and specialist of river-edge habitats.



Black-bellied Gnateater



Amazonian Antpitta

By now we were reaching the end of the afternoon, but there was still some light left, so we drove slowly along the Transamazonica, hoping to luck into a Vulturine Parrot. We stopped by one of the wooden bridges for a last-ditch effort, and while we heard a few bits and pieces (Little Cuckoo, Blackish Antbird and Plain-crowned Spinetail, for instance), there wasn't much to be seen as dusk arrived. Flushed with the success of our only full day at Amazonia National Park, we returned to the lodge to have a beer, go through the checklist, and enjoy another tasty home-cooked meal.

September 22nd: Travel from Amazonia NP to Manaus

We had hoped to do a bit of birding around the lodge first thing this morning, but we awoke to a torrential downpour that carried all the way through breakfast, putting paid to that plan. Instead, we loaded the vehicle and departed for Itaituba along the slick-surfaced Transamazonica 'highway'. Despite the rain, the road was still in pretty good shape and we arrived in town without incident. We were relieved to learn that our flight had not been cancelled, and checked our luggage for the flight to Manaus. Upon arriving back in the largest city in the Amazon, we headed straight over to our preferred restaurant, enjoying yet another sumptuous fire-roasted *tambaqui* fish together with a celebratory *caipirinha* to toast our success at Amazonia National Park. We had done very well on our target birds, despite the best efforts of the Passaredo airline to scupper our visit to the park. After lunch we decided to stop in at the Peoples of the Amazon Museum near our hotel. During our hour or so at the museum lock we enjoyed the historical exhibits and local art, particularly the impressive display of indigenous tribal headdresses made from feathers of some of the Amazonian species we had the privilege of observing in the wild over the past two weeks.

September 23rd: Manaus – Ramal Saudade

With international flights scheduled for this evening, we decided to spend just a couple of hours doing some relaxed birding near Manaus. To that end, we headed for the Ramal Saudade, a partly paved track some thirty-odd kilometres north of the city. We stopped at a 24-hour bakery en route for breakfast, and arrived at the site

about a half hour after dawn. Things were fairly quiet and muggy early on as we birded the paved section, seeing a **Dusky Parrot** and a handful of **Mealy Parrots**. We worked on a stubborn pair of **Guianan Warbling-Anthbirds** for a while before they finally showed themselves, seeing **Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper** in the same general area. A bit further along we had a **Curve-billed Sycthebill** of the nominate Guianan Shield race before an **Amazonian Pygmy-Owl** piped up. It took a while to spot the owl, and while we looked for it we had views of a procession of birds that were also searching for this fierce diurnal predator, including **Black-eared Fairy**, **Tiny Tyrant-Manakins**, a female **White-crowned Manakin**, **Golden-headed Manakin** and **Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher**. As we duly admired the pygmy-owl through the scope, a **Guianan Puffbird** piped up nearby and we spotted it after a bit of effort. Not to be outdone was a **Spotted Puffbird** that was much closer, right beside the road. Later on we hit a really nice canopy flock in tall roadside emergent, the flock being led by a vocal **Todd's Sirystes** and a pair of **Glossy-backed Becards**. The scope was very useful here as we picked off **Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo**, **Golden-bellied Euphonia**, **Slate-colored Grosbeak**, **Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper**, **Rufous-throated Sapphire**, **Guianan Woodcreeper**, **Spotted Tanager**, **Fulvous-crested Tanager** and a pair of **Gray Elaenias**, all in the uppermost branches of the tallest trees. The flock appeared to be getting a bit stale as we kept seeing the same birds over and over, and we were just about to get back into the car to move on when we heard the far-carrying calls of the **Red-billed Pied-Tanager**. The birds responded pretty quickly to tape, and soon enough we were enjoying a trio of these unique tanagers through the scope as they rushed along branches, peering underneath from time to time in search of prey.

Pleased with the flock, we moved on to the stunted forest where we tried in vain for Capuchinbird. By now it was really hot, but we did see a few birds: both **Red-legged** and **Short-billed Honeycreepers**, a **Grayish Mourner** gathering nesting material, a young male **Pompadour Cotinga**, and a few **Paradise Jacamars**. We worked hard to see a **Coraya Wren** in roadside tangles, eventually getting decent views. In the same area we also tried our luck with a vocal **Olivaceous Schiffornis** that played a pretty fair cat-and-mouse with us, rocketing back and forth across the track as they often do, only pausing ever so briefly in the open on a few occasions. A couple of **Black Nunbirds** were nearby, and a **Greater Yellow-headed Vulture** sat calmly beside the road offering up our best views of the trip. We also flushed a pair of **Blackish Nightjars** from the side of the road as we walked back to the vehicle.

Mike and Dana's outbound international flight, direct from Manaus to Panama City, was scheduled for the wee hours of the morning on the 24th, so the plan today was for just a relaxing morning's birding followed by some time off to rest up before the flight. Back at the hotel we made our farewells and parted ways after a couple of really phenomenal weeks of birding in a couple of the top locations in the Amazon (though once again poor marks to Passaredo for butchering our flight schedule and costing us two days at Amazonia NP, though remarkably hardly costing us any birds).

Species Accounts

TINAMOUS

* **Great Tinamou** *Tinamus tao*

Singles heard on just two dates at PiraAçu, and also from the MUSA tower in Manaus.

* **Great Tinamou** *Tinamus major*

Heard only on the 14th at PiraAçu.

* **White-throated Tinamou** *Tinamus guttatus*

During our visit, this was the most vocal of the large *Tinamus* tinamous at PiraAçu, where we recorded the species on six dates. Also heard at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

* **Cinereous Tinamou** *Crypturellus cinereus*

Heard on six dates in total.

* **Little Tinamou** *Crypturellus soui*

Heard only on the 21st at Amazonia NP.

* **Undulated Tinamou** *Crypturellus undulatus*

Heard on five dates at PiraAçu, always in riverine forests.

* **Brazilian Tinamou** *Crypturellus strigulosus*

Heard on five dates at PiraAçu. Particularly common along the track to the Buiucu river, where we heard up to four singing birds on two dates. In spite of our efforts, we couldn't get any of the singing birds to make any discernable movement in our direction using playback.

* **Variegated Tinamou** *Crypturellus variegatus*

Heard on six dates at PiraAçu.

DUCKS, GEESE & SWANS

Black-bellied Whistling-Duck *Dendrocygna autumnalis*

A few pairs seen on river islands in the Solimões near Manaus on the 18th.

Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*

A female seen on the 12th and 15th in shallow rapids below the lodge at PiraAçu.

Brazilian Teal *Amazonetta brasiliensis*

A couple of birds seen on river islands in the Solimões near Manaus on the 18th.

GUANS & ALLIES

Speckled Chachalaca *Ortalis guttata*

We heard three duetting pairs on the morning of the 12th along the Aripuanã upstream from PiraAçu. A single bird seen en route to Amazonia NP on the 19th was our only sighting.

White-crested Guan *Penelope pileata*

Two birds seen along the Transamazonica at Amazonia NP on the 21st. Endemic to the eastern Amazon in Brazil.

Spix's Guan *Penelope jacquacu*

Two seen on the Agua Linda trail at PiraAçu on the 15th.

Red-throated Piping-Guan *Pipile cufuji*

Seen on four dates at PiraAçu, with most of our sightings coming along the Aripuanã river, especially on river islands.

Razor-billed Curassow *Mitu tuberosum*

One of the great delights of our visit to PiraAçu was seeing good numbers of this large-bodied game bird along the Aripuanã river. We had sightings almost every day at PiraAçu, and most early morning or late afternoon trips on the river produced one or two pairs at the water's edge. Our high count was 8 birds seen on the afternoon of the 11th downstream from the lodge.

Black Curassow *Crax alector*

A single and a pair seen on the morning of the 19th along the ZF-2 track north of Manaus. Not a bird that we initially expected on this itinerary, but after the cancellations of our flights to Itaituba we were left with extra time in Manaus.

Nocturnal Curassow *Nothocrax urumutum*

In a trip with many highlights, the indelible memory of seeing this elusive species so well at PiraAçu has to be at the top of the list. A pair of birders visiting the lodge independently had seen the species at least twice along the track between the lodge and the airstrip, and after just missing seeing it ourselves on the 11th, we connected in grand fashion just after dawn on the 12th. We watched as a pair strolled unconcernedly along the track in our direction, stopping for a bit to pick at a fallen fruit that appeared to be an Annonaceae (sugar apple family) of some sort before they continued in our direction. One of the two walked right up to us, stopping within four metres of us, making soft contact calls while it looked us over. It then returned to its mate, and the two of them stepped into the forest and disappeared. Remarkably, this was not our only encounter with the species: our local guide Gilberto and I had a clear but very brief view of a pair crossing the Capelinha Trail in front of us at Amazonia National Park on the 21st. This was Gilberto's first sighting of the species in the park since 1993.

NEW WORLD QUAILS

*** Marbled Wood-Quail** *Odontophorus gujanensis*

Heard from the MUSA canopy tower in Manaus on the 19th, and also at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

*** Starred Wood-Quail** *Odontophorus stellatus*

I saw a pair at the beginning of the Castanhal trail at PiraAçu on the 12th, but the birds scurried away before the others could get up the river bank from the boat.

PIGEONS & DOVES

Rock Pigeon *Columba livia*

Seen in Manaus.

Pale-vented Pigeon *Patagioenas cayennensis*

Two birds seen perched in canopy of forest on a river islands downstream on the Aripuanã on the 17th. Also seen on the river islands in the Solimões on the 18th.

*** Plumbeous Pigeon** *Patagioenas plumbea*

Heard on eight dates.

Ruddy Pigeon *Patagioenas subvinacea*

Seen or heard on ten different dates.

Common Ground-Dove *Columbina passerina*

Seen on just a couple of dates, en route to PiraAçu and also along the landing strip at the lodge.

Ruddy Ground-Dove *Columbina talpacoti*

Seen on river islands in the Solimões on the 20th.

Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana*

Singles seen briefly on the 10th and 13th at PiraAçu.

White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*

Seen only on the 18th, on a river island in the Solimões upstream from Manaus.

Gray-fronted Dove *Leptotila rufaxilla*

Seen on at least four dates at PiraAçu, mostly along the river edge, or flying across the river in front of our boat as we passed.

CUCKOOS

Greater Ani *Crotophaga major*

We saw this species on six dates at PiraAçu, including a high count of 45 birds on the afternoon of the 14th during our boat trip up the Buiucu river.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*

Recorded on just a few dates, including along the Transamazonica between Apui and the Aripuana river, and between Itaituba and Amazonia National Park, and also on the river islands near Manaus.

*** Little Cuckoo** *Coccyua minuta*

Heard only at Amazonia NP on the afternoon of the 21st at the very end of the day. The bird responded well, but refused to show itself before we finally decided the light was too dim to see much of anything anyway.

Squirrel Cuckoo *Piaya cayana*

Seen or heard on at least eight dates, including almost daily at PiraAçu.

