

ORNITHOLIDAYS' TOUR TO CHILE
Birds & Wine

15 November – 01 December 2008



Leaders: Roberto Donoso and Richard Coomber

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A Personal Diary

Saturday, 15 November

Our 2008 Ornitholidays' party to Chile gathered at Heathrow's Terminal 4 for the TAM Airlines overnight flight to Santiago, via São Paulo, Brazil.

Sunday, 16 November

Our arrival at 7am (local time -2 hrs GMT) was on schedule after a smooth flight in a very new Airbus A330. The transfer from Terminals 1 to 2 was relatively easy and on reaching the departure gate we were issued with boarding passes for our onward flight to Santiago. The aircraft this time was an equally new Boeing 777. We left about half an hour late, which was time we never made up.

Once we were away from the sprawl of São Paulo we were above the clouds until we crossed into Argentinean airspace. The views below were of an essentially brown landscape, except for the patches of irrigation. Very soon after passing over the western city of Mendoza we reached the foothills of the Andes and moments later we were gazing down and across to the snow-capped peaks and glaciers of the magnificent Andes – the views from either side of the aircraft were fantastic.

After landing at Santiago we passed through immigration and then had an anxious wait for our bags, which were amongst the last to appear. As soon as we were through the final security check we were met by the beaming smile of Roberto, one of Fantastico Sur's main leaders. We should have had Enrique, who has guided some of the previous Ornitholidays' tours, but he suffered a shoulder problem that requires surgery a few days ago.

So our tour began, but not by going straight to the coast as per the brochure, but to the Maipo Valley and our first wine experience. Driving along in our air-conditioned bus a few birds were seen by those who didn't nod off, for by this time it was getting on for 2 o'clock in the afternoon, but our body clocks said it was 5pm and we still hadn't had lunch. A bustling restaurant with *al fresco* dining was well patronised by the locals and it might even have been Al Fresco himself strumming the guitar as part of the entertainment. His rendition of *Guantanamera* immediately took Peter, Sandra and I back to Cuba where we had been together earlier in the year.

It was just before 4pm by the time we finished a relaxed meal in the warmth of the spring sunshine. Just along the road was the world famous Concha y Toro winery, where we had our first tour and tasting. Our attractive lady guide didn't know much about the Chimango Caracaras, American Kestrel, Monk Parakeets and Austral Thrushes we were looking at, but she did know a lot about the wines produced by Concha y Toro. Initially we were shown the original estate house as she told of the winery's history. Then, from the edge of a nearby vineyard, she went into the details of vine growing before we had our first tasting – *Amelia*, a very pleasant Chardonnay. From there we entered the cellars, the first being air-conditioned, and beyond into another that was the estate's original cellar below ground, where the temperature was naturally cool. In the latter was stored barrels of Casillero del Diablo, and with almost a Hollywood production, the Legend of Diablo was told. Another tasting followed; a Marques de Casa Concha Cabernet Sauvignon. We were invited to keep our *Concha y Toro* wine glasses as souvenirs – I wonder how many will survive!

Our base for the next two nights was over an hour's drive away at Santa Cruz in the Colchagua Valley, another of Chile's famous wine producing areas. The good Chilean roads (so far) meant that we were able to

doze as we passed many Southern Lapwings along the verges, also Eared Doves and introduced California Quail.

The hotel at Santa Cruz was traditionally built on the edge of the town's plaza, which on a warm Sunday evening was busy with locals still on park benches or just strolling around. After check-in and a quick freshen up we went straight into dinner or straight to bed!

Monday, 17 November

Very hot and sunny. 32°C

Breakfast was not until 8am, but being a buffet meant that we finished sooner than we might otherwise have done. With daylight came the realisation that the extensive hotel grounds were quite well developed with a variety of buildings. However, from the steps that led to the breakfast room we added White-crested Elaenia and Tufted Tit-tyrant to the list. Afterwards a walk amongst the trees in the town's plaza produced little except for a Chimango Caracara with nesting material, good views of an Eared Dove and a multitude of House Sparrows.

With the day warming up we boarded the coach and headed a few kilometres out of town to the Viña Santa Cruz winery, passing on the way the first of many Long-tailed Meadowlarks and Common Diuca Finches, the latter we were to see well at the winery where several territorial males were singing.

I half expected there to be a repetition of yesterday's visit, but not a bit of it. We began birding. Chilean Swallows, a blue and white species with a white rump that recalled our House Martin, were flying around the buildings, where they were no doubt breeding. Certainly Southern House Wren and American Kestrel were. We heard both Chilean Tinamou and Dusky Tapaculo and were just about to try and find the tapaculo, a notoriously difficult species to see at times, when the winery's guide called us over to the cable car. A cable car at a winery? This one took us to the top of a nearby hill where not only was there the dome of an astronomical telescope, but three small museums showing three cultures that had developed in Chile's past, including an excellent one on Easter Island. In a room at the base of the telescope pieces of meteorite and even a satellite's fuel tank were on display – the whole thing was very well done. We found a few birds too, with another Tufted Tit-tyrant being seen and Fire-eyed Diucon, a smart tyrant-flycatcher with an amazingly red eye, and a Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail being noted. The hilltop also provided a panoramic view of the vineyards on the slopes of the surrounding hillsides and across the valley floor below.

Once back down to the main area of buildings by cable car we were taken into the cool of the cellars, where, in a hall of huge storage vats, the guide spoke of their wine production. The shiny stainless steel vats stored the 'ordinary' wines and wooden ones for the better varieties. Then we moved on to a cellar full of wooden barrels, each containing over two hundred litres of wine, or three hundred bottles worth. We also had a tasting – a rosé and two reds, one of the latter being Chamán a 50:50 blend of Carmenère and Cabernet Sauvignon. Perhaps the reds were not quite as good as yesterday's at Concha y Toro, but wines from Viña Santa Cruz are currently solely produced for the home market, although our winery guide thought that in 2010 they might be going into the export business.

It had been an excellent morning, which finished well with good views of a Spot-flanked Gallinule feeding in the weedy river beneath the bridge as we left the property. Good views for us of a new bird and the best views that Roberto had ever had as well!

Following lunch at the hotel we took a siesta as outside the temperatures rose to the low 30° centigrade. At 4pm we returned along the road towards Viña Santa Cruz, stopping to explore a scrubby hillside in the hope of the sought-after tapaculos. No reply from Dusky or White-throated, but one of the largest ones, Moustached Turca, appeared in a low fork of a tree before running away down the slope. We also found Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail and Dusky-tailed Canastero, an endemic. Overhead soared Turkey Vultures and an American Kestrel.

Continuing beyond the entrance to this morning's winery we stopped by the river further downstream. Chilean Swallows were hawking over the river and as we crossed a footbridge Roberto heard a singing Dusky Tapaculo, which we tracked down to thick undergrowth on the steep sides of a lane leading to a shallow ford. Initially playback seemed to drive our quarry away towards the ford, but at the same time attracting the curiosity of a White-crested Elaenia. At the ford we heard a rival tapaculo calling from the opposite bank of the river, so as holding the speaker hadn't worked I suggested that Roberto tucked his equipment beneath some debris and played the repetitive song very quietly. It did the business, for after just a few minutes the tiny, almost wren sized, bird appeared in deep shade approaching the speaker and giving us excellent views on several occasions, although each appearance only lasted a matter of seconds. When it started to sing from a hidden perch within the driftwood tangle we knew that it had rumbled our efforts and the CD player was silenced. We could then pay attention to the fly-catching efforts of a female Giant Hummingbird over the ford. The views were great, although somewhat into the light, in fact they were the best views I have had of this species.

We were on a high, and so was the sun, although the clock told us it was nearly 7pm! Time to go. On the way back to Santa Cruz Sarah and Mike had good views of the tour's first White-tailed Kite, the New World counterpart of Black-shouldered Kite, and the rest of us had distant views of a second as a few minutes later hovering over a stubble field. Two other good birds were seen on the drive back. A Yellow-winged Blackbird was seen by a few of the party as it flew from a patch of rank grasses and even fewer saw the Moustached Turca stand on the roadside slope where it had disappeared earlier in the afternoon.

For some reason known only to our driver and the bus company, we had a coach and driver exchange this evening. Our large coach and Julio were replaced by a small vehicle and Oberto, who has worked with Roberto on numerous occasions in the past – perhaps he wasn't available when we arrived yesterday. Was it as recently as that?

With everyone feeling somewhat tired yesterday, we decided to postpone Margaret's birthday celebrations until dinner this evening. Apparently she had been pleased that it had apparently slipped by unnoticed, but no! We were able to suitably embarrass her with a chocolate gateau with candles and a rendition of *Happy Birthday to you*, which perhaps was not the greatest, but was infinitely better than we could have managed yesterday! To round off a great day we found somewhere quieter just off the dining room to do the first log of the tour.

Tuesday, 18 November

Hot, sunny and cloudless. 30°C

After breakfast we loaded the coach and headed for Vilches, our base for tonight. The route was a mixture of dual carriageways and country roads passing through small towns and villages. En route we try two or three places for Chilean Tinamou to no avail, but at one we had a party of five Kelp Gulls fly over to join others at the local landfill, whilst at another the roadside flowers were beautiful, being mainly of native species.