Black-bellied Cuckoo *Piaya melanogaster*

Seen or heard on eight dates, usually no more than one or two individuals per day.

NIGHTJARS

Nacunda Nighthawk *Podager nacunda*

One seen on a rock amidst a set of rapids on the Aripuanã river en route to PiraAçu on the 8th was our only sighting.

Short-tailed Nighthawk *Lurocalis semitorquatus*

Seen on the 12th over the lodge at PiraAçu.

Blackish Nightjar *Nyctipolus nigrescens*

We saw this species along the airstrip at PiraAçu on three different dates. Our best views, however, came along the ZF-2 track north of Manaus on the 19th.

Common Pauraque *Nyctidromus albicollis*

Recorded on three different dates.

Ladder-tailed Nightjar *Hydrosalis climacocerca*

A male seen on a sandbar island in the Aripuanã on the 10th, and heard during breakfast at our lodge at Amazonia NP on the morning of the 21st.

POTOOS

Long-tailed Potoo *Nyctibius aethereus*

A vocal pair at the beginning of the Buiucu track on the evening of the 8th.

Common Potoo *Nyctibius griseus*

Seen on the 12th at PiraAçu.

SWIFTS

Chapman's Swift *Chaetura chapmani*

Seen on 6 dates. It was the most common swift during our visit to PiraAçu.

Short-tailed Swift *Chaetura brachyura*

Seen on 5 dates. In small numbers at PiraAçu mostly, but also at least 16 birds seen on the boat trip upriver to the lodge on the 8th.

Gray-rumped Swift *Chaetura cinereiventris*

Recorded just twice at PiraAçu.

Band-rumped Swift *Chaetura spinicaudus*

Seen on two dates in the Manaus area.

Fork-tailed Palm-Swift *Tachornis squamata*

A pair seen from the tower in Manaus was somewhat surprisingly our only record.

HUMMINGBIRDS

White-necked Jacobin *Florisuga Mellivora*

Seen on the 14th and 16th along the Paxiuba river at PiraAçu.

Needle-billed Hermit *Phaethornis philippii*

Recorded on 3 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP, with our best sighting coming along the airstrip at PiraAçu where we had 1 or 2 birds visiting flowering passion vines.

Long-tailed Hermit *Phaethornis superciliosus*

1 seen at PiraAçu together with the above species along the airstrip (ssp. *insignus*), and 1 seen north of Manaus on our final morning of birding (ssp. *superciliosus*). The race we saw at PiraAçu, *insignus*, is endemic to the Madeira-Tapajós interfluvium, and is sometimes considered a subspecies of Great-billed Hermit rather than Long-tailed, just the sort of uncertainty that makes one wonder if perhaps it isn't a valid species-level taxon of its own.

Reddish Hermit *Phaethornis ruber*

Recorded on 5 dates.

Black-eared Fairy *Heliothryx auratus*

Seen only on the last morning of the trip at the Ramal Saudade north of Manaus.

Green-tailed Goldenthrout *Polytmus theresiae*

At least four individuals seen on the sandbar river island in the Aripuanã downstream from the mouth of the Paxiuba.

Fiery-tailed Aowlbill *Avocettula recurvirostris*

A massive highlight of our shortened visit to Amazonia NP. We found a female in the roadside canopy along the Transamazonica on our first afternoon, and shortly thereafter a male put in an appearance, too! Nice scope views of the female, and quicker views of the male. A rare species throughout its range, but one that is seen regularly at Amazonia NP.

*** Black-bellied Thorntail** *Discosura langsdorffi*

Heard only, a bird singing in the canopy on the Taboquinha trail at PiraAçu on the 16th.

Gray-breasted Sabrewing *Campylopterus largipennis*

Singles seen on 4 dates.

Fork-tailed Woodnymph *Thalurania furcata*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, and two birds at Amazonia NP. This is usually the most frequently encountered forest hummingbird in the Amazon, and the paucity of encounters during our trip was part of a larger picture wherein we didn't find many hummingbirds at all, possibly due to seasonality?

Rufous-throated Sapphire *Hylocharis sapphirine*

Only one sighting, a female seen feeding in flowering vines at Ramal Saudade north of Manaus on the morning of the 23rd.

HOATZIN

Hoatzin *Opisthocomus hoazin*

We saw at least 18 of these bizarre, prehistoric-looking birds at a small oxbow on the Buiucu river on the afternoon of the 14th.

RAILS & ALLIES

Gray-cowled Wood-Rail *Aramides cajaneus*

Pairs seen on the 12th and 14th along the rivers from PiraAçu.

*** Russet-crowned Crake** *Anurolimnas viridis*

Heard on the 17th in the scrubby secondary forest across the road from the airport in Apuí while we waited for our plane to arrive.

FINFOOTS

Sungrebe *Heliornis fulica*

Singles seen on four different dates along the rivers at PiraAçu, including some very close range sightings of rather tame individuals. We also had a pair from a rickety wooden bridge north of Manaus on the last day of the trip. The Sungrebe is the only American representative of the finfoot family.

TRUMPETERS

*** Dark-winged Trumpeter** *Psophia viridis*

One of the more frustrating encounters of the trip. To my surprise, we didn't find any trumpeters at all during our time at PiraAçu. We finally found a family group in the swampy hollow at the bottom of the Piçarreira Trail at Amazonia NP on the 21st, but try as we might we couldn't get the birds to come across the waterlogged streambed in our direction – they remained heard only.

PLOVERS & LAPWINGS

American Golden Plover *Pluvialis dominica*

1 on a tiny sandbar in the Aripuanã river downstream from the lodge on the 12th. At least 52 birds counted on a large sandbar in the river islands of the Solimões upstream from Manaus on the 18th.

Pied Lapwing *Vanellus cayanus*

Seen on every trip up or down the Aripuanã river from PiraAçu.

Southern Lapwing *Vanellus chilensis*

Seen on four dates.

Collared Plover *Charadrius collaris*

A minimum of 12 birds on the large sandbar in the river islands of the Solimões upstream from Manaus on the 18th.

JACANAS

Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*

Seen on just 3 dates.

SANDPIPERS

White-rumped Sandpiper *Calidris fuscicollis*

1 migrant bird on the large sandbar river islands in the Marchantaria area on the Solimões river.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Recorded on 5 dates on the Aripuanã and its tributaries, solitary birds in rocky rapids.

Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria*

Seen on 3 dates.

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes*

1 on the Ilha do Embaubal in the Marchantaria area on the 18th.

GULLS & TERNS

Yellow-billed Tern *Sternula superciliaris*

Recorded on 6 dates – only in small numbers along the Aripuanã river near PiraAçu, but there were at least 60 birds on the extensive sandbar island at Marchantaria, mostly nesting pairs, on the 18th.

Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*

Seen on 4 dates. There were many nesting pairs on the extensive sandbar island at Marchantaria upstream from Manaus on the 18th. There were a few families with buckets working the island, collecting tern and skimmer eggs.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica*

Four birds (two sets of two) were found on muddy beaches on the Ilha Nova in the Marchantaria area, rather aloof from the two more common tern species. This was my first record for the species this far up the Amazon, where it is a rare but regular vagrant.

SKIMMERS

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger*

Seen only on the 18th in the Marchantaria river island complex in the Solimões river upstream from Manaus. There were many breeding pairs incubating eggs on nests – mere scrapes in the loose sand – and we estimated a total of 180 individuals for the day's count.

SUNBITTERN

Sunbittern *Eurypyga helias*

Singles or pairs recorded on 4 dates at PiraAçu Lodge, where the best observations we had were of a couple of extremely calm pairs working the shallow edges of the Paxiuba river. Watching these elegant, monotypic birds as they step deliberately along shady river edges searching for aquatic arthropods, or occasionally venturing out into full sunshine to ambush a group of butterflies at a “puddle party”, is always a highlight of any visit to the Amazon.

DARTERS

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*

Seen in small numbers on 6 dates at PiraAçu Lodge.

CORMORANTS

Neotropical Cormorant *Nannopterum brasilianum*

Seen on 4 dates along the Aripuanã river.

HERONS & EGRETS

Zigzag Heron *Zebrilus undulatus*

What a great sighting of this shy crepuscular heron we had on the Buiucu river late in the afternoon on September 14th. We pulled the boat into a likely looking spot – an overgrown oxbow with dense tangles around the edges – and played the tape. It didn't take long before a bird responded, and soon it was perched in the tangles just a few metres from the boat! It took a bit of twisting and acrobatics for all of us to get clear views of the bird without spooking it by turning on the engine to move the boat, but in the end we all had great looks.

Rufescent Tiger-Heron *Tigrisoma lineatum*

Singles seen on 5 dates on the Aripuanã river and its tributaries during our time at PiraAçu.

Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi*

Singles seen on 6 dates at PiraAçu.

Great Egret *Ardea alba*

Somewhat surprisingly, we only saw this species on the 18th in the Marchantaria area.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

Seen only on 2 dates.

Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Seen in open country between Apuí and the Aripuanã river on the 8th, and along the Transamazonica highway outside Itaituba on the 20th. A lone bird on the Aripuanã on the 12th was our only other sighting.

Striated Heron *Butorides striata*

1 seen in the Marchantaria river island complex on the 18th.

Agami Heron *Agamia agami*

We saw an immature bird on the Paxiuba river shortly after we finally connected on the Rondonia Bushbird, on September 16th. The heron was originally stalking along a narrow beach, holding its body horizontally, before it spooked at our approach and flushed into a tangle. Once there it froze, extending its neck vertically in the style of a bittern. After we had our fill watching this special heron we left it alone and continued upriver; the bird was still in the same location about 30 minutes later when we cruised past on our way downstream.

Capped Heron *Pilherodius pileatus*

Seen on 2 dates.

IBISES & SPOONBILLS

Green Ibis *Mesembrinibis cayennensis*

Common along the Aripuanã river, where we had singles or pairs on nearly a daily basis.

NEW WORLD VULTURES

Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*

Common and widespread.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Seen only on the 18th in the Marchantaria river island complex.

Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*

Seen only on the 18th in the Marchantaria river island complex.

Greater Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes melambrotus*

Seen on at least 6 dates, always soaring over forest and never in open country.

OSPREY

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Seen on 6 dates. Four of our five sightings at PiraAçu were almost certainly all of the same individual.

HAWKS, KITES & EAGLES

Swallow-tailed Kite *Elanoides forficatus*

We had a couple of sightings early in the trip, and then a remarkable kettle of at least 70 birds, possibly many more, at the confluence of the Aripuanã and Roosevelt rivers in mid-morning on September 17th.

Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis*

1 seen on a river island in the Marchantaria area upstream from Manaus on the 18th.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis*

2 birds seen on a river island in the Marchantaria area upstream from Manaus on the 18th.

Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea*

Singles seen on 2 dates at PiraAçu.

Great Black Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga*

1 on the Aripuanã downstream from PiraAçu on the 12th turned out to be our only sighting.