Birding didn't really start until we reached the beautiful wooded hills and mountains of the Vilches area, where we concentrated our efforts at Altos de Lircay Natural Reserve, where we had our picnic lunch in the sunshine watching a Thorn-tailed Rayadito busily taking food to young in a nest-hole in a nearby building. The forest contained many splendid Southern Beech – *Nothofagus*, where the most abundant bird was White-crested Elaenia, whose plaintive calls were constantly in the background. We had scarcely walked 500 metres when Roberto pointed out a large, recently excavated, nest-hole in a tree by the track – Magellanic Woodpecker, and while we were standing nearby trying to see White-throated Tree-runner, the female flew from the nest and landed on a nearby trunk. The views were brilliant and in perfect light for much of the time. We withdrew and watched her back to the hole and disappear inside.

Much of the rest of the afternoon was spent trying two sites for Chestnut-throated Huet-huet, a large and elusive tapaculo of the forest. It is big, like the Moustached Turca we saw yesterday and although it came close on a couple of occasions in response to playback, it never came the extra yards that might have brought

it into view. The only birds of note while we were waiting were Patagonian Tyrant seen briefly high in the canopy and Austral Parakeets flying over.

As we walked back to the coach we had to pass the Magellanic Woodpecker nest and this time it was the scarlet-headed male that put its head out to look at us before he emerged, visited a few other trees before returning to the nest and showing himself off in the strong early evening sunlight.

Our hotel was 14 kilometres back down the wooded hill, where our rooms were in the wooded chalets that formed part of a small resort-type hotel. It is probably busy during the holidays and at weekends, but tonight we were the only guests. We checked-in with plenty of time before dinner and afterwards most of us went owling. Well, it might have been owling had we seen one, but instead it was the local dogs that were doing all the 'owling this evening. We tried at the hotel and then took the bus up the hill again to various spots further on. Unfortunately there was no response from the hoped-for Rufous-legged Owl to playback. Away from the lights of buildings the intensity of the starshine from the blanket of stars of the Milky Way was amazing and almost unbelievable to anyone who had not been down to southern latitudes before. Starry, starry night.....

Wednesday, 19 November

Another hot and sunny day. Cloudless except for a bank of thunderclouds behind the ramparts of the Andes in the evening. 30°C

For those waking before daylight a Rufous-legged Owl was calling in the tall trees behind the cabins, for the rest waking a little later there was just a cock crowing. We had an early breakfast before returning to Altos de Lircay in order to maximise our time before the day became too hot. Black-chinned Siskins were the first birds to show themselves as we drove up. A very similar species to our own, those earlier on the trip had only been fly-bys, seen so briefly we hadn't put them on the list. Further on we were able to have good views of a flock of Austral Blackbirds and while doing so, Dinah found a very well hidden California Quail on a pile of cut branches.

As we began walking the main track we were all able to have excellent views of White-throated Treerunner and Tufted Tit-Tyrant. The female Magellanic Woodpecker put her head out of the nest hole as we approached and came out of the nest briefly before we hurried by to let her return as soon as possible. Much of the morning was spent trying to see the huet-huet again for we discovered there were three different calling males in the area and yet again we brought the birds in close to us, but never quite close enough. The understorey within their territories was pretty thick. On the plus side we did have excellent views of Des Mur's Wiretail, a tiny bird with incredibly fine tail feathers that were at least twice its body length. It was particularly pleasing for Mike, who had only glimpsed it when we were in Chile together a couple of years ago and the views were the best I have ever had of this elusive species. On one occasion as we were waiting a Culpeo Fox emerged from the undergrowth and stood in the middle of the path to exchange glances with Kay and Mike before trotting off again – the rest of us were looking the wrong way!

It was a beautiful morning in the forest of lofty *Nothofagus*. Lizards basked on the trunks of trees and butterflies flitted across our paths, although many were not in the wildlife guide that had recently been published. Down by the stream Sarah and I glimpsed a Chucao Tapaculo running across an open area at the water's-edge. The rest of the party came over and even by using playback there was no further sign. On the other hand technology worked a treat bringing Striped Woodpecker into view, for at one time we had two males chasing a female through the canopy above us, occasionally stopping long enough for us to have good views in sunlight. As we walked back to the coach a pair of Red-backed Hawks soared over the trees. On the way down to lunch we stopped for excellent views of three Austral Parakeets, a single bird and a courting pair. Their love-making was very affectionate and extremely agile as they mated on a narrow branch in the trees above us.

After lunch we loaded the coach and hit the road to Santiago. Again there was no sign of Chilean Tinamous in the anticipated fields, but a little further on near Lago Colbún, Sarah spotted two pairs of Black-faced Ibis, a species we hadn't anticipated before we headed further south. On checking the large lake we quickly found

a number of species – Speckled Teal and Spectacled Duck with ducklings, Yellow-billed Pintail and Chiloé Wigeon as well as Great Grebe and a lone Cooi Heron. Near the mouth of the Rio Maule there were great numbers of wildfowl, but the distances were too great to sort out absolutely everything and in the coming days we would encounter most of Chile's lowland wildfowl and coot species.

Roberto was keen to show us Burrowing Parrot, a rare species found along the Rio Maule, and whilst he found another Spectacled Duck and I picked up a couple of very distant Andean Condors over the mountains, it was Wendy who pointed out the three Burrowing Parrots that flew along river below us. Marking where they were heading we loaded up and followed. What followed was a treat for we must have eventually seen 30-40 in an area of large trees and small fields. The views through the 'scope and of the birds as they flew round calling noisily were superb.

Santiago turned out to be over four hours drive away and when we left the Burrowing Parrots it was almost tea-time! Needless to say there were no more birding stops, although things like White-tailed Kite and Great Egret were seen en route. A highway service station gave the driver a break and although we could have had a Kit-kat, most opted for an ice-cream!

On reaching the hotel about 8.30pm we checked-in and went straight to dinner with the checklist being postponed until tomorrow.

Thursday, 20 November

Hot and sunny once more with a few scattered clouds appearing over the mountains during the afternoon. 30°C, slightly cooler at height 25°C .

Today was one of the tour's 'big' days with a lot to play for, so with a 6am cold buffet breakfast we were able to leave the hotel just before 6.45am and make our way out of Santiago before the rush-hour traffic caused too much congestion.

We were heading for Embalse El Yeso, a reservoir at about 3,000 metres above sea-level in the heart of the Andes. Beyond the urban sprawl we turned up into a valley through which a fast river tumbled down from the mountains. Silt and sediment turned the raging waters brown from mining activities along one of its various tributaries. This was Torrent Duck country and before too long Mike spotted a female standing on a rock in mid-stream and although we were some distance away, she seemed to be aware of us stopping, and only some of the party saw her before she slipped out of sight. We searched and scanned likely places further up and again later on our return, to no avail.

The usual roadside birds of California Quail, Austral Thrush and Chilean Mockingbirds were joined, and eventually replaced, by a number of new species as we steadily gained altitude. Roberto's first, and only as it turned out, stop for the endemic Crag Chilia provided us with good views when one responded well to playback.

We stopped at a number of places to look at ground-tyrants - Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant was our first of a number of ground-tyrant species recorded today and was a particularly good one as Roberto commented that it was not recorded on every tour. Amongst parties of sierra-finches, Gray-hooded, Mourning and Plumbeous were seen, and at one stop we found a pair of Scale-throated Earthcreepers taking food to a hole in a stream bank. We walked across for a better view and whilst we waited Sarah drew my attention to a small flycatcher resting on a stone by bushes near the water. It was a puzzle for there is nothing like it in the book, so therefore it could well be a new species for Chile! We got Roberto and the rest of the party on to it and over the nest 10-15 minutes Kay and Peter managed to get some photos before it eventually flew downstream. The problem with the field guide for Chile is that it is so good, one does not need a backup that covers one of the adjacent countries, so it might be a while before we can get a positive i.d.

Where wet seeps and shallow streams passed through fields birds such as Bar-winged and Gray-flanked Cinclodes fed with the sierra-finches, ground-tyrants and now Greater Yellow-finches. In a rocky and shrubby area we had good views of Moustached Turca, the large tapaculo we had seen near Santa Cruz at

the beginning of the tour. A new ground dove was Black-winged and we also saw the first Giant Hummingbirds of the day. The mountains were getting high, more rugged with more snow, so it was perhaps not surprising when Andean Condors appeared over the skyline. In the space of a few minutes we saw six, probably birds leaving a roost as the temperature rose creating the lift they needed to get going in the morning.

Eventually we reached the reservoir set below snowy peaks and, unlike in the shelter of the valley there was a breeze, so on finding a sheltered area Roberto and Oberto, set about making the sandwiches and laying out bowls of delicious avocados, olives and nuts. After our early start we were ready for this. Birds in the area included the Puna Hawk, Rufous-banded Miner and another pair of Scale-throated Earthcreepers.

Beyond the reservoir lies a broad valley created by the waters of a graded river fed by melt water from the glaciers and snowfields in the surrounding mountains. In places rushes and other hardy aquatic plants grow in marshy and seepage areas. On checking such an area we soon found three wintering Baird's Sandpipers from North America and a pair of Crested Ducks, the latter being particularly wary.

Our target bird for the area, the day and perhaps the whole tour, was a small shorebird unlike any other and only found in a particular type of marshy area, or *bofedale*, as it is called in the Andes. It does require some effort to see, so we took the bus as far as we could along a track traversing the valley, until the red-brown waters of a small river prevented us going any further dry-shod. Just before we alighted we watched a pair of Gray-breasted Seedsnipe and their four very small downy chicks beside the road.

A variety of footwear appeared from bags, ranging from flip-flops, sandals, trainers to wellies, but whatever the choice we all got wet feet for the water came almost to the knee in places and it was cold, very cold. Still, all who planned to cross made it, with only Wendy deciding to stay warm and dry. We followed the track towards a side valley, crossing a number of smaller streams en route, before eventually walking along a relatively recently laid track that gave some height overlooking another, and more extensive, *bofedale* in the side valley. We set the 'scopes up and almost immediately Roberto found our quarry, the Diademed Sandpiper-plover. Soon after I found another, so the honours were even until Roberto noticed a small chick beside one of the adults, although for much of the time it was hidden by grass. At a range of some 150 metres or more the telescopes gave quite reasonable views, but due to the marshy nature of the terrain, the fact that the area has no protection from disturbance and that the birds had small young we decided not to go any closer. From our vantage point we watched them and saw more Gray-breasted Seedsnipe than I have seen on previous visits – we must have seen up to 15 in total. There were more cinclodes and ground-tyrants, the latter including Cinereous and Rufous-naped and we also had particularly good views of smart black and yellow Yellow-rumped Siskins. Mike and Sarah went a little further than the rest of us for a photo and added a small hummer, White-sided Hillstar, to the list.

By the time we had returned to the bus and changed footwear it was gone four o'clock and with few distractions it took the best part of three and a half hours to get back to Santiago. Before leaving the reservoir environs we had good views of a Puna Hawk and also of a female White-sided Hillstar as she fed on the yellow flowers of the Calafate bushes that grew on the slopes below the road. Much further down the valley we looked again for Torrent Duck, but probably the main cause of the late return to the hotel was the serious traffic congestion as we entered the city. It appeared to be simply volume of traffic.

It had been a splendid day and the dining table later was surrounded by glowing faces from the sun and wind from our day in the Andes.

Friday, 21 November

Hot and sunny, cooler at the coast. 25°C

On leaving the hotel we made our way through rush hour traffic westwards towards the mountains again, this time to Farellones, a ski resort area above Santiago. Once we started to climb the hillsides were dotted with the endemic cactus and the verges carpeted with California Poppies and other colourful spring flowers.

The only birds of note on the ascent of 38 hairpins was a Moustached Turca and a flock of Black-chinned Siskins.

We stopped first at a small village below the ski slopes. Gray-flanked and Bar-winged Cinclodes were feeding on a wet seepage area beside the road. White-browed Ground-Tyrants were nesting in the walling below the edge of the road and there were also feeding parties of Gray-hooded Sierra-Finches and Greater Yellow-Finches. The only bird of prey while we were out of the bus was a Puna Hawk, but as we drove away an Andean Condor sailed overhead.

On the way to a neighbouring resort area a male Band-tailed Sierra-Finch sang from the telegraph wires and amongst the rocks and bushes below the road we found a pair of Sharp-billed Canasteros - thus seeing well the two main target birds of the morning. Sarah pointed out a well excremented ledge on a cliff about a kilometre away and a few minutes later Kay spotted an adult Andean Condor heading our way. Judging by its full crop it had had a good breakfast and moments later it was on final approach to the aforesaid ledge. A perfect landing and then good scope views for everyone. All too soon our mountain visit was over, although we had a photo stop for the poppies on the way down.

Having negotiated Santiago we headed towards the coast, stopping at a motorway service station restaurant for lunch, which as that type of food goes, wasn't too bad. The lagoon reserve at the colourful seaside town of Cartagena, was a wetland just inland from the beach and is supported by our agents, Fantastico Sur.

The afternoon light was perfect, so we were soon getting excellent views of a host of new birds on the water. Amongst the first was a pair of Red Shoveler, then came Yellow-billed Pintail and a lone Speckled Teal. Lake Duck is a stiff-tail looking like a North American Ruddy Duck with black cheeks and a flatter profile to the crown. Further on was a pair of Coscoroba Swans with cygnets and nearby on some vegetated sandy mounds out in the lagoon were hundreds of Whimbrel, which being the Hudsonian race lacked the white on the back shown by our Old World birds. Another wintering shorebird from the north was Lesser Yellowlegs, whilst the American Oystercatchers were nearing the southern edge of their range. The Black-necked Stilt of North America is here replaced by White-backed Stilt, with at least one pair noisily defending their downy chicks against all comers. From our vantage point on a bank, with the sun behind us, we were able to compare two of the South American Coot species - White-winged and Red-fronted. We also looked down on a flock of resting Black Skimmers, mainly adult, but with one or two mealy-headed immatures as well. A distant Cooi Heron and several Cattle Egrets were the only herons here.

As with anywhere near the sea in temperate latitudes there were gulls - Kelp that looked like one of our black-backs and Brown-hooded that resembled a Black-headed at home, except that it had black and white wing tips. There were also a few Franklin's Gulls around, a winter visitor from breeding grounds from the North American mid-west.

A short distance north, the lagoon at El Peralá, was our next stop and as we approached from the small visitor centre some of the ladies saw a Stripe-backed Bittern. Later as we were on a causeway leading to a viewing platform we all had excellent views of it both clambering on the reeds and in flight. Before long we had good views in the reeds of many people's 'must see bird' - Many-colored Rush-tyrant, a small, but very colourful bird of the marshes. Its local name, *Siete colores*, draws attention to its seven colours. Wren-like Rushbird, another specialist of this habitat was also seen, fitting well into the LBJ category. Amongst the reeds surrounding the lagoon bred Brown-hooded Gulls and Cattle Egrets, the latter first recorded in Chile in 1969, now has three hundred pairs breeding at this site. With the first breeding in the UK in 2008, how long will it be before we have such numbers? There were several Black-headed Duck, the only parasitic duck in the world, resting on the water with other wildfowl and we also had good views of Red-gartered Coot at close range.

All too soon the clock beat us, so we headed straight for the hotel, although at the mouth of the Aconcagua River we could see tens of thousands of gulls - only Franklin's Gulls attain those numbers in this area. We reached the hotel at Quintero overlooking the Pacific and went to dinner half an hour or so later. 'Scoping

from my bedroom window I saw hundreds of passing Sooty Shearwaters and other tubenoses, boobies and pelicans – they would all be waiting for us out there tomorrow.

Saturday, 22 November

Hot and sunny when not cloudy. 24°C

An early breakfast gave us a great start to what turned out to be another terrific pelagic trip off Quintero, Just before 6.20am we were down in the harbour and boarding a small fishing vessel just as dawn was breaking. By the time we cleared the port complex the first Pink-footed and Sooty Shearwaters were seen, the former being the most plentiful tubenose of the morning. With them were a few Inca Terns and Franklin's Gulls, whilst Peruvian Diving-Petrels skimmed over the waves on whirling wings, looking just like tiny auks, not tubenoses.

It was perhaps the albatrosses that stole the show – first to appear were Black-browed, which during the morning vied with Salvin's to be the commoner of the two species we saw most frequently. Later a lone Northern Royal Albatross appeared, but always remained aloof compared with its smaller cousins. One of the two or three Buller's Albatross we attracted stayed around for quite some time during chumming sessions. The mainly inshore Sooty Shearwaters were replaced further out by the larger and pale-bellied Pink-footed Shearwaters. Peruvian Diving-Petrels were also seen nearer coast, whirring past on small wings that made them look more like Little Auks than tubenoses. One was so low over the boat that it almost passed between us! Along with the albatrosses and shearwaters there were three large petrels – the brown and white Cape Petrel or Pintado and two black ones, White-chinned (that sometimes had no white chin) and Westland that had a black tip to the bill, were often seen together around the vessel so that good comparisons could be made. Unlike White-chinned the Westlands were in wing moult, thus making them easier to pick out at a distance. We only saw one *Pterodroma* petrel today – a lone Masatierra (or De Fillipi's) that flew off the bows without joining in the chumming mêlée.

In the course of the morning we saw both Northern and Southern Giant Petrels, the former having a reddish tip to the bill as opposed to the greenish tip to that of its southern relative. Our final petrel was Wilson's Storm-Petrel and compared with two years ago we had really good views this morning. We motored some 20 miles from shore, chumming at regular intervals with each session producing many of the same species, and perhaps some of the same individuals, as earlier. During the course of the trip a number of chestnut-bodied Chilean Skuas were seen, one or two Brown Skuas from much further south and two Arctic Skuas from the north. Back in the harbour area we saw passing groups of Peruvian Boobies and a sinuous line of Guanay Cormorants heading towards feeding areas along the coast. Before docking we crossed the harbour to have better views of Inca Terns at jetty where a large bulk carrier was discharging its cargo of coal.

Lunch was ready by the time we reached the hotel and afterwards followed a short siesta. We were reunited with Dinah, Joyce and Sandra, who had opted to stay on *terra firma*, yet still saw Southern Giant Petrel and added Ruddy Turnstone to the list.

During the afternoon we visited a wetland close to the sulphuric acid factory at Ventanas. There were the usual species of coot and wildfowl and we added Great Grebe and Pied-billed Grebe. The reedbeds held another Cattle Egret breeding colony. The views of Spectacled Tyrant beyond the wetland were somewhat distant and unfortunately we didn't see any later in the tour.