Roadside Hawk *Rupornis magnirostris*

Recorded on 6 dates.

White Hawk *Pseudastur albicollis*

An adult seen on the ZF-2 track north of Manaus on the morning of the 19th was our only sighting.

White-browed Hawk *Leucopternis kuhli*

We had nice scope views of a responsive bird on the Castanhal trail at PiraAçu on the 13th, and subsequently heard the species on three dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia National Park.

Gray-lined Hawk *Buteo nitidus*

Seen on the Aripuanã as we started our journey upstream to PiraAçu on the 8th.

TYPICAL OWLS

Tawny-bellied Screech-Owl *Megascops watsonii*

Heard on a couple of evenings at PiraAçu, and finally seen on the evening of the 16th along the track that leads from the lodge to the airstrip.

Amazonian Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium hardyi*

We saw this tiny canopy-dwelling predator during our first session at PiraAçu on the afternoon of the 8th. We heard the species on 6 subsequent dates, and although I frequently use a mix of imitations and recordings of the species to attract passerines in the canopy, we did not see it again.

Mottled Owl *Strix virgata*

We had a really nice sighting of a day-roosting bird that flushed from a thick liana, where it had been sitting at about head height just over the Castanhal trail at PiraAçu on the 13th. It took a bit of scanning to re-locate the bird, but once we did it stayed put for a long time, allowing scope views and a few photos.

TROGONS & QUETZALS

Pavonine Quetzal *Pharomachrus pavoninus*

One female seen on the Buiucu track on the morning of the 11th turned out to be our only sighting of this attractive quetzal, a species found primarily in high quality terra firme rainforest in the Amazon. The species is fairly common at PiraAçu, however, but they certainly weren't very vocal during our visit.

Black-tailed Trogon *Trogon melanurus*

Seen or heard on 4 dates at PiraAçu, where the species prefers seasonally flooded forests and the transition zone between those forests and the taller terra firme.

Green-backed Trogon *Trogon viridis*

Seen or heard on 6 different dates, mostly at PiraAçu but also at Amazonia National Park and north of Manaus. Formerly known as White-tailed Trogon or Amazonian White-tailed Trogon.

Amazonian Trogon *Trogon ramonianus*

We saw this canopy trogon on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, typically accompanying mixed species flocks, and heard it on 2 or 3 further dates at PiraAçu and Amazonian NP. Formerly part of the Violaceous Trogon complex, the Amazonian birds found west of the Rio Negro and south of the Amazon are now called Amazonian Trogon.

*** Blue-crowned Trogon** *Trogon curucui*

We heard this species on 3 dates at PiraAçu, but didn't make a special effort to see this bird which is widespread in eastern South America, as at each encounter there seemed to be some higher priority species also calling!

*** Black-throated Trogon** *Trogon rufus*

Heard on 4 dates at PiraAçu. The Brazilian checklist committee recently split the Black-throated Trogon into three different species: *Trogon rufus* of the Amazon basin; *Trogon chrysochloros* of the Atlantic rainforest; and *Trogon muriciensis*, a highly endangered taxon of the tiny remnant forest patches in Alagoas and Pernambuco in north-east Brazil.

Collared Trogon *Trogon collaris*

Heard on a couple of dates, and seen in the seasonally flooded forest along the first stretch of the Jatuarana trail at PiraAçu on the 12th.

MOTMOTS

*** Amazonian Motmot** *Momotus momota*

Heard at PiraAçu on the 12th, both in the morning along the river and in the afternoon on the Jatuarana trail.

*** Rufous Motmot** *Baryphthengus martii*

Heard on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

*** Broad-billed Motmot** *Electron platyrhynchum*

Heard on 3 dates at PiraAçu, including a bird singing from along the streambed behind the Bushbird territory on the Taboquinha trail during our visits to that trail.

KINGFISHERS

Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*

Seen on just 5 dates, all sightings of single birds on the Aripuanã and Paxiuba rivers at PiraAçu.

Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona*

Seen on 9 dates.

Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana*

Recorded on just 4 dates.

PUFFBIRDS

*** White-necked Puffbird** *Notharchus hyperrhynchus*

Heard on three dates at PiraAçu, but in all cases birds singing from the canopy that we were unable to spot from the forest floor.

Guianan Puffbird *Notharchus macrorhynchos*

We had scope views of this large puffbird on our final morning of birding north of Manaus on the 23rd.

*** Pied Puffbird** *Notharchus tectus*

Heard on several dates, almost always distantly. The birds we did try to call in would invariably fall silent and refuse to reply.

Spotted Puffbird *Bucco tamatia*

One seen atop the small hill on the Serra do Bréu trail in its preferred stunted *campinarana* habitat. Also seen at close range on the 23rd north of Manaus, where we had a pair right at the roadside.

Collared Puffbird *Bucco capensis*

A bird seen on the 11th on the Buiucu track at PiraAçu. At first it seemed as though the bird wasn't going to play ball, as it responded distantly but didn't approach. However, shortly after we had moved on a short distance it started to sing from beside the trail, and after a bit of searching we managed to spot it sitting quietly in the subcanopy. A classic Amazonian bird.

Rufous-necked Puffbird *Malacoptila rufa*

After striking out on this southern Amazon specialty everywhere at PiraAçu, we finally managed to find one at Amazonia NP on the Piçarreira trail on the morning of the 21st.

Black Nunbird *Monasa atra*

Seen on the 19th and 23rd during our extra birding sessions in the Manaus area. A Guianan Shield specialty.

Black-fronted Nunbird *Monasa nigrifrons*

Widespread and common at forest edges and near water.

White-fronted Nunbird *Monasa morphoeus*

Recorded on 8 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP. This species replaces the latter in the interior of terra firme forests, far from forest edge.

Swallow-winged Puffbird *Chelidoptera tenebrosa*

Seen almost daily throughout the trip.

JACAMARS

Yellow-billed Jacamar *Galbula albirostris*

Heard on the ZF-2 track north of Manaus on the 19th as we searched for Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant.

Blue-cheeked Jacamar *Galbula cyanicollis*

Recorded almost every day on the trails at PiraAçu, and seen there on 3 dates.

*** Rufous-tailed Jacamar** *Galbula ruficauda*

Heard on the 9th singing from one of the larger islands in the Aripuanã below the Paxiuba.

Green-tailed Jacamar *Galbula galbula*

A pair seen on the afternoon of the 21st along the Transamazonica inside Amazonia NP.

Bronzy Jacamar *Galbula leucogastra*

Three birds seen on the Serra do Bréu trail at PiraAçu on the 12th.

Paradise Jacamar *Galbula dea*

Seen or heard on 7 dates, mostly at PiraAçu.

BARBETS

Black-girdled Barbet *Capito dayi*

Seen on 2 dates at PiraAçu, both sightings along the Agua Linda trail. This attractive barbet is endemic to the south-central Amazon in Brazil east of the Madeira river.

Brown-chested Barbet *Capito brunneipectus*

One of the first birds we found during our first afternoon session along the Transamazonica highway within Amazonia NP on the 20th, where we had good scope views of a pair after tracking their ventriloquial songs for a little while. Heard during both the morning and the afternoon the following day as well. This species is endemic to the lower reaches of the Madeira-Tapajós interfluvium; the range limits and contact zone between this and the latter species are still apparently unclear. Amazonia National Park is undoubtedly the best place in the world to see this specialty.

TOUCANS

Green Aracari *Pteroglossus viridis*

We had six individuals at a fruiting tree during an afternoon visit to a gated community in Manaus where we were searching for Pied Tamarins.

Lettered Aracari *Pteroglossus inscriptus*

A pair seen during our vigil waiting for Golden Parakeets south of Amazonia NP on the afternoon of the 20th turned out to be the only observation of the trip.

Black-necked Aracari *Pteroglossus aracari*

Seen on the 18th and 19th in Manaus and at the canopy tower.

Chestnut-eared Aracari *Pteroglossus castanotis*

Seen on a couple of dates around PiraAçu, and another bird seen at the airport in Apuí as we waited for our delayed flight.

Red-necked Aracari *Pteroglossus bitorquatus*

Recorded on 3 dates at PiraAçu, but only seen on the afternoon of the 11th in the canopy of seasonally flooded forest on the Jatuarana trail.

Guianan Toucanet *Selenidera piperivora*

A pair seen on the KM 28 road north of Manaus on our final morning birding session. A Guianan Shield endemic.

Gould's Toucanet *Selenidera gouldii*

Seen only on the 10th on the Agua Linda trail at PiraAçu, but heard almost every day at PiraAçu, and also heard on the 21st at Amazonia NP.

White-throated Toucan *Ramphastos tucanus*

Common, widespread, and recorded almost daily.

Channel-billed Toucan *Ramphastos vitellinus*

Seen on (mostly) heard on 11 different dates.

WOODPECKERS

Bar-breasted Piculet *Picumnus aurifrons*

Recorded on 5 dates at PiraAçu, but only seen on the Serra do Bréu trail downstream from the lodge near mouth of the Guariba river.

Yellow-tufted Woodpecker *Melanerpes cruentatus*

Seen or heard on 4 dates.

*** Golden-collared Woodpecker** *Dryobates cassini*

1 heard from the canopy tower in Manaus on the 19th.

Little Woodpecker *Dryobates passerines*

Seen on a couple of different dates in the river islands on the Solimões upstream from Manaus on the 18th.

Red-stained Woodpecker *Dryobates affinis*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, and also at Amazonia NP.

Red-necked Woodpecker *Campephilus rubricollis*

Nice scope views of this hulking woodpecker at the far end of the airstrip at PiraAçu on the 11th. Recorded on at least three other dates as well.

Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucos*

Seen flying across the Aripuana river on the morning of the 14th.

Lineated Woodpecker *Dryocopus lineatus*

Only one sighting, of a bird that landed in the Golden Parakeet roost tree in the late afternoon of the 20th south of Amazonia NP.

*** Ringed Woodpecker** *Celeus torquatus*

Heard only, and only once, on the Agua Linda trail on the 10th.

Scale-breasted Woodpecker *Celeus grammicus*

Seen or heard on 4 dates at PiraAçu.

Cream-coloured Woodpecker *Celeus flavus*

Recorded on 4 dates. Our best sighting came on the afternoon of the 14th with a pair that flew back and forth several times over the Buiucu river before finally alighting in a tree at the riverside.

Chestnut Woodpecker *Celeus elegans*

We saw a pair from the Paxiuba river on the 16th, and then had great views of a bird with a mixed flock on the Piçarreira trail on the 21st at Amazonia NP.

Yellow-throated Woodpecker *Piculus flavigula*

Seen on 4 different dates at PiraAçu, invariably single birds accompanying mixed species flocks in the subcanopy and middle stories.

*** Golden-green Woodpecker** *Piculus chrysocloros*

Heard only on the 14th.

Spot-breasted Woodpecker *Colaptes punctigula*

A pair seen on a young river island in the Marchantaria complex in the Solimões river on the 18th.