Our next stop was the affluent seaside community of Cachagua, where we walked along lanes amongst houses and gardens towards the coast seeing Rufous-tailed Plantcutters and Black-chinned Siskins. It was Saturday and the beach was busy with day visitors, exacerbated by a wedding reception taking place in a huge marquee on the sand. Over the sea Peruvian Pelicans and cormorants were coming and going from a rocky islet, which was also home to hundreds of Humboldt Penguins. Some were seen in the sea just below us, but the majority were observed through the 'scopes. Along the rocky shore was the endemic Chilean Seaside Cinclodes, the last good bird of a superb day. We then returned to the hotel for dinner.

Sunday, 23 November

Hot and sunny. 30°C

On leaving the hotel this morning we drove round to the mouth of the Rio Aconcagua, where we walked out across grey sand to view the small number of gulls resting on the estuary. Most were Kelp Gulls, but small parties of Franklin's Gulls flew in from the sea to bathe in the fresh, but very muddy waters, of the river. Some 20 Black Skimmers were also resting, but the views were distant compared with those we had a couple of days ago. The only shorebirds were American Oystercatcher and four wintering Greater Yellowlegs.

On the south side of the river is the seaside town of Con Con and some rocks offshore provided us with excellent views of several Red-legged Cormorants and a lone Guanay Cormorant. Chilean Seaside Cinclodes chased one another around seaweed-covered rocks or in the gardens of houses perched on the cliff edge. Offshore were a number of non-breeding plumaged Great Grebe, some coming quite close inshore, where a small party of Ruddy Turnstones rested.

A drive inland took us to the wooded hills of La Campana National Park. We walked up a rough track, admiring a variety of flowers and watching butterflies flit across sunny patches beneath overhanging trees. We found White-crested Elaenias and heard Thorn-tailed Rayadito and Striped Woodpecker. Our target bird was White-throated Tapaculo, but it must have had a text from the huet-huet over at Vilches, for in spite of Roberto's best efforts it came so close, but never into a viewable position in the thick undergrowth. During our vigil we heard both Dusky Tapaculo and Moustached Turca.

We continued towards Santiago, stopping at Til Til on a hillside track looking east to the Central Valley and the Andes and west to the lowlands beyond the coastal ranges. It was a splendid view, where a refreshing breeze blew as we sat on rocks to eat an excellent picnic. Roberto had arranged to collect *empanadas* and sandwiches in La Campana as we passed through the small town. Moustached Turca called and so did at least three White-throated Tapaculos. We stood and waited in a bushy valley as Roberto used playback, but only Mike was lucky enough to have a glimpse as one appeared very, very briefly on a bare branch on the edge of a bush. The rest of us had to make do with views of familiar species such as Tufted Tit-Tyrant. It is frustrating, but par for the course unfortunately. Roberto suggests that the high temperatures we are experiencing on this tour so far is making the elusive tapaculos even harder to see than usual.

The wetland at Lampa was our final stop, or it would have been had Peter not spotted a pair of Burrowing Owls in an orchard as we passed, or Roberto not seen an immature Harris' Hawk en route. Two years ago Lampa was much wetter for today we walked across areas that had been flooded before, in fact finding areas of standing water was a problem this time! Along a river passing through the area we found Yellow-billed Pintail, Cinnamon Teal and Red-gartered Coot, but I certainly did not expect Sarah's mystery black and white birds to turn out to be Andean Geese, as previously I had only seen them up on the altiplano to the north of the country! There were two and later a single was seen.

When we did reach a reedy pond there were stilts and Lesser Yellowlegs as well as a Plumbeous Rail, which it did its best to remain hidden behind some rubbish, before eventually sitting down on a bit of wood in the sunshine. The grassland held Correndera Pipits and breeding Southern Lapwings. There must have been more water to the south, which we were unable to reach for at one time hundreds of noisy Franklin's Gulls rose and flew over. On their way back to the road Peter *et al* found another pair of Burrowing Owls.

Being a Sunday evening the traffic for the run into Santiago was light and we reached our hotel just after 7.30pm.

Monday, 24 November

Hot, sunny and cloudless once more in Santiago, but breezy with showers and sunny periods in Punta Arenas, where temperature only 12°C without wind chill.

After breakfast we went straight to the airport, where check-in went smoothly for our three-hour flight in a LAN Airbus south to Punta Arenas. Leading an American birding group on the same flight was Alvaro Jaramillo, the author of the Chilean field guide, so we took the opportunity to show him Peter's photos of Sarah's flycatcher. His first impression was of Hudson's Black Tyrant, a South American migrant from Argentina, however he checked images on the Internet and decided against that. Further research is still required!

Having taken off half an hour late we were unable to make up time on the flight, which passed quite pleasantly with a showing of the *Mama Mia* movie. Down at Punta Arenas it was a different world, well it was Patagonia after all, so with a fresh breeze, partly overcast skies and passing showers it came up to expectations! Sadly the mini-coach didn't, for it failed to start and while the driver and a colleague tried to fix it we enjoyed the sandwiches that had been freshly prepared by Roberto's wife.

After about a 30 minute delay the bus was eventually bump started and we were off to Otway Sound, some 40 minutes away with our driver, Juvenal. Well, it would have been 40 minutes had we not stopped a number of times to enjoy views of birds like Upland Geese, Crested Ducks, Southern Crested Caracara, South American Snipe and Common Miner from the comfort of our mobile hide. Birds like Austral Negrito were common and as we crossed the flat landscape stunted *Nothofagus* trees and yellow-flowered Calafate bushes had been pruned by the relentless winds to become natural topiary. Elsewhere the countryside had been tamed to pasture or was tundra-like in places with a lichen and scrub flora. The many roadside ponds held wildfowl, mainly Yellow-billed Pintails and a few pairs of Speckled Teal and Chiloé Wigeon. A distant Cinereous Harrier quartered the fields shortly after we had enjoyed Rolls-Royce views of our first Lesser or Darwin's Rheas feeding only yards from the track.

Sixteen years ago when I first visited Otway Sound and it's Magellanic Penguin colony, one just drove out along a track, parked and wandered along a footpath at will. Now there is an entrance hut when one turns off the road and a hard-standing carpark with loos, a small curio shop, a café and a US\$10 entrance fee, which was included in the tour. A well constructed footpath and board-walk now meanders several hundred metres to a viewpoint and open-backed hide where one can watch the penguins coming ashore on the stony beach, or negotiating the driftwood strewn along the top of the beach before they waddle along well-worn paths to their nesting burrows inland. It was good to see that there were a number of juveniles amongst those on the shore. On the way we were able to admire our first Patagonian spring flowers and some of the party watched a singing Grass Wren. All in all it was a great experience, but as some people were hoping to change money in town, we headed back to the bus instead of completing the boardwalk circuit. In addition to the birds some saw a Patagonian Grey Fox running across the area and as we returned to the bus an introduced European Brown Hare was also seen.

The bad news was that the bus would not restart, so they resorted to trying to use another bus and a tow rope to bump start it this time. This might have worked had the rope not parted every time it took the strain. A replacement vehicle was summonsed and knowing it would be at least an hour before it arrived, we migrated to the warmth of the café. With a fine sunny evening in the offing some took the opportunity to return to the penguins and also to complete the walk around the area. Another harrier was seen, a Grass Wren was busy feeding young in an unseen nest and on a shallow pond amongst the wildfowl were several Red Shoveler.

The replacement bus in fact took an hour and a half to arrive and took us straight to the hotel. Once the rooms were allocated we went to dinner, for it was almost 9pm.

Tuesday, 25 November

Mainly overcast, with some sunny periods. 20°C without allowing for wind chill.

8am found us at the head of the queue of vehicles waiting to board the small ferry for the two-hour crossing of the Straits of Magellan to Porvenir at the western end of Tierra del Fuego. The checklist was brought up-to-date before we braved the wind to see what was about. Not a lot apart from a gathering of Imperial Cormorants and a few Dolphin Gulls, the latter being an addition to the trip list.

The crossing was relatively smooth, but there was a chill to the easterly breeze. Had the wind been from the west we might have seen more birds, but nevertheless we had some quite close fly-by South American Terns, chestnut-bodied Chilean Skuas and we watched the effortless grace of a handful of Black-browed Albatrosses as they sailed over the waves. We saw Magellanic Diving-Petrels well enough on a number of occasions to be sure of their identity for the clear-cut black and white pattern to the sides of the head showed well. Some of the party saw two Wilson's Storm-Petrels and others had a brief view of a Peale's Dolphin.

Just over two hours later we docked at Porvenir and then for five minutes watched the efforts of the various vehicles getting off. Once the car-deck was clear the passengers disembarked. Judging by the backpacks of some of our fellow passengers there were some serious mountaineers aboard, but before we engaged in some *serious* birding we decided to patronise a Croatian restaurant for a reviving cuppa.

On leaving the small town with its colourful buildings we drove east to explore the dry muddy shores of a once extensive lake. There was still water and reeds out in the middle that attracted shorebirds such as White-rumped Sandpipers, various ducks and some distant Coscoroba Swans. However our target bird was to be found on the dry mud and with very little searching we found it – Magellanic Plover, a strange small shorebird about the size of the Two-banded Plover we found at the same time. Unlike a typical small plover the Magellanic bore more than a passing resemblance to a ground dove, for it adopts a hunched feeding posture. It proved quite tame and after a careful approach we were rewarded with excellent views and as our bird was an adult, it had pink legs. Back at the bus we tucked into more of Roberto's wife's delicious sandwiches.