FALCONS & CARACARAS

*** Collared Forest-Falcon** *Micrastur semitorquatus*

Heard at Amazonia NP on the evening of the 21st.

*** Slaty-backed Forest-Falcon** *Micrastur mirandollei*

A counter-singing pair heard on the morning of the 13th on the Castanhal trail refused to budge in response to playback.

*** Barred Forest-Falcon** *Micrastur ruficollis*

Heard on the 14th as we headed upstream on the Paxiuba river toward the Bushbird trail.

Cryptic Forest-Falcon *Micrastur mintoni*

Tough luck with this relatively recently described species on the Buiucu track on the 13th. A pair began to counter-sing in response to tape broadcast at a known territory, and one individual flew in and landed almost directly over the trail, but it was completely blocked by a tree. When we tried to move to see it, the bird flushed and flew back to where its partner was calling. We were trying to call it in again for a better look when the lodge's ATV came down the trail, on its way to pick up members of a group of sport fishermen who were fishing that afternoon on the Buiucu river.

Crested Caracara *Caracara plancus*

Seen around Apuí.

Red-throated Caracara *Ibycter americana*

Four birds seen along the Aripuanã river upstream from the lodge on the morning of the 13th. Also heard on 3 other dates.

Yellow-headed Caracara *Daptrius chimachima*

1 seen in the Marchantaria river island complex on the 18th. Formerly maintained in the genus *Milvago*.

Black Caracara *Daptrius ater*

Recorded on 7 dates.

NEW WORLD PARROTS

*** Scarlet-shouldered Parrotlet** *Touit huetii*

Heard on 3 dates along the rivers at PiraAçu; as is so often the case, the birds were flying somewhere up in the stratosphere and only once did we see even a tiny speck in the sky.

Tui Parakeet *Brotogeris sanctithomae*

We counted 26 birds during our excursion to the Marchantaria river island complex in the Solimões on the 18th.

White-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris versicolurus*

A half dozen individuals seen on a young river island in the Marchantaria complex.

Golden-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris chrysoptera*

Recorded on 11 dates in terra firme forests at PiraAçu, north of Manaus, and at Amazonia NP.

Orange-cheeked Parrot *Pyrilia barrabandi*

A pair that flew over the airstrip at PiraAçu on the 8th turned out to be our only decent sighting of the species, even though we heard the species on 6 other dates at the lodge as they scuttled through the forest at or just below canopy height.

Dusky Parrot *Pionus fuscus*

Singles seen north of Manaus on the 19th and 23rd, including a bird scoped on the latter date.

Blue-headed Parrot *Pionus menstruus*

Common species of forested areas. Recorded on 12 dates.

Short-tailed Parrot *Graydidascalus brachyurus*

16 bird seen on the 18th during our excursion into the river islands at Marchantaria.

Red-lored Parrot *Amazona autumnalis*

5 seen from the MUSA canopy tower at the north edge of Manaus on the afternoon of the 19th. The subspecies here, *diadema*, is sometimes considered a species-level taxon distinct from other forms of Red-lored Parrot.

Mealy Parrot *Amazona farinosa*

Recorded on 4 dates around Manaus and at Amazonia NP.

Kawall's Parrot *Amazona kawalli*

We had sightings on 3 different dates, and recorded it on 4 more dates, all at PiraAçu.

Orange-winged Parrot *Amazona amazonica*

Four birds seen during our Golden Parakeet vigil to the south of Amazonia NP on the afternoon of the 20th.

Red-fan Parrot *Deropitacus accipitrinus*

A trio seen from the MUSA canopy tower in Manaus was our only sighting.

Crimson-bellied Parakeet *Pyrrhura perlata*

Our best sighting came on the Agua Linda trail late in the morning on the 10th. Also recorded on three other dates at PiraAçu, including two or three birds that appeared to be headed to roost in a tree cavity along the Buiucu track.

Santarem Parakeet *Pyrrhura amazonum*

Recorded on 8 dates; most of those records refer to a flock that spends a lot of time in and around the lodge clearing at PiraAçu.

Red-bellied Macaw *Orthopsittacus manilatus*

A pair seen from the tower in Manaus (and the species is abundant in the city) on the 19th, and seen on a couple of dates at Amazonia NP.

Blue-and-yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna*

Seen in small numbers at PiraAçu, mostly in pairs on 4 dates, and also pairs seen in Manaus and Amazonia NP.

Chestnut-fronted Macaw *Ara severus*

A pair seen on the 14th along the Paxiuba river was our only sighting of the species.

Scarlet Macaw *Ara macao*

We saw this spectacular macaw on 8 different dates.

Red-and-green Macaw *Ara chloropterus*

Recorded on 7 dates – seen on 4 – always in pairs.

Golden Parakeet *Guaruba guarouba*

Even though Amazonia National Park is – in my view – one of the top birding sites in the entire Brazilian Amazon and home to a long list of rare specialties, this bird is undoubtedly the main reason for visiting the park. Since the Passaredo airline and its cancellations had left us with just two nights at the park, we opted to use our first afternoon to ‘guarantee’ this species. This meant driving south all the way through the park some

to a site some 115 km away to a roost site known to our local guide, Gilberto. We arrived at the site in plenty of time and settled in to wait for the birds to arrive, a suspenseful vigil that lasted into the latest afternoon hour before we finally heard the frantic screeching of a distant flock of parakeets. After few tense minutes, the birds finally appeared over the horizon, streaking for their roost tree. In all we counted 22 birds that piled into the nearly leafless *pequi* tree (*Caryocar* sp.), where they cavorted for a couple of minutes before filing into several cavities, some birds heading straight in to roost while others allopreened one another in the branches or sat with their heads poking out of the cavities. A fantastic sighting, and well worth the long drive and the anxious wait to see these spectacular large parakeets, endemic to the eastern Amazon in Brazil and threatened due to the cage bird trade and rampant deforestation across their range.

White-eyed Parakeet *Psittacara leucophthalmus*

Recorded on 4 dates. Absent from PiraAçu.

TYPICAL ANTBRIDS

Fasciated Antshrike *Cymbilaimus lineatus*

Heard on 7 dates at PiraAçu, but only seen during our final afternoon session at the Buiçu track on the 16th, where we had a male that showed pretty well high up in vine tangles.

Great Antshrike *Taraba major*

Heard on the 12th near the village at the mouth of the Guariba river.

Glossy Antshrike *Sakesphorus luctuosus*

Heard on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, but we only finally managed to see this endemic antshrike on the afternoon of the 21st, 1 seen in riverine forest at the beginning of the Tracoá trail in Amazonia NP.

Plain-winged Antshrike *Thamnophilus schistaceus*

Seen or heard (mostly heard) on 9 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP.

Mouse-coloured Antshrike *Thamophilus murinus*

Pairs heard counter-singing on 2 dates birding in terra firme forests north of Manaus.

Natterer's Slaty-Antshrike *Thamnophilus stictocephalus*

A pair seen on the Serra do Breu trail on the morning of the 12th was our only sighting of the species, which tends to prefer stunted forests on sandy or rocky substrates.

Amazonian Antshrike *Thamnophilus amazonicus*

A pair seen on the 14th in the seasonally flooded forest at the beginning of the Taboquinha trail at PiraAçu.

Pearly Antshrike *Megastictus margaritatus*

We found a terrific male along the Buiçu track on the 11th, and heard (presumably) its mate calling in the background.

Rondonia Bushbird *Clytoctantes atrogularis*

It took us three attempts, but we finally connected, finding a male of this much-desired species on the Taboquinha trail on the morning of the 16th. Even though it has been found at a handful sites in the southern Brazilian Amazon in the Madeira-Tapajos interfluvium, it remains one of the Amazon's most poorly known birds. We were fortunate enough to locate this territory during our first scouting visit to the lodge in May 2021, and during the same visit we found foraging signs in the slender bamboos that the species prefers, strongly indicating that more territories will be found with further birding coverage at the lodge. This means PiraAçu may well become the most convenient site for the species in the near future, particularly as the main alternate site is under heavy deforestation pressure and may not last much longer.

Saturnine Antshrike *Thamnomanes saturninus*

We encountered pairs with mixed-species feeding flocks in the understorey on 3 different dates at PiraAçu.

Cinereous Antshrike *Thamnomanes caesius*

Seen on 5 dates on the trail system at PiraAçu, where it is a nuclear species in mixed-species feeding flocks in the understorey. Also recorded at Amazonia National Park.

Plain-throated Antwren *Iseria hauxwelli*

Recorded on 4 different dates, but only seen on the Castanhal trail at PiraAçu on the 13th.

Spot-winged Antshrike *Pygiptila stellaris*

Seen or heard on 5 different dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP.

White-eyed Stipplethroat *Epinecrophylla leucophthalma*

Seen on 5 dates in the understorey of terra firme forest at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP.

Pygmy Antwren *Myrmotherula brachyura*

Recorded on 5 dates, and we saw this diminutive canopy antwren on a couple of occasions.

Sclater's Antwren *Myrmotherula sclateri*

Encountered on 8 dates, mostly birds heard in the canopy, but only seen on the 13th.

Amazonian Streaked-Antwren *Myrmotherula multostriata*

Six different encounters on 4 dates, mostly heard, seen on the 14th on the Buiucu river.

White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris*

Recorded on 7 dates at PiraAçu, near Manaus, and Amazonia NP. Of all the *Myrmotherula* antwrens, this is one of the most tolerant of more sparsely wooded habitats, and accordingly we saw them on the Serra do Breu trail, near the beginning of the Taboquinha trail, and in the overgrown quarry at the beginning of the Piçarreira trail at Amazonia NP.

Long-winged Antwren *Myrmotherula longipennis*

Seen on 5 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP, always in pairs accompanying mixed species flocks, usually occupying a slightly lower stratum than the very similar Gray Antwren.

Ihering's Antwren *Myrmotherula iheringi*

A male seen on the Piçarreira trail on the 21st at Amazonia NP was our only sighting of the trip. This is the nominate form, endemic to the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium; the New Species Edition of the Handbook of the Birds of the World, published in 2013, split the *heteropteran* and *oreni* subspecies as species-level taxa, but the major checklists have not followed that treatment.

Gray Antwren *Myrmotherula menetriesii*

Seen on 4 dates, always together with mixed flocks.

Banded Antbird *Dichrozona cincta*

A fabulous encounter with this species, an individual that approached very closely and strolled serenely on the forest floor at our feet. A fascinating species with an intricate plumage pattern that functions remarkably to break up its silhouette, particularly when it stands still in the leaf litter – you can be looking straight at it, and not realize that it's there! Seen on the 15th on the Agua Linda trail at Pousada PiraAçu.

*** Spot-backed Antwren** *Herpsilochmus dorsimaculatus*

Heard from the MUSA canopy tower in Manaus.