During the afternoon we took another gravel road out of town that meandered up into the hills. Earlier by the lake we had seen very distant Guanacos, one of South America's two wild camelids, but now we had wonderful views of many more close to the road. Another new mammal was Common Muskrat, which like the Guanaco had only provided distant views in the morning, but from the bus we had good views of activities around a large lodge.

The flat tops to the hills were moorland dominated by the domed bosses of Balsam Bog and the heather-like Diddle-dee, both species familiar to anyone who had visited the Falklands. Our target bird is also found in that far-flung corner of the empire – Rufous-chested Dotterel. Initially we had one flying over before it landed in the distance. Then we had a close low-level flyby before it stopped again to give reasonable views through the bins and the 'scope, before taking off once more to join two others in flight. Two broke away to engage in an aerial ballet high over the moorland. The views from the top gave us a 180° sweep of the Straits of Magellan with Porvenir below us and the early evening sunshine catching tin roofs on some houses across the water at Punta Arenas.

We checked into our small hotel in Porvenir at 6.45pm and had dinner 8pm. It was still quite light well after 10pm in these southern latitudes.

Wednesday, 26 November

Overcast with sunny periods. 25°C

And light again before 5am in the morning!

Today turned out to be a full day, a very full day indeed. Roberto hoped to show us a host of special birds and we were not disappointed for it scored with practically everything. Our departure from Porvenir was delayed a few minutes as we photographed some of the colourful buildings. Then it was birding.....

The road to the eastern ferry terminal took us past the lake where we saw the Magellanic Plover yesterday. Beyond were more lakes and ponds, all with wildfowl and shorebirds – the numbers of Baird's and White-rumped Sandpipers were vast and I'm glad some of the other small North American 'peeps' don't come this far south! During the course of the morning and its numerous stops we also found both Great and Lesser Yellowlegs and South American Snipe. We had great views of Great Grebes and our first of Ruddy-headed Goose and Silver Teal. This rolling steppe landscape was sheep rearing country, which Guanacos seemed to

like as well. There were small birds too. By the time we reached the ferry we had seen Short-billed Miner, Chocolate-vented Tyrant, Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant and Patagonian Yellow-Finch.

On reaching the ferry we couldn't believe our bad luck – the 1pm sailing was only a few yards away from the slip and leaving. Then a miracle happened, for once offshore it seemed to hesitate before turning and sailing into another slip a few hundred metres along the coast. By the time it dropped its ramp we were there and waiting and had driven aboard in next to no time. CalMac would never have done that! The crossing was smooth and to our delight we were accompanied by a number of pied Commerson's Dolphins. Several small groups frequent the narrow point of the Straits of Magellan, although we never saw more than three or four at a time. For a few glorious moments we had two or three riding the bow-wave below us! No albatrosses this far from the ocean, but there were Chilean Skuas, Magellanic Diving-Petrels and South American Terns.

On reaching Punta Delgada we disembarked and had our picnic in sunshine overlooking the Straits. The breeze was from the north and positively balmy making it hard to believe that here we were at the southern end of the South American mainland. The dolphins were still milling around in the channel and a steady succession of Rock Cormorants was passing to and from their colony on the low cliffs further along the coast to the west.

The afternoon produced some more excellent birds. We stopped at San Gregorio in the hope of Kelp Goose, but this was a long shot we missed. On the plus side we found a pair of Flightless Steamer-Ducks offshore and a pair of Black-necked Ibis nesting on the hulk of a historic iron ship. When we turned off the main road it was onto gravel farm roads from which we hoped to find dotterel. Many kilometres later we came across a pair of Least Seedsnipe and had further sightings of Chocolate-vented Tyrant. The first Black-throated Finch was a surprise for it showed so much yellow on the wings compared with those on the Falklands that its alternative name of Canary-winged Finch seemed far more appropriate. The male we watched initially was the first of many we were to see fly up from the verge as we crossed mile after mile of featureless rolling grasslands, where sheep and Guanacos held sway.

When we did see Tawny-throated Dotterel they were spotted by Juvenal and we had excellent views through the bins and scopes of these beautiful upland shorebirds, which is not a common species within its range, so we were lucky. They shared a field with a pair of Ruddy-headed Geese and Black-throated Finches. Time, as always, was against us, but there was time to see one more new bird – a smart male Ashy-headed Goose in a flock of Upland Geese. And there were mammals too, for we had good views of Patagonian Grey Foxes and a Patagonian Hog-nosed Skunk, brilliantly spotted by Kay as we sped along. It seemed quite unconcerned as it dug for tit-bits in a small open area.

Distances in this part of the world are great, but eventually we left the steppes behind and reached the first trees for a couple of days. The *Nothofagus* were little more than shrubs at first, but soon gave way to proper trees. The farmland created from cleared forest was much more luxuriant than the sheep country we had been passing through, but the lakes and ponds held many fewer birds, which was just as well for it was 9pm by the time we reached the long inlet from the sea on which our hotel at Puerto Natales overlooks. The views of snowy peaked mountains from the rooms were splendid and once we had settled in we went straight to dinner, ready for a good meal and a good night's sleep.

Thursday, 27 November

Cloudy, with sunshine during middle of day and early afternoon. Brief, but heavy shower late afternoon. 18°C

Grey skies and lower clouds on the mountains surrounding Puerto Natales greeted us at breakfast time. We enjoyed a few minutes with the Black-necked Swans and their cygnets along the waterfront before heading for the Torres del Paine area, but of course we didn't go straight there, but detoured into an area of sandstone hills and snowy mountains for much of the day. A stop at a tourist shop gave the rare opportunity to buy postcards, stamps etc.

As the road wound its way through low bushy foothills we stopped to admire the flowers growing on the verges. Watching one of the day's first Andean Condors led us onto a pair of massive Black-chested Buzzard-Eagles and their nest on a cliff above a fast flowing river that contained at least two downy white chicks. Further on we stopped to add a singing male Patagonian Mockingbird to the list and a pair of South American Grey Foxes were concerned at our presence for amongst the scrubby bushes they had at least one small cub. They were the first of several families we were to encounter during the day – delightful to us, but not for small rodents and ground nesting birds of course.

The road entered a steep sided valley, where sheep grazed on flatter areas and the mountains beyond the river became higher with more snow lying in sheltered gullies. A Scale-throated Earthcreeper was found singing from a rock, Gray-hooded Sierra-finches were joined by Mourning and Plumbeous relatives and hardly at all were we out of range of singing male Rufous-collared Sparrows. A shame they are relegated to the depths of being a 'trash' bird! One of our target birds appeared just before lunch – Yellow-bridled Finch, a relative of yesterday's Black-throated Finch without the yellow wings and more yellow around its face.

Surprisingly it was not cold and we sat out on the roadside to enjoy our picnic – substantial goulash, avocado and lettuce filled buns for the omnivores in the party. Afterwards we continued to search for another of the special birds of the area, but we failed to find White-throated Caracara, in this or the next valley we searched. However the skies were not entirely empty as four Andean Condors became six, then eight, ten, fifteen, eighteen until we had at least twenty rising from beyond a ridge in the valley a kilometre or so ahead of us. It was a splendid sight as both adults and immatures circled to rise into the skies above snowy mountains. Had they drifted our way and not away from us would have been better, but it was a fantastic condor experience with only the sound of pan pipes missing!

Although we failed in the second valley to see the caracara, there were more Yellow-bridle Finches, a shallow lake dotted with Chilean Flamingos, wildfowl and a number of coot that were too distant to identify. On reaching our last family of foxes and being mindful of the clock headed back towards Torres del Paine. Stopping near our mockingbird area we had one more species to see. Band-tailed Earthcreeper was once considered to have been an Argentine endemic, but six years ago it was discovered near Bahia Azul on Tierra de Fuego and just two years ago, Roberto found this site whilst looking for the mockingbird. Today they did not disappoint as under threatening skies a pair responded very well to playback by singing from the tops of scrubby bushes on the hillside. We all had good views, the last just before a heavy rain shower began.

By the time we were approaching Torres del Paine National Park proper the clouds were breaking up and we were watching sub-adult male Guanacos in sunshine with the mountains beyond. Here they seemed far more used to people and vehicles, so they continued sparring with one another unhindered. Some five kilometres before our hotel we were obliged to change buses and transfer our luggage to a trailer. The reason was that a small suspension bridge simply wasn't wide enough for anything other than a car or one of the hotel's fleet of narrow minibuses.

We had made good time today, perhaps thanks in part to the rain earlier in the afternoon. Soon after checking-in some of the group joined Roberto on a walk amongst *Nothofagus* trees in a shallow valley in front of the hotel. White-crested Elaenias and Thorn-tailed Rayaditos responded in double quick time to the playback of Austral Pygmy-Owl and in turn attracted the attention of Chilean Flicker and Austral Thrush before the owl itself appeared and distracted the birds from us. We had good views of all those species before heading back towards the hotel. As we made our way back through the trees Sarah saw a Chilean Hawk, a Sparrowhawk-like accipiter, fly away – the only one of the tour alas!

After dinner it was time to catch up with the checklist and where better than the hotel's conference room beneath a large poster of Torres del Paine and its wildlife.

Friday, 28 November

Fine, sunny and warm out of biting wind. 9° - 18°C

On leaving the hotel after breakfast on a sunny, but partly cloudy morning, we caught the hotel bus back to the rickety bridge. Sarah set-off walking almost an hour earlier and would have completed her five kilometre hike before we arrived had she not been distracted by a Spectacled Duck on a small pond with Yellow-billed Pintail and by photographing a beautiful clump of Calceolarias.

We all crossed the bridge together and were soon searching a stretch of turbulent river for the pair of Torrent Duck known to frequent the area. It was bitterly cold in the first really strong Patagonian winds that we had experienced, but it was all worthwhile as we did have very good views of the pair through the telescopes as nearby Guanacos grazed and Andean Condors soared overhead. It was indeed almost a clip from the BBC's *Flight of the Condor* – just the things that attract one to these southern latitudes and all the time, both here and elsewhere during the day, a host of colourful flowers grew from the gravel at our feet. The problem for the photographers, of course, was finding sheltered subjects not being thrashed by the constant wind!

Near the bus-exchange area were Austral Canastero and Rufous-tailed Plantcutter, but passerines were generally few and far between today. Instead we saw a good variety of wildfowl and coot, as well as a handful of Chilean Flamingos, on various lakes and ponds we passed. Some waters were open and saline, which is where the flamingos were, whilst others were more sheltered and in many cases of fresh water, where rushes grew in the shallows. It was at one of these we stopped in the hope of seeing the recently re-discovered Austral Rail, a species that closely resembles the Virginia Rail of North America or our Water Rail that had been thought to be extinct until 1998, when it was rediscovered and a recording made of the call. Once the call was on tape and the habitat known birders in the southern regions of South America started to discover it in other areas, both in Argentina and neighbouring Chile, but would we be lucky?

The bus made a good hide and at least we were out of that biting wind. The call could be clearly heard from the bus, but competing against the wind was almost a losing battle until Roberto heard a reply. Then the strategy changed and we were out of the bus and lined up so we could look along small channels through the rushes. The calls of the rail came closer, Roberto glimpsed it, before a furtive shape with a long red bill swam across first one gap and then another! When the rail hesitated a second time round we had a better view, or rather a better glimpse. Wow! It was a new bird for all, except Wendy, who had seen it on our Argentinean tour. There can't be many who have seen this elusive bird in two countries! Another new bird was found on another lake – Andean Duck, once thought to have been a race of the North American Ruddy Duck, was watched at close range from the bus alongside a Silvery Grebe.

So far today there has been no mention of the scenery. More wow moments dominated by the snows and bare rock faces of the central Paine Massif and of course photo stops, which thanks to digital meant no worries about running out of film! The scarlet flowers of Chilean Firebush added an extra splash of colour and when one stop to look at the mountains across a lake with a waterfall on the river beyond produced a sheltered hollow out of the wind our picnic spot was found. It was idyllic – amazing scenery, a good lunch, good company and warm sunshine. In full sun Kay's thermometer rose into the 30s°C with no wind-chill! Amongst the flowers that grew nearby were several clumps of the beautiful Porcelain Orchid. All we needed was a condor to the background accompaniment of panpipes, but it was one of the few places we stopped today where a condor didn't appear.

During the afternoon we passed 'proper' picnic areas, where at one a pair of Culpeo Foxes were attracted by handouts. The area of the Grey Glacier gave us a good walk through *Nothofagus* forest to a gravel beach to view the beautiful blue icebergs that had broken from the distant snout of the glacier. On the way back to the bus White-crested Elaenias responded to Roberto's Austral Pygmy Owl whistle, but a Patagonian Sierra-Finch remained in the background. Nearer the path a Magellanic Woodpecker called and the scarlet-headed male was watched by some of the party before it flew away. In the woods we found another orchid, so many white-flowered Dog Orchids one could hardly miss them!

So an amazing excursion drew to a close, but nothing new or outstanding was seen on the way back to the hotel. We were just in awe of the scenery, knowing how lucky we had been today.

After dinner several of us joined Roberto on a hilltop not far from the hotel to watch for an owl and a pussycat. Last night a Puma had been seen at 10pm walking by the stables and along near the hotel, but sadly not this evening. We waited and we watched – Brown Hares would have made a snack for the cat, but not the hunting Cinereous Harrier we watched as the first stars began to twinkle in the fading light. We heard South American Snipe doing their chipping call and then as dusk fell they started drumming all around us – quite different from the drumming made by Common Snipe and seemingly accompanied by calls as well. Far away on the mountain slopes beyond the stables Roberto heard the lonesome call of a Magellanic Horned Owl, but it was too far away for playback to have any effect, so we tried in the small valley where Austral Pygmy Owl had been seen a couple of days ago, but without success. With tomorrow being the long transfer day back to Santiago and packing still to be done we decided to call it a day at 10.45pm.

Saturday, 29 November

Bright first thing, soon becoming overcast with rain during the late afternoon. 15°C

We left the hotel more or less on schedule on what was to be a travelling day back to Santiago. One couldn't leave a place like Torres del Paine without saying goodbye, which we did looking across a lake at the iconic towers in the last of the sunshine as clouds steadily thickened. There were few stops en route, although a pair of Andean Condors feeding on the top of a ridge quite close to the road justified one of them. Otherwise we passed our last roadside Guanacos and European Brown Hares before the landscape became tamed for sheep farming.

A shopping and coffee stop provided some well deserved retail therapy at Co Castillo, but it would be worth the next group noting that in a number of cases books etc were cheaper back at the hotel in Torres del Paine than they were there, or in some cases cheaper in Punta Arenas, but were we down hearted? Perhaps, for some stocks of pesos were in terminal decline!

The bus was refuelled in Puerto Natales and while Roberto and Juvenal saw to that we were dropped off to admire the local flock of Black-necked Swans along the waterfront. Some display was taking place between some of the flock and further away we could see that the family we had watched a couple of days ago still had three cygnets. An old jetty had a thriving Imperial Shag colony with a Chilean Skua loafing around nearby.

Roberto had arranged for us to have a light lunch at a small restaurant at midday, with most of us opting to share one of the large round sandwiches with someone else in the party. After that it was on again. Meadowlarks on fence posts and rheas in fields, wildfowl in ponds and rolling miles of sheep pasture until we reached the Straits of Magellan and headed west to Punta Arenas. We arrived at the airport to check-in our luggage for the evening flight at about 2.30 p.m., where in addition Roberto was also able to obtain the boarding passes for the northern extension tomorrow!

We then drove into Punta Arenas where we explored the main plaza, some touching the foot of the bronze statue of an Indian, which legend says will bring one back to the town. I did it first time I was here and 14 months later I was back. Between that visit and now 14 years have elapsed, so I won't hold my breath. While we wandered round the city centre, Roberto was arranging an early dinner, our last as a united group and to which Ornitholidays contributed the bottles of sauvignon blanc, which went down quite well with the late afternoon meal! Before leaving for the airport thanks were expressed to Juvenal for his careful driving, and to Roberto for the care and attention he had given all of us on the first part of the tour.

By the time we reached the airport shortly after 6pm the rain was falling steadily, but all we had to do was pass through security into the departure lounge. Take-off was just a few minutes late at 7.05pm, but we had flown some way north before the clouds cleared to reveal snowy peaks, forested hills and lakes. A smoking volcano was seen on the starboard side shortly before we reached Puerto Montt, our intermediate stop before reaching Santiago at 11pm.

By the time bags appeared, the minibus arrived and we had checked into our nearby hotel it was almost midnight and we were more than ready for bed.

Sunday, 30 November

Fine and sunny in Santiago.

For those doing the extension to Arica and up to the altiplano above Putre it was a short night, a very short night for with a 6am flight via Iquique they had to leave the hotel at 4.30am! For the four members of the party returning to London, Kay, Margaret, Mike and Wendy, things were somewhat more civilized and we were able to enjoy a leisurely breakfast before leaving for the airport at 10am on the hotel courtesy bus.

The busiest part of the international check-in hall at the airport was in front of the TAM desks and it took an age, an hour in fact, from the time we arrived until the time the last of our reduced party received their boarding passes, which covered both sectors of our flight to London via Sao Paulo.

The flight was an hour late leaving and this time no one had a window seat to enjoy their last views of the Andes. Arriving an hour late in Brazil was no problem as it meant we only had six hours to wait and not seven! The time passed as it often does at an airport – slowly, and when we eventually left it was just after midnight Brazilian time, or two hours behind London, or an hour ahead of Santiago.

Monday, 01 December

Back in the UK it was a cold winter's day. The first sign of land was the Purbeck of Dorset, then Poole Harbour, the Needles, Southampton and then north towards Berkshire and the home counties before crossing the southern outskirts of London to turn and come straight into Heathrow from the east and land more or less on schedule about 1.30pm.

Down in the baggage hall we were soon reunited with the luggage and saying farewell to the friends that we had shared such a splendid tour.