Rusty-winged Antwren *Herpsilochmus frater*

Seen on the Serra do Breu trail on the 12th, and heard on the 14th from the Buiucu river. Formerly part of the

Rufous-winged Antwren, which has been split into Rusty-winged and Rufous-margined Antwrens, the latter found in the Atlantic forest of eastern Brazil.

Dot-winged Antwren *Microrhophias quixensis*

Seen on 6 dates at PiraAçu, including family parties seen during every visit to the Taboquinha trail. The birds at PiraAçu pertain to the *bicolor* subspecies, endemic to the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium.

White-fringed Antwren *Formicivora grisea*

1 seen in very young secondary scrub at the edge of the airstrip at PiraAçu on the 11th. Sometimes split as Southern White-fringed Antwren.

Guianan Warbling-Antbird *Hypocnemis cantator*

A pair seen at the edge of forest along the KM 28 track north of Manaus on the 23rd.

Spix's Warbling-Antbird *Hypocnemis striata*

Quite common inside forest, especially near tangles and treefalls, at PiraAçu where we recorded the species on at least 8 dates.

Yellow-browed Antbird *Hypocnemis hypoxantha*

A pair seen on the Serra do Breu downstream from the lodge at PiraAçu was our only sighting. Apparently the birds found in the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium belong to an undescribed taxon, one presumably most closely related to the endemic form found east of the Tapajós, subspecies *ochraceiventer*.

Blackish Antbird *Cercomacroides nigrescens*

Recorded on 4 dates. The species was moved from the genus *Cecromacra* relatively recently.

Gray Antbird *Cercomacra cinerascens*

We recorded this widespread Amazonian antbird on 9 different dates. Although we only saw it a couple of times, the slow raspy *chuk-chrr-chuk-chrr-chuk-chrr* song was heard frequently from vine tangles in the middle storey and subcanopy.

Black-faced Antbird *Myrmoborus myotherinus*

Seen or heard on 5 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP. There is quite a lot of plumage variation (particularly in females) and some difference in the songs across the species' Amazonian range, suggesting that multiple cryptic species are likely contained in *M. myotherinus*. The birds found in the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium belong to the *ochrolaemus* subspecies.

Black-chinned Antbird *Hypocnemoides melanopogon*

Seen on a couple of dates along the Paxiuba river, where it sticks to river edges and along streams in seasonally flooded forest.

Black-and-white Antbird *Myrmochanes hemileucus*

We had terrific views of a pair of these monotypic river island specialists near the edge of a small cultivated plot on a new river island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

Silvered Antbird *Sclateria naevia*

A pair seen along the Buiucu river on the afternoon of the 14th was our only sighting.

*** Black-headed Antbird** *Pernostola rufifrons*

Heard on the 19th on the ZF-2 track north of Manaus.

Rufous-faced Antbird *Myrmelastes rufifacies*

We had a very good sighting of a pair at a dry streambed near the beginning of the Agua Linda trail at PiraAçu on the morning of the 10th. The species is a forest stream specialist, and is endemic to the eastern Amazon east of the Madeira river.

Ferruginous-backed Antbird *Myrmoderus ferrugineus*

This species was silent throughout our trip, but we did manage to find one foraging near the track on the Buiucu trail on the morning of the 11th – a great job by Michael to spot the bird and get us onto it.

* **Black-throated Antbird** *Myrmophylax atrothorax*

1 heard calling from the dense roadside scrub across from the airport in Apuí was the only record of the trip.

* **Rufous-throated Antbird** *Gymnopithys rufigula*

Heard from the ZF-2 track north of Manaus.

Harlequin Antbird *Rhegmatorhina berlepschi*

After trawling for the species all along the Piçarreira trail on the morning of the 21st at Amazonia NP with no results, we were about leave the forest when we stumbled across a small antswarm. To our great joy, there were at least three individuals of this obligate ant-following species attending the antswarm. It took some effort, but in the end we finally all had excellent views of a male and at least fleeting views of the female. The species is endemic to the lower Madeira – Tapajos basin, and is replaced in the middle and upper reaches of the interfluvium by the following species.

White-breasted Antbird *Rhegmatorhina hoffmannsi*

Like the previous species, another endemic obligate antswarm follower. We found a pair at a small antswarm near the beginning of the Agua Linda trail late in the morning on the 15th, but not everyone got views of the birds before they worked their way downslope into a steep gully. We returned to the same spot after lunch, and heard the birds, but they were less responsive and only moved away from us every time we tried to stalk towards them. However, the following morning we connected in style, seeing the species well at an antswarm on the Taboquinha trail. Endemic to the middle and upper Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium.

Spot-backed Antbird *Hylophylax naevius*

A pair seen on the Castanhal trail at PiraAçu on the 13th; also heard on 2 different dates on the Agua Linda trail.

Common Scale-backed Antbird *Willisornis poecilinotus*

Seen on 3 dates at PiraAçu, and heard on 2 others.

Black-spotted Bare-eye *Phlegopsis nigromaculata*

Heard on 3 dates at PiraAçu before we saw one at an antswarm on the Taboquinha trail on the 16th. We also saw a pair at the antswarm on the Piçarreira trail at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

Pale-faced Bare-eye *Phlegopsis borbae*

Absolutely one of the top targets to any trip within its range (endemic to the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium), and this one was double underlined for Dana given its former placement in the monotypic genus *Skutchia* in honour of his good friend Alexander Skutch's contribution to the study of natural history in the American tropics. Thankfully, PiraAçu may well be the most reliable site for this species. We had great views of three birds that rocketed in to check out some speculative playback on the Agua Linda trail on the morning of the 10th. We saw another pair, also on the Agua Linda trail (but almost 2 kilometres from the first spot), on the morning of the 15th; these birds didn't approach as closely, but they stuck around for longer, and one of them waited patiently perching on a vertical stem while the photographers in the group struggled with the very low light of the dim forest understorey. It will always be *Skutchia* to me!

GNATEATERS

Black-bellied Gnateater *Conopophaga melanogaster*

Gilberto took us to a favourite territory for this spectacular gnateater on the afternoon of the 21st, and we proceeded to call in a pair. The birds came in to eat some small worms that Gilberto had dug up during lunchtime. Well worth a mid-afternoon quick-march along a very quiet Capelinha trail at Amazonia NP.

Black-breasted Gnateater *Conopophaga snethlageae*

A bit frustrating – we encountered a vocal pair on both of our morning visits to the Agua Linda trail at PiraAçu, but on both occasions the birds were extremely wary and refused to show well, or for very long. On the 10th we had glimpses of the male as he called angrily (their calls always seem angry, anyway), and on the 16th the female showed better but was still rather flighty. Ranges of the recent split of the Chestnut-belted Gnateater would indicate that the birds at PiraAçu should be Chestnut-belted, but based on our observations they are instead *Conopophaga snethlageae*.

ANTPITTAS

Alta Floresta Antpitta *Hylopezus whittakeri*

We had a terrific sighting of a responsive bird along the Buiucu track on the afternoon of the 16th, though we had to go a short distance ‘off-piste’ to get into a good spot from which to call the bird. If you are looking for Alta Floresta Antpitta, always first try to find an area with a relatively open understorey, ideally with a nice fallen log or two. This taxon was described as a new species to science a few years ago, named in honour of our friend Andy Whittaker; it was previously considered an undescribed subspecies within the Spotted Antpitta complex.

Amazonian Antpitta *Myrmothera berlepschi*

This was another one in Gilberto’s bag of tricks at Amazonia NP. During lunchtime at our lodge near the lodge, Gilberto headed down to a small pond behind the restaurant and returned with a little cup full of worms. By late afternoon the hapless worms found themselves staked out on a branch within a dense tangle, writhing in futility as a two-legged nightmare bounded in to snap them up for afternoon tea. We had terrific views of Amazonian Antpitta as a result of this set-up, something that takes some getting used to saying.

*** Tapajos Antpitta** *Myrmothera subcanescens*

Heard on 6 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP. We gave it several earnest attempts, but had no joy in seeing this very elusive denizen of dense tangles and treefalls within terra firme rainforest.

TAPACULOS

Rusty-belted Tapaculo *Liosceles thoracicus*

Great views of this unique and enigmatic tapaculo of Amazon terra firme rainforest on the morning of the 21st on the Piçarreira trail at Amazonia NP. The haunting song of this hefty tapaculo is a wonderful element of the soundscape in these forests, but on the whole the species was extremely quiet at both the principal sites during our visit.

ANTTHRUSHES

Rufous-capped Antthrush *Formicarius colma*

After hearing the species on 5 different dates at PiraAçu, we finally managed to see one on our final afternoon at the lodge, a bird that rocketed in to check out my whistled imitation of its song. It stopped still on a perch and stayed there long enough for us to train the scope on it.

Black-faced Antthrush *Formicarius analis*

Heard distantly on the Agua Linda trail on the 13th, and then seen on the 21st at Amazonia NP on the Piçarreira trail.

WOODCREEPERS

Spot-throated Woodcreeper *Certhiasomus stictolaemus*

1 seen with a mixed flock near the far end of the Agua Linda trail at PiraAçu on the morning of the 10th.

Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus*

Seen or heard on 8 dates.

Long-tailed Woodcreeper *Deconychura longicauda*

A pair seen on the Taboquinha trail at PiraAçu on our first morning at the lodge.

*** White-chinned Woodcreeper** *Dendrocincla merula*

Heard on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, but not seen.

Plain-brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*

1 seen attending an army ant swarm at the Piçarreira trail on the 21st at Amazonia NP.

Wedge-billed Woodcreeper *Glyphorhynchus spirurus*

Heard a few times at PiraAçu, but only seen at Amazonia NP and near Manaus.

*** Cinnamon-throated Woodcreeper** *Dendrexetastes rufigula*

Heard on a couple of occasions around Manaus.

Long-billed Woodcreeper *Nasica longirostris*

Seen along the Buiúçu river on the 14th, and at the Tracoá trail at Amazonia NP on the 21st. A classic Amazonian bird and always a pleasure to see.

Amazonian Barred-Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes certhia*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, and heard on several other occasions. The subspecies here is the Madeira – Tapajos endemic *concolor* race.

Hoffmanns's Woodcreeper *Dendrocolaptes hoffmannsi*

We saw this endemic woodcreeper on 3 occasions at PiraAçu, and also once on the Piçarreira trail at Amazonia NP. Endemic to the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium.

Uniform Woodcreeper *Hylexetastes uniformis*

We encountered this hulking woodcreeper twice at PiraAçu: one on our first morning on the Taboquinha trail; and a pair in the late afternoon of the 13th on the Buiúçu track. This scarce woodcreeper is restricted to the southern Amazon between the Madeira and the Xingu rivers.

Striped Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus obsoletus*

A specialist of seasonally flooded forests, recorded on 3 dates.

Chestnut-rumped Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus pardalotus*

The common woodcreeper of terra firme middle and understorey in the Guianan Shield forests, and we recorded the species on 3 dates around Manaus, including a couple of sightings.

Elegant Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus elegans*

Recorded on a near daily basis on the trail system at PiraAçu. The nominate *elegans* race.