Acknowledgments

Thanks to Nigel and the boys at Fantastico Sur for setting up such a splendid tour, to our various drivers for a job well done, to Roberto for his constant good humour, companionship and expertise, but most especially yourselves for being such a good group, always on time and always in good humour, even when the tour arrival at hotels wasn't as anticipated! Thank you for coming and I hope we meet up on another Ornitholidays' tour again before too long. There are plenty in the brochure!

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Itinerary and weather

15 November	Overnight flight London Heathrow to São Paulo, Brazil
16 November	Early morning arrival São Paulo, onward flight to Santiago. Maipo Valley, lunch and afternoon visit to Concho y Toro winery. Overnight at Santa Cruz. Hot and sunny. 25°C
17 November	Morning visit to Viña Santa Cruz winery. Lunch, siesta and afternoon birding near Santa Cruz. Very hot and sunny. 32°C
18 November	Morning transfer to Vilches area with lunch and afternoon birding at Altos de Lircay Natural Reserve. Overnight Vilches. Hot, sunny and cloudless. 30°C
19 November	Morning birding at Altos de Lircay Natural Reserve. Lunch at Vilches and afternoon transfer to Santiago via Lago Colbún. Overnight Santiago. Hot and sunny. 30°C
20 November	Day excursion to Embalse El Yeso. Hot and sunny with scattered clouds over mountains p.m. 30°C, slightly cooler at height 25°C
21 November	a.m. into the Andes at Farellones. Late morning transfer to Cartegena and El Peral for afternoon birding. Overnight Quintero. Hot and sunny, cooler at the coast. 25°C
22 November	a.m. Pacific pelagic. Lunch at hotel, siesta and afternoon birding at Ventanas and Cachagua. Hot and sunny when not cloudy. 24°C
23 November	Return to Santiago via birding. Con Con, La Campana, Til Til, Lampa. Hot and sunny. 30°C
24 November	Morning flight to Punta Arenas. Afternoon excursion to Otway Sound. Overnight Punta Arenas. Breeze, sunny periods and showers. 12°C less with wind chill.
25 November	Early ferry crossing to Porvenir, birding in area and overnight there. Mainly cloudy, sunny periods, warmer than yesterday. 20°C less with wind chill.
26 November	Drive east to ferry at Bahia Azul. Ferry crossing, picnic lunch at Punta Delgada. p.m. birding en route to Puerto Natales where overnight. Overcast with sunny periods. A balmy 25°C
27 November	Transfer to Torres del Paine birding en route during the day. Cloudy, with sunshine periods late a.m. & early p.m. Brief, but heavy shower late afternoon. 18°C
28 November	Whole day's birding and exploration of Torres del Paine National Park. Sunny and warm out of biting wind. 9° - 18°
29 November	Road transfer to Punta Arenas, evening flight to Santiago where overnight. Overcast with rain late afternoon in south. 15°C
30 November	Early morning flight to Arica and onward to Putre by road for those on the extension. Flight to Sao Paulo and onwards to London for remainder of party.
01 December	Early afternoon arrival at Heathrow.

CHECKLIST OF BIRDS SEEN DURING THE TOUR

No of days recorded	Location	Abundance Scale
1 2h means seen on 1 day and heard on 2 other days	S = Santiago, Santa Cruz, Vilches and Andes C = Coastal central Chile from coast to coastal ranges P = Patagonia – Punta Arenas, Tierra del Fuego and Torres del Paine	1 = <5 seen 2 = 5-9 seen 3 = 10-99 seen 4 = 100-999 seen 5 = 1,000-9,999

SPECIES	No.of days recorded	Locations	Abundance Scale	SCIENTIFIC NAME
Darwin's Rhea	5	P	3	<i>Rhea pennata</i>
Chilean Tinamou	- 1h	S	h	<i>Nothoprocta perdicaria</i>
Humboldt Penguin	1	C	4	<i>Spheniscus humboldti</i>
Magellanic Penguin	3	P	4	<i>Spheniscus magellanicus</i>
Pied-billed Grebe	1	C	1	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>
White-tufted Grebe	2	C	1	<i>Rollandia rolland</i>
Great Grebe	6	S C	P 3	<i>Podiceps major</i>
Silvery Grebe	3	C	P 3	<i>Podiceps occipitalis</i>
Northern Royal Albatross	1	C	1	<i>Diomedea (epomophora) sandfordi</i>
Black-browed Albatross	3	C	P 3	<i>Thalassarche melanophris</i>
Buller's Albatross	1	C	1	<i>Thalassarche bulleri</i>
Salvin's Albatross	1	C	3	<i>Thalassarche (cauta) salvini</i>
Antarctic (Southern) Giant Petrel	2	C	1	<i>Macronectes giganteus</i>
Hall's (Northern) Giant Petrel	1	C	1	<i>Macronectes halli</i>
Cape Petrel	1	C	1	<i>Daption capense</i>
Masatierra Petrel	1	C	1	<i>Pterodroma defilippiana</i>
White-chinned Petrel	1	C	3	<i>Procellaria aequinoctialis</i>
Westland Petrel	1	C	3	<i>Procellaria westlandica</i>
Pink-footed Shearwater	3	C	4	<i>Puffinus creatopus</i>
Sooty Shearwater	3	C	4	<i>Puffinus griseus</i>
Wilson's Storm-Petrel	2	C	2	<i>Oceanites oceanicus</i>
Peruvian Diving-Petrel	1	C	1	<i>Pelecanoides garnotii</i>
Magellanic Diving-Petrel	2	P	3	<i>Pelecanoides magellani</i>
Peruvian Pelican	2	C	4	<i>Pelecanus thagus</i>
Peruvian Booby	3	C	3	<i>Sula variegata</i>
Neotropic Cormorant	9	S C	P 3	<i>Phalacrocorax brasiliensis</i>
Rock Shag	3	P	3	<i>Phalacrocorax magellanicus</i>
Guanay Cormorant	2	C	3	<i>Phalacrocorax bougainvillii</i>
Imperial Shag	5	P	4	<i>Phalacrocorax atriceps</i>
Red-legged Cormorant	1	C	2	<i>Phalacrocorax gaimardi</i>
Great Egret	3	S C	1	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Snowy Egret	5	S C	3	<i>Egretta thula</i>
Cattle Egret	6	S C	4	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>
Black-crowned Night-Heron	3	C	P 3	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>
Stripe-backed Bittern	1	C	1	<i>Ixobrychus involucris</i>
Black-faced Ibis	6	C	P 3	<i>Theristicus melanopis</i>
Chilean Flamingo	4	P	4	<i>Phoenicopterus chilensis</i>
Black-necked Swan	5	C	P 3	<i>Cygnus melanocorypha</i>
Coscoroba Swan	6	C	P 4	<i>Coscoroba coscoroba</i>
Andean Goose	1	S	1	<i>Chloephaga melanoptera</i>
Upland Goose	6	P	4	<i>Chloephaga picta</i>
Ashy-headed Goose	4	P	1	<i>Chloephaga poliocephala</i>
Ruddy-headed Goose	1	P	2	<i>Chloephaga rubidiceps</i>
Flightless Steamerduck	1	P	1	<i>Tachyeres pteneres</i>
Flying Steamerduck	4	P	3	<i>Tachyeres patachonicus</i>
Torrent Duck	2	S	P 1	<i>Merganetta armata</i>
Chiloe Wigeon	9	S C	P 4	<i>Anas sibilatrix</i>
Speckled Teal	7	S C	P 2	<i>Anas flavirostris</i>