Buff-throated Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus guttatus*

Seen or heard on 7 dates.

Straight-billed Woodcreeper *Dendroplex picus*

Seen on the 14th and heard on a couple of other dates.

Curve-billed Scythebill *Campylorhamphus procurvoides*

Heard on 3 dates before we finally saw the species on the Buiúçu track on the afternoon of the 13th. Also seen on the 21st at Amazonia NP, and on the 23rd north of Manaus. The birds at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP refer to

the *probatus* subspecies (sometimes treated as a species level taxon, Rondonia Scythebill), while the birds north of Manaus are the nominate form (called Curve-billed Scythebill when the various forms are split).

Guianan Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes albolineatus*

A Guianan Shield specialty, heard from the MUSA canopy tower and later seen north of Manaus on the 23rd.

Dusky-capped Woodcreeper *Lepidocolaptes fuscicapillus*

A pair seen with a mixed flock on our first afternoon at the lodge along the airstrip at PiraAçu. Subsequently heard on a couple of other dates.

OVENBIRDS

Plain Xenops *Xenops minutus*

Singles birds seen on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Slender-billed Xenops *Xenops tenuirostris*

1 with a big mixed flock on our first afternoon at the lodge along the airstrip at PiraAçu.

Lesser Hornero *Furnarius minor*

1 seen on a new river island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

Rufous-rumped Foliage-gleaner *Philydor erythrocercum*

Seen on 5 dates on the trails at PiraAçu, where it is common constituent of mixed species feeding flocks.

Rufous-tailed Foliage-gleaner *Anabacerthia ruficaudata*

Singles seen with mixed flocks at PiraAçu on a couple of dates.

Chestnut-winged Hookbill *Ancistrops strigilatus*

Seen on 5 dates at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP, typically accompanying mixed flocks in the subcanopy.

Buff-throated Foliage-gleaner *Automolus ochrolaemus*

A responsive bird seen in the undergrowth along the Buiucu track on the 11th.

Pará Foliage-gleaner *Automolus paraensis*

1 seen with a mixed flock along the Agua Linda trail on the 15th. The bird was silent to begin with, but we glimpsed it at the edges of the flock, calling it in with playback. This wound the bird up a bit, and it began calling incessantly, eventually allowing us to get decent views of it perched. Endemic to the southern Brazilian Amazon east of the Madeira river.

Parker's Spinetail *Cranioleuca vulpina*

A pair seen on a river island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

*** Speckled Spinetail** *Cranioleuca gutturata*

Heard from the Aripuanã river on the 12th.

Yellow-chinned Spinetail *Certhiaxis cinnamomeus*

Three birds seen on river islands in the Solimões on the 18th.

Red-and-white Spinetail *Certhiaxis mustelinus*

We found a single individual of this river island specialist in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

White-bellied Spinetail *Mazaria propinqua*

We had great views of a pair near a small cultivated patch on a young river island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

*** Plain-crowned Spinetail** *Synallaxis gujanensis*

Heard only, at the very end of the day along the Transamazonica highway in Amazonia NP on the 21st.

Dark-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis albigularis*

Three individuals seen in successional growth on a young river islands in the Marchantaria complex.

MANAKINS

Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin *Tyranneutes stolzmanni*

Seen or (especially) heard on a daily basis on the trails at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP. My eBird records from the trip show that we recorded a total of 49 individuals over the course of the trip!

Tiny Tyrant-Manakin *Tyranneutes virescens*

We recorded this inconspicuous little manakin on 2 dates north of Manaus, where it replaces the previous species on the Guianan Shield.

*** Blue-backed Manakin** *Chiroxiphia pareola*

Heard on the 10th.

Snow-capped Manakin *Lepidothrix nattereri*

Seen or heard on 5 dates, including a nice male well seen on the morning of the 10th on the Agua Linda trail.

*** White-fronted Manakin** *Lepidothrix serena*

Heard on the 19th on the ZF-2 track north of Manaus.

Flame-crowned Manakin *Heterocercus linteatus*

Seen on the Jatuarana trail at PiraAçu on the 14th.

White-crowned Manakin *Pseudopipra pipra*

Seen on the Serra do Breu trail on the 12th, and also north of Manaus on the track at KM 28 on the final morning.

Golden-headed Manakin *Ceratopipra erythrocephala*

Seen on 2 dates north of Manaus .

Red-headed Manakin *Ceratopipra rubrocapilla*

Recorded on 7 dates. Seen well at a lek on the Agua Linda trail on the 10th.

COTINGAS

*** Guianan Red-Cotinga** *Phoenicircus carnifex*

Heard on the ZF-2 track while we searched for Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant.

Black-necked Red-Cotinga *Phoenicircus nigricollis*

An adult male seen on the Agua Linda trail on the 10th, and an immature male seen the following morning on the Buiucu track.

Amazonian Umbrellabird *Cephalopterus ornatus*

Seen on 4 dates at PiraAçu, all sightings of birds flying across the Aripuanã river, or perched up in the canopy alongside the river.

*** Spangled Cotinga** *Cotinga cayana*

Heard on several occasions at PiraAçu, but we were always inside forest when we heard its soft, short *who* call from in the canopy. Surprisingly, we did not see the species even once during the trip.

Screaming Piha *Lipaugus vociferans*

Recorded pretty much every day that we birded in terra firme forest.

Pompadour Cotinga *Xipholena punicea*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu – an immature male in the canopy on the Taboquinha trail on the 9th, and a female along the airstrip on the 11th. Heard on a couple of subsequent dates.

White-tailed Cotinga *Xipholena lamellipennis*

This endemic of the lower reaches of the Madeira – Tapajos and eastern Brazilian Amazon was a big target for us at Amazonia NP. It also turned out to be one of the very first birds that our local guide Gilberto produced for us, a male that appeared on cue in the very treetop he said it would! A fantastic start to what turned out to be a remarkable afternoon (followed by Fiery-tailed Aowl, Brown-chested Barbet, Golden Parakeet).

TITYRAS & ALLIES

White-tailed Tityra *Tityra leucura*

Hard to believe I'm writing this species name into our annotated species list. We found a male of this essentially unknown species together with a mixed species flock at the edge of the forest along the airstrip at PiraAçu during our first afternoon session at the lodge on September 8th. We photographed and filmed the bird as it foraged sluggishly at mid-levels, at first with the flock, and then on its own as it stayed behind while most of the flock moved on. White-tailed Tityra is known from a single specimen collected in 1829 and from a sighting made by Andy Whittaker along the Rio Roosevelt in 2006. Our bird matched Whittaker's description of the bird seen in 2006 almost exactly, and the location of his sighting is just 100 km south-west of PiraAçu. We urge future visitors to the region to watch closely for this species in mixed species flocks, and to suppress the instinct to pass over any tityras encounters, as birders often do when they are searching for rarer birds.

Masked Tityra *Tityra semifasciata*

We saw a pair on the airstrip at PiraAçu on the 8th.

Olivaceous Schiffornis *Schiffornis olivacea*

Decent views of a responsive bird on the track at KM 28 north of Manaus.

Brown-winged Schiffornis *Schiffornis turdine*

Recorded on 4 dates, including a pair sitting calmly together on the same branch on the Agua Linda trail on the 15th.

Cinereous Mourner *Laniocera hypopyrra*

Our only sighting came on the 13th on the Castanhil trail at PiraAçu.

White-browed Purpleuft *Iodopleura isabellae*

Seen on the 8th and the 14th at PiraAçu.

Cinereous Becard *Pachyramphus rufus*

1 at the track at KM 28 north of Manaus on the 23rd was our only sighting.

Chestnut-crowned Becard *Pachyramphus castaneus*

Seen only on the Castanhil trail at PiraAçu, a bird accompanying a mixed flock in the canopy.

*** Black-capped Becard** *Pachyramphus marginatus*

The most frequently encountered becard during the tour, heard on 5 dates but we never actually saw it!

Glossy-backed Becard *Pachyramphus surinamus*

We had pairs of this scarce, attractive becard on 2 dates north of Manaus, including from the MUSA canopy tower.

Pink-throated Becard *Pachyramphus minor*

Seen on the 20th and 21st at Amazonia NP.

ROYAL FLYCATCHERS & ALLIES

* **Ruddy-tailed Flycatcher** *Terenotriccus erythrurus*

Heard on 4 dates.

TYRANT FLYCATCHERS

* **Wing-barred Piprites** *Piprites chloris*

Recorded on 5 dates on the trail system at PiraAçu.

Cinnamon Manakin-Tyrant *Neopipo cinnamomea*

Seen and photographed on the Taboquinha trail on the morning of the 9th, and heard on the same trail again on the 16th. I've always preferred the more evocative 'Cinnamon Neopipo' as the common name for this species... what the heck is a manakin-tyrant, anyway?

* **Golden-crowned Spadebill** *Platyrinchus coronatus*

Heard and glimpsed on the Jatuarana trail on the 12th.

White-crested Spadebill *Platyrinchus platyrhynchos*

Seen on the Agua Linda trail and heard on a couple of other occasions.

Ochre-bellied Flycatcher *Mionectes oleaginous*

Recorded on 2 dates at PiraAçu.

McConnell's Flycatcher *Mionectes macconnelli*

1 seen together with a mixed flock on the 23rd during our final morning's birding north of Manaus.

Short-tailed Pygmy-Tyrant *Myiornis ecaudatus*

Recorded on at least 7 dates, including several sightings. Together with the Black-capped Pygmy-Tyrant of north S. America, this little guy holds the title of the smallest passerine in the world!

Snethlage's Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus minor*

Recorded just about every day on the trail system at PiraAçu, and also at least once at Amazonia NP.

Boat-billed Tody-Tyrant *Hemitriccus josephinae*

This rarity of Guianan Shield terra firme had been re-discovered near Manaus just a month prior to our visit. Since at first we planned to have just a morning and an afternoon of birding around Manaus between our flights, going to have a look for this species (a lifer for me) didn't really cross my mind. However, once the Passaredo airline cancelled our flights, it became a possibility, one that was reinforced when we happened to meet up with Mario Cohn-Haft on the river islands near Manaus. Mario gave us a couple of valuable tips on seeing the bird, and armed with that information we decided to go look for the birds the following day. We found two different individuals on the ZF-2 track, not too far from one another; the first bird behaved exactly as Mario said it might, refusing to sit still very long and often drifting away for short periods, though we managed glimpses. The second individual was on much better behaviour, working calmly along the forest edge and showing well for excellent views and a few photos.

* **Zimmer's Tody-Tyrant** *Hemitriccus minimus*

We heard this species on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Buff-cheeked Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilatriccus senex*

Seen well on the 14th and 15th at PiraAçu, near the beginning of the Taboquinha and Agua Linda trails, respectively. The species is quite common along the Aripuanã and its tributaries at PiraAçu, and we heard it on

a couple of other occasions. Unless one knows its frog-like voice, this can be a very inconspicuous species, as its history suggests: first discovered to science in the 1830s, the bird went unnoticed until 1993, when rediscovered along the lower Madeira river. With further fieldwork in the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium, the species has actually turned out to be quite common in appropriate habitats (vine tangles in slightly stunted forests, either seasonally flooded igapó, or it sandy soil campinaranas) throughout the region. The species likely isn't a true *Poecilatriccus*, perhaps belonging to *Hemitriccus* (tody-tyrants) or even *Oncostoma* (bentbills).

Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilatriccus latirostris*

A pair seen in scrub along the airstrip on the 11th was the first record for PiraAçu.

Spotted Tody-Flycatcher *Todirostrum maculatum*

Heard on several dates at PiraAçu along rivers, but we didn't actually see the species until the 18th on the river islands near Manaus.

*** Painted Tody-Flycatcher** *Todirostrum pictum*

Heard on a couple of dates around Manaus.

Olivaceous Flatbill *Rhynchocyclus olivaceous*

Lone birds together with mixed flocks on the 13th at PiraAçu (Buiucu trail) and the 21st at Amazonia NP (Piçarreira trail). The taxonomy of birds in the Madeira – Tapajois is a bit unclear, but they are likely the *sordidus* subspecies of the “eastern” group of Olivaceous Flatbills.

Yellow-margined Flycatcher *Tolmomyias assimilis*

Recorded on 7 dates. The birds seen at PiraAçu on a couple of occasions, typically with mixed flocks in the canopy, are presumed to belong to the nominate form. The individual we saw with a large canopy flock north of Manaus on our final morning would be the Guianan Shield form, ssp. *examinatus*.

Gray-crowned Flycatcher *Tolmomyias poliocephalus*

Heard on multiple dates, and seen on the Serra do Breu trail on the 12th.

White-lored Tyrannulet *Ornithion inerme*

Seen or heard on 5 different dates.

Southern Beardless-Tyrannulet *Camptostoma obsoletum*

Seen on just 2 dates.

Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet *Tyrannulus elatus*

Seen on our first afternoon session at PiraAçu, and heard on multiple subsequent dates – its catchy little *free-beer* call is ubiquitous up in the canopy, even during the hottest hours of the day.

Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii*

Heard on 8 different dates, but actually only seen during our first afternoon at Amazonia NP on the 20th.

Gray (Amazonian) Elaenia *Myiopagis caniceps*

Heard in the canopy on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, and a pair seen with a mixed flock north of Manaus on the 23rd. The Amazonian form has been split in Clements / eBird and is now called Amazonian Elaenia *M. cinerea*.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia *Elaenia flavogaster*

Seen at the Golden Parakeet stakeout on the afternoon of the 20th.

River Tyrannulet *Serpophaga hypoleuca*

Pairs seen on a couple of different young river islands in the Marchantaria complex near Manaus on the 18th.

Chico's Tyrannulet *Zimmerius chicomendesi*

We saw this recently described species at PiraAçu in stunted hilltop forest at the Serra do Breu downstream

from the lodge. Admittedly, we didn't have the best views as the bird kept its distance, only approaching a bit closer to check out pygmy-owl imitations, but we did see the *Zimmerius* shape, the red bill, and the yellowish edging on the wings.

Guianan Tyrannulet *Zimmerius acer*

Seen from the tower in Manaus on the 19th.

*** Slender-footed Tyrannulet** *Zimmerius gracilipes*

Heard at PiraAçu.

Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant *Stigmatura napensis*

1 seen on a young river island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th. The species has recently been split into two different species, the river island specialist Lesser Wagtail-Tyrant and the very similar Bahia Wagtail-Tyrant of the arid caatinga in North-east Brazil (a habitat that could not possibly be more different!).

Euler's Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus euleri*

Recorded on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Amazonian Scrub-Flycatcher *Sublegatus obscurior*

Seen on 2 dates – at PiraAçu on the Agua Linda trail in a canopy gap on the 10th; and on the 21st at Amazonia NP on the Piçarreira trail.

Riverside Tyrant *Knipolegus orenocensis*

We had pairs on two different river islands in the Marchantaria island complex on the 18th.

Drab Water-Tyrant *Ochthornis littoralis*

Seen on a daily basis along the edges of the rivers at PiraAçu.

Little Ground-Tyrant *Syrtidicola fluviatilis*

1 seen running to and fro on a sandbar island in the Aripuanã downstream from the mouth of the Paxiuba. The species is at least a partial migrant, as it moves in and out of the south-central Brazilian Amazon as the water levels fluctuate and its seasonal river island habitats are revealed and then hidden by the flood regime.

Rufous-tailed Flatbill *Ramphotricon ruficauda*

Recorded on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Cinnamon Attila *Attila cinnamomea*

Recorded on 3 dates; our only sighting came on the 20th, with a pair seen in a small patch of riparian woodland while we waited for the Golden Parakeets to arrive to their roost tree.

Bright-rumped Attila *Attila spadiceus*

Seen at PiraAçu on the 13th; heard on several other occasions.

Todd's Sirystes *Sirystes subcanescens*

1 with a big canopy flock on the morning of the 23rd.

Grayish Mourner *Rhytipterna simplex*

Seen or heard on 8 different dates.

Short-crested Flycatcher *Myiarchus ferox*

Recorded on just 5 dates.

Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*

Seen or heard on only 4 dates.

Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarynchus pitangua*

Heard on the 8th and seen on the 13th at PiraAçu.

Rusty-margined Flycatcher *Myiozetetes cayanensis*

A pair seen on the afternoon of the 20th on our way to the Golden Parakeet roost was our only encounter.

Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*

1 during our trip into the Marchantaria river islands on the 18th.

Dusky-chested Flycatcher *Myiozetetes luteiventris*

Recorded on 5 dates, but only seen on the 20th at Amazonia NP.

Yellow-throated Flycatcher *Conopias parvus*

Recorded on 5 dates at PiraAçu, and also seen at the MUSA canopy tower in Manaus. Typically found with canopy flocks, where it is a nuclear species and often a flock leader.

Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastes maculatus*

Seen on a young river island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

Piratic Flycatcher *Legatus leucophaeus*

Recorded on 5 occasions, but only actually seen once, at Amazonia NP on the 20th.

Variegated Flycatcher *Empidonomus varius*

Seen at the far end of the airstrip at PiraAçu on the 8th and 9th, but nowhere else during the trip.

Sulphury Flycatcher *Tyrannopsis sulphurea*

We had this specialist of *Mauritia* palm swamps on the afternoon of the 20th near the Golden Parakeet stakeout.

White-throated Kingbird *Tyrannus albogularis*

1 seen on river islands at Marchantaria on the 18th.

Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*

Seen on 7 dates.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, but the majority of the population that winters in the Amazon had probably already moved to southern and eastern South America to breed.

VIREOS & ALLIES

*** Rufous-browed Peppershrike** *Cyclarhis gujanensis*

Heard on at least 7 dates, but we didn't make much of an effort to see any of them and the species stays on the 'heard only' list.

Gray-chested Greenlet *Hylophilus semicinereus*

The ringing song of this bird of river edges and flooded forests was a frequent companion during our river trips at PiraAçu; heard on at least 8 dates, and seen on a couple of occasions.

*** Lemon-chested Greenlet** *Hylophilus thoracicus*

Heard on the 23rd north of Manaus.

Slaty-capped Shrike-Vireo *Vireolanius leucotis*

Seen on the Castanhal trail at PiraAçu on the 13th and heard on 3 or 4 further occasions.

Tawny-crowned Greenlet *Tunchiornis ochraceiceps*

Heard with mixed flocks on the Agua Linda trail on the 10th and 15th, and finally seen on the Piçarreira trail at

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Amazonia NP on the 21st. Tawny-crowned Greenlet is likely to be split in the future: the birds found south of the Amazon and east of the Madeira belong to the dark-eyed “Red-fronted” group. The song of the Madeira – Tapajos birds differs slightly from populations further east.

Buff-cheeked Greenlet *Pachysylvia muscicapina*

Seen or heard on 9 dates.

Chivi Vireo *Vireo chivi*

Recorded on 5 dates.

DONACOBIUS

Black-capped Donacobius *Donacobius atricapilla*

1 seen on a young river island at Marchantaria was our only sighting.

SWALLOWS

Black-collared Swallow *Pygochelidon melanoleuca*

Seen daily along the Aripuanã river at PiraAçu, especially in the rockier stretches where we typically counted flocks of a dozen birds or so at a time.

White-banded Swallow *Atticora fasciata*

Recorded almost daily at PiraAçu, and also in small numbers at Amazonia NP.

Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*

Seen on 8 dates.

Purple Martin *Progne subis*

A male and female seen north of Manaus on the 23rd.

Gray-breasted Martin *Progne chalybea*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu.

Brown-chested Martin *Progne tapera*

Seen almost daily at PiraAçu, and also at Marchantaria on the 18th.

White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer*

Seen daily at PiraAçu, where numerous along the rivers.

Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica*

Recorded on the 10th on the Aripuana river.

GNATCATCHERS

*** Long-billed Gnatwren** *Ramphocaenus melanurus*

Heard at PiraAçu and also north of Manaus.

Klages's Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila paraensis*

1 seen with a big canopy flock on the Agua Linda trail on the 15th. Endemic to the southeastern Brazilian Amazon east of the Madeira.

WRENS

*** Scaly-breasted Wren** *Microcerculus marginatus*

Heard on the 10th on the Agua Linda trail, but unfortunately it wouldn't come in to grace us with a view.

Tooth-billed Wren *Odontorchilus cinereus*

Pairs with mixed flocks on the Agua Linda and Castanhal trails at PiraAçu.

House Wren *Troglodytes aedon*

Recorded on 3 dates.

* **Thrush-like Wren** *Campylorhynchus turdinus*

Heard on the 13th at PiraAçu.

Moustached Wren *Pheugopedius genibarbis*

Recorded on 5 dates, but only seen on the 20th near the Golden Parakeet stakeout.

Coraya Wren *Pheugopedius coraya*

1 showed well in the undergrowth at the roadside on the KM 28 track north of the Manaus on the 23rd.

Buff-breasted Wren *Cantorchilus leucotis*

Heard almost daily at PiraAçu (a dueting pair near the lodge pier), and seen near Amazonia NP on the 20th.

Musician Wren *Cyphorhinus arada*

Heard on the 9th and 11th on the Buiucu track, and good views of a responsive bird in the undergrowth on the Agua Linda trail on the 10th. The birds here belong to the *interpositus* subspecies; the Brazilian Ornithological Committee has split the Musician Wren into six different species-level taxa, and they suggest the English name Rondonia Wren for *Cyphorhinus interpositus*.

THRUSHES

* **Hauxwell's Thrush** *Turdus hauxwelli*

Heard on the Tracoá trail at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

OLD WORLD SPARROWS

House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*

Seen in Itaituba on the 20th.

FINCHES

Golden-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia chrysopasta*

Seen around Manaus on the 19th from the MUSA canopy tower, and on the 23rd north of the city.

Thick-billed Euphonia *Euphonia lanirostris*

Seen at PiraAçu on the 17th and Amazonia NP on the 21st.

* **Golden-sided Euphonia** *Euphonia cayennensis*

Heard north of Manaus on the 23rd.

Rufous-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia rufiventris*

Seen or heard on 6 dates at PiraAçu.

NEW WORLD SPARROWS

Yellow-browed Sparrow *Ammodramus aurifrons*

Seen on a couple of dates around PiraAçu; also at Marchantaria, in Itaituba, and at our lodge outside Amazonia NP.

* **Pectoral Sparrow** *Arremon taciturnus*

Heard at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

NEW WORLD BLACKBIRDS

Red-breasted Meadowlark *Leistes militaris*

Seen on 6 dates, typically in small numbers except for a flock of about a dozen birds seen on the 8th en route to PiraAçu.

*** Green Oropendola** *Psarocolius viridis*

Heard on the 13th.

Crested Oropendola *Psarocolius decumanus*

Singles seen in Manaus (on the 18th) and Amazonia NP (the 21st) were our only records.

Olive Oropendola *Psarocolius bifasciatus*

Nice views of two or three birds feeding relatively low down inside the forest on the Castanhal trail on the 13th. Heard on another couple of occasions at PiraAçu.

Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*

Seen on 7 dates.

*** Red-rumped Cacique** *Cacicus haemorrhous*

Heard only, at PiraAçu and Amazonia NP.

Epaulet Oriole *Icterus cayanensis*

A pair seen during our first afternoon birding session on the runway at PiraAçu on the 8th.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*

Seen only on the river islands at Marchantaria.

Giant Cowbird *Molothrus oryzivorus*

Seen almost every day at PiraAçu along the Aripuanã river.

Oriole Blackbird *Gymnomystax mexicanus*

2 seen on a river island dominated by young *Cecropia* trees in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Chrysomus icterocephalus*

We had 8 birds on the river islands in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

NEW WORLD WARBLERS

Masked Yellowthroat *Geothlypis aequinoctialis*

1 on the young river islands in the Marchantaria complex.

MITROSPINGID TANAGERS

Red-billed Pied Tanager *Lamprospiza melanoleuca*

Recorded on 5 different dates, but we only saw this tanager of the monotypic *Lamprospiza* genus (though one wonders if Cherry-throated Tanagers might not also be *Lamprospiza*?) on the 10th on the Agua Linda trail, and also on the 23rd north of Manaus at KM 28.

CARDINAL GROSBEAKS

Red-crowned Ant-Tanager *Habia rubica*

Pairs seen with mixed flocks in the understorey at PiraAçu on the 15th, and at Amazonia NP on the 21st. The birds of the Madeira – Tapajos interfluvium belong to the “Scarlet-throated” group.

*** Yellow-green Grosbeak** *Caryothraustes canadensis*

Heard north of Manaus.

Red-and-black Grosbeak *Periporphyrus erythromelas*

We encountered a spectacular male in a dense thicket of caranaí palms (*Lepidocaryum tenue*) on the Agua Linda trail on the 10th, and heard a second bird calling nearby as well. I also bumped into another male in a stand of caranaí palms on the same trail on the 15th as I tried to track down some White-breasted Antbirds. This handsome grosbeak of deep terra firme forest has long been considered a specialty of the Guianan Shield, but with more fieldwork in the Madeira – Tapajos basin we have found that it occurs here at least in small numbers.

Rose-breasted Chat *Granatellus pelzelni*

A female seen on the Buiucu trail on the 9th actually turned out to be our only sighting of this attractive species.

*** Amazonian Grosbeak** *Cyanoloxia rothschildii*

Heard only, on a couple of dates.

TANAGERS & ALLIES

Red-capped Cardinal *Paroaria gularis*

A pair seen on the Paxiuba on the 16th was our only sighting.

Flame-crested Tanager *Loriotus cristatus*

Seen on a couple of dates.

Fulvous-crested Tanager *Tachyphonus surinamus*

Seen or heard on 6 dates.

White-lined Tanager *Tachyphonus rufus*

A pair seen along the runway at PiraAçu on our first afternoon session at the lodge.

White-winged Shrike-Tanager *Lanio versicolor*

Recorded on 3 occasions, all on the Agua Linda trail at PiraAçu.

Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo*

Seen on 6 dates.

Blue-gray Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*

We only had this widespread tanager on 3 dates.

Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*

Seen on 4 dates.

Dotted Tanager *Ixothraupis varia*

After hearing this scarce species on a couple of dates at PiraAçu, we finally had good views of a male late on the morning of the 15th on the Agua Linda trail when a succession of gaudy tanagers moved through a gap in the subcanopy, all showing quite well.

Spotted Tanager *Ixothraupis punctatus*

A trio with a tanager flock on the Agua Linda trail on the 15th, and a pair seen later in the trip north of Manaus.

Turquoise Tanager *Tangara mexicana*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu.

Paradise Tanager *Tangara chilensis*

Seen or heard on 5 different dates.

Opal-rumped Tanager *Tangara velia*

Seen on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Bay-headed Tanager *Tangara gyrola*

Singles seen with two different canopy flocks on the Agua Linda trail on the 15th.

Green-and-gold Tanager *Tangara schrankii*

1 with a tanager flock on the Agua Linda trail on the 15th.

Swallow Tanager *Tersina viridis*

Recorded on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Black-faced Dacnis *Dacnis lineata*

A pair seen on the Agua Linda trail on the 15th.

Blue Dacnis *Dacnis cayana*

Seen on 4 dates.

Short-billed Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes nitidus*

Pairs seen on 3 different dates.

Red-legged Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes cyaneus*

4 birds north of Manaus at KM 28 on the 23rd.

Purple Honeycreeper *Cyanerpes caeruleus*

Seen on 3 dates at PiraAçu.

Green Honeycreeper *Chlorophanes spiza*

Seen on the 14th and 15th at PiraAçu, and also on the 23rd north of Manaus.

Yellow-backed Tanager *Hemithraupis flavicollis*

Seen on the airstrip at PiraAçu on the 8th, and on the Castanhal trail on the 13th.

Bicolored Conebill *Conirostrum bicolor*

Pair seen on a couple of different river islands in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

Orange-fronted Yellow-Finch *Sicalis columbiana*

3 or 4 birds seen in the Marchantaria complex.

Blue-black Grassquit *Volatinia jacarina*

1 at KM 28 north of Manaus on the 23rd was our only sighting.

Chestnut-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila castaneiventris*

We had a handful on the sandbar island in the Aripuana below the mouth of the Paxiuba on the afternoon of the 10th; a flock of 30+ birds seen on an island in the Marchantaria complex on the 18th.

Chestnut-bellied Seed-Finch *Sporophila angolensis*

A male seen on the 14th along the Aripuana river.

Yellow-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila nigricollis*

1 on the sandbar island in the Aripuana on the afternoon of the 10th.

Buff-throated Saltator *Saltator maximus*

Recorded on 4 dates.

Bluish-gray Saltator *Saltator coerulescens*

1 in Manaus on the afternoon of the 18th as we searched for Pied Tamarins. Previously known as Grayish Saltator.

Slate-colored Grosbeak *Saltator grossus*

Recorded on 4 dates; seen on the 14th on the Taboquinha trail.

**** 441 bird species recorded ****

MAMMALS

PACA & AGOUTIS

Capybara *Hydrochoerus hydrochaeris*

Seen on four dates along the Aripuana river.

Agouti

SQUIRRELS

Southern Amazon Red Squirrel *Sciurus spadiceus*

Seen on the 14th when we spooked one that was on the ground near the river's edge during our boat trip up the Buiucu. Also seen at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

PRIMATES

Golden-white Tassel-ear Marmoset *Mico chrysoleucus*

We had a great encounter with these terrific little monkeys along the track between the lodge and the airstrip at PiraAçu on the afternoon of the 14th. A micro-endemic with its range delimited by the Aripuanã and the Sucunduri river to the east, at least in the southern reaches of its range. The northern range limits are still not fully understood. At PiraAçu, *M. chrysoleucus* is replaced on the west bank of the Guariba by *Mico intermedius*, but we haven't yet determined which *Mico* species is found between the Aripuanã and the Guariba.

Bare-eared Squirrel Monkey *Saimiri ustus*

Seen together with Brown Capuchins in the stunted forest atop the Serra do Bréu on the 12th.

Brown Capuchin *Sapajus apella*

Seen on a couple of dates at PiraAçu.

Ashy Black Titi Monkey *Plecturocebus cinerascens*

Seen on the 8th and the 10th at the airstrip at PiraAçu. Endemic to the area between the Aripuanã and the Juruena rivers.

*** Hoffmans's Titi Monkey** *Plecturocebus hoffmannsi*

Heard at Amazonia NP on the 20th.

Red-nosed Bearded Saki Monkey *Chiropotes albinasus*

Seen on 4 different dates at PiraAçu, including really fantastic sightings of active troops on the 10th on the Agua Linda trail, and the 11th on the Buiucu trail. Another endemic species, found only in the southern Brazilian Amazon east of the Madeira.

Amazon Black Howler Monkey *Alouatta nigerrima*

A group of a half dozen seen on the Piçarreira trail at Amazonia NP on the 21st.



Amazon Black Howler Monkey

Black-faced Spider Monkey *Ateles chamek*

A troop of a dozen or more seen on the 12th at PiraAçu.

Common Woolly Monkey *Lagothrix lagotricha*

Great sightings of large troops of these spectacular, large primates at PiraAçu on the 10th and 11th.

BATS

Proboscis Bat *Rhynchonycteris naso*

Seen along the Paxiuba river on the 9th.

FELIDS

Ocelot *Leopardus pardalis*

Unfortunately, only seen by Gilberto and myself on the Piçarreira trail at Amazonia NP on the 21st. We were positioned, waiting for a Rusty-belted Tapaculo to show, when Gilberto motioned that something was coming down the trail in front of us; the cat turned around, though, before the rest of us could see it.

MUSTELIDS

Tayra *Eira Barbara*

Seen on the 12th at PiraAçu and at Amazonia NP on the 21st.

Giant Otter *Pteronura brasiliensis*

A group of 5 individuals seen around the sandbar islands and associated rapids in the Aripuana river below the mouth of the Paxiuba.

TAPIRS

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Brazilian Tapir *Tapirus terrestris*

1 that I alone saw on the PiraAçu airstrip at the end of the day on the 8th after the others had decided to grab a ride back to the lodge turned out to be the only encounter of the trip.

DEER

Red Brocket Deer *Mazama americana*

1 at PiraAçu on the 12th.

CETECEANS

Amazon River Dolphin *Inia geoffrensis*

Good views on a couple of dates at PiraAçu on the Aripuanã river, including a pair with a calf that we watched from the trailhead of the Agua Linda trail on the 15th. The water was clear enough in spots that we were able to see the animals even as they swam underwater and fished nearby us for at least ten minutes.