Spectacled Duck	2	S		P	2	<i>Anas specularis</i>
Crested Duck	7	S		P	4	<i>Anas specularioides</i>
Yellow-billed Pintail	9	S	C	P	3	<i>Anas georgica</i>
Silver Teal	1			P	1	<i>Anas versicolor</i>
Cinnamon Teal	3		C		3	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>
Red Shoveler	6		C	P	3	<i>Anas platalea</i>
Black-headed Duck	1		C		2	<i>Heteronetta atricapilla</i>
Andean Duck	1			P	1	<i>Oxyura ferruginea</i>
Lake Duck	2		C		3	<i>Oxyura vittata</i>
Black Vulture	6	S	C		2	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>
Turkey Vulture	7	S	C	P	2	<i>Cathartes aura</i>
Andean Condor	6	S		P	3	<i>Vultur gryphus</i>
White-tailed Kite	3	S			1	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>
Chilean Hawk	1			P	1	<i>Accipiter chilensis</i>
Cinereous Harrier	7		C	P	1	<i>Circus cinereus</i>
Harris' Hawk	1	S			1	<i>Parabuteo unicinctus</i>
Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle	2			P	2	<i>Geranoaetus melanoleucus</i>
Red-backed Hawk	4	S	C		1	<i>Buteo polyosoma</i>
Puna Hawk	2	S			1	<i>Buteo poecilochrous</i>
Southern Crested Caracara	5			P	3	<i>Caracara plancus</i>
Chimango Caracara	13	S	C	P	3	<i>Milvago chimango</i>
American Kestrel	11	S	C	P	1	<i>Falco sparverius</i>
Peregrine Falcon	1	S			1	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>
California Quail (I)	6	S	C		3	<i>Callipepla californica</i>
Austral Rail	1			P	1	<i>Rallus antarcticus</i>
Plumbeous Rail	1	S			1	<i>Pardirallus sanguinolentus</i>
Spot-flanked Gallinule	1	S			1	<i>Gallinula melanops</i>
White-winged Coot	4		C	P	3	<i>Fulica leucoptera</i>
Red-gartered Coot	4		C	P	3	<i>Fulica armillata</i>
Red-fronted Coot	2		C		2	<i>Fulica rufifrons</i>
Magellanic Oystercatcher	6			P	3	<i>Haematopus leucopodus</i>
Blackish Oystercatcher	2		C		2	<i>Haematopus ater</i>
American Oystercatcher	2		C		3	<i>Haematopus palliatus</i>
White-backed Stilt	2		C		3	<i>Himantopus melanurus</i>
Southern Lapwing	14	S	C	P	4	<i>Vanellus chilensis</i>
Two-banded Plover	4			P	3	<i>Charadrius falklandicus</i>
Rufous-chested Dotterel	2			P	1	<i>Charadrius modestus</i>
Diademed Sandpiper-Plover	1	S			1	<i>Phegornis mitchellii</i>
Tawny-throated Dotterel	1			P	3	<i>Oreopholus ruficollis</i>
South American Snipe	3	lh		P	1	<i>Gallinago paraguaiiae</i>
(Hudsonian) Whimbrel	4		C	P	4	<i>Numenius phaeopus hudsonicus</i>
Greater Yellowlegs	2		C	P	2	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>
Lesser Yellowlegs	4		C	P	2	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>
Ruddy Turnstone	2		C		2	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>
White-rumped Sandpiper	3			P	5	<i>Calidris fuscicollis</i>
Baird's Sandpiper	4	S		P	4	<i>Calidris bairdii</i>
Wilson's Phalarope	1			P	3	<i>Phalaropus tricolor</i>
Red (Grey) Phalarope	2		C		3	<i>Phalaropus fulicaria</i>
Gray-breasted Seedsnipe	1		C		3	<i>Thinocorus orbignyianus</i>
Least Seedsnipe	2			P	1	<i>Thinocorus rumicivorus</i>
Parasitic Jaeger (Arctic Skua)	1		C		1	<i>Stercorarius parasiticus</i>
Brown Skua	1		C		1	<i>Stercorarius antarctica lonnbergi</i>
Chilean Skua	5		C	P	2	<i>Stercorarius chilensis</i>
Dolphin Gull	3			P	3	<i>Larus scoresbii</i>
Gray Gull	1		C		1	<i>Larus modestus</i>
Kelp Gull	11	S	C	P	4	<i>Larus dominicanus</i>
Brown-hooded Gull	9		C	P	3	<i>Larus maculipennis</i>
Franklin's Gull	2	S	C		4	<i>Larus pipixcan</i>
Elegant Tern	1		C		1	<i>Sterna elegans</i>
South American Tern	4			P	3	<i>Sterna hirundinacea</i>

Common Tern	1		C		5	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>	
Inca Tern	1		C		3	<i>Larosterna inca</i>	
Black Skimmer	2		C		3	<i>Rynchops niger</i>	
Rock Dove (introduced)	9		S	C	3	<i>Columba livia</i>	
Chilean Pigeon	3		S		2	<i>Columba araucana</i>	
Eared Dove	13		S	C	P	3	<i>Zenaida auriculata</i>
Picui Ground-Dove	2		S		2	<i>Columbina picui</i>	
Black-winged Ground-Dove	1		S		1	<i>Metriopelia melanoptera</i>	
Monk Parakeet	1		S		3	<i>Myiopsitta monachus</i>	
Rufous-legged Owl	-	1h	S		h	<i>Strix rufipes</i>	
Burrowing Owl	1		S		1	<i>Athene cucularia</i>	
White-sided Hillstar	1		S		2	<i>Oreotrochilus leucopleurus</i>	
Giant Hummingbird	4		S		1	<i>Patagona gigas</i>	
Green-backed Firecrown	2		S		1	<i>Sephanoides sephaniodes</i>	
Striped Woodpecker	1	2h	S		P	1	<i>Picoides lignarius</i>
Chilean Flicker	3			C	P	2	<i>Colaptes pitius</i>
Magellanic Woodpecker	3		S		P	1	<i>Campephilus magellanicus</i>
Common Miner	2				P	1	<i>Geositta cucularia</i>
Short-billed Miner	1				P	2	<i>Geositta antarctica</i>
Rufous-banded Miner	1		S		1	<i>Geositta rufipennis</i>	
Scale-throated Earthcreeper	2		S		P	1	<i>Upucerthia dumetaria</i>
Band-tailed Earthcreeper	1				P	1	<i>Upucerthia phoenicurus</i>
Crag Chilia (E)	1		S		1	<i>Chilia melanura</i>	
Chilean Seaside Cinclodes (E)	2			C		1	<i>Cinclodes nigrofumosus</i>
Dark-bellied Cinclodes	5				P	2	<i>Cinclodes patagonicus</i>
Gray-flanked Cinclodes	2		S		3	<i>Cinclodes oustaleti</i>	
Bar-winged Cinclodes	7		S	C	P	3	<i>Cinclodes fuscus</i>
Des Murs' Wiretail	1		S		1	<i>Sylviorthorhynchus desmursii</i>	
Thorn-tailed Rayadito	5		S	C	P	2	<i>Aphrastura spinicauda</i>
Plain-mantled Tit-Spinetail	3		S		1	<i>Leptasthenura aegithaloides</i>	
Wren-like Rushbird	2			C		1	<i>Phleocryptes melanops</i>
Sharp-billed (Lesser) Canastero	1		S		1	<i>Asthenes pyrrholeuca</i>	
Dusky-tailed Canastero (E)	1		S		1	<i>Asthenes humicola</i>	
Austral Canastero	1	2h			P	1	<i>Asthenes modesta</i>
White-throated Treerunner	2		S		1	<i>Pygarrhichas albogularis</i>	
Chestnut-throated Huet-huet	-	2h	S		h	<i>Pterotochos castaneus</i>	
Moustached Turca (E)	4		S	C	1	<i>Pterotochos megapodius</i>	
White-throated Tapaculo (E)	1	h		C	1	<i>Scelorchilus albicollis</i>	
Chucazo Tapaculo	1		S		1	<i>Scelorchilus rubecula</i>	
Dusky Tapaculo (E)	1		S		1	<i>Scytalopus fuscus</i>	
Rufous-tailed Plantcutter	5			C	1	<i>Phytotoma rara</i>	
White-crested Elaenia	6		S	C	P	3	<i>Elaenia albiceps</i>
Tufted Tit-Tyrant	4		S	C	1	<i>Anairetes parulus</i>	
Many-colored Rush-Tyrant	2			C	1	<i>Tachuris rubrigastra</i>	
Patagonian Tyrant	2		S		1	<i>Colorhamphus parvirostris</i>	
Fire-eyed Diucon	6		S	C	P	3	<i>Xolmis pyrope</i>
Chocolate-vented Tyrant	1				P	3	<i>Neoxolmis rufiventris</i>
Spot-billed Ground-Tyrant	1		S		1	<i>Muscisaxicola maculirostris</i>	
Cinnamon-bellied Ground-Tyrant	2				P	2	<i>Muscisaxicola capistrata</i>
Rufous-naped Ground-Tyrant	1		S		1	<i>Muscisaxicola rufivertex</i>	
White-browed Ground-Tyrant	2		S		3	<i>Muscisaxicola albilora</i>	
Cinereous Ground-Tyrant	1		S		1	<i>Muscisaxicola cinerea</i>	
Austral Negrito	7			C	P	4	<i>Lessonia rufa</i>
Spectacled Tyrant	1			C	1	<i>Hymenops perspicillatus</i>	
Chilean Swallow	13		S	C	P	3	<i>Tachycineta meyeri</i>
Blue-and-white Swallow	9		S	C	P	3	<i>Pygochelidon cyanoleuca</i>
Correndera Pipit	6		S		P	3	<i>Anthus correndera</i>
Southern House Wren	7		S	C	P	1	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>
Sedge Wren	1				P	1	<i>Cistothorus platensis</i>
Patagonian Mockingbird	1				P	1	<i>Mimus patagonicus</i>

Chilean Mockingbird (E)	7	S	C		3	<i>Mimus thenca</i>	
Austral Thrush	14	S	C	P	3	<i>Turdus falcklandii</i>	
House Sparrow (I)	13	S	C	P	3	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	
Black-chinned Siskin	8	S	C	P	3	<i>Carduelis barbata</i>	
Yellow-rumped Siskin	1	S			3	<i>Carduelis uropygialis</i>	
Gray-hooded Sierra-Finch	6	S	C	P	3	<i>Phrygilus gayi</i>	
Mourning Sierra-Finch	2	S		P	4	<i>Phrygilus fruticeti</i>	
Plumbeous Sierra-Finch	2	S		P	2	<i>Phrygilus unicolor</i>	
Band-tailed Sierra-Finch	1	S			1	<i>Phrygilus alaudinus</i>	
Black-throated Finch	1			P	3	<i>Melanodera melanodera</i>	
Yellow-bridled Finch	1			P	3	<i>Melanodera xanthogramma</i>	
Common Diuca-Finch	5	S	C		3	<i>Diuca diuca</i>	
Greater Yellow-Finch	3	S		P	3	<i>Sicalis auriventris</i>	
Patagonian Yellow-Finch	1			P	2	<i>Sicalis olivascens</i>	
Rufous-collared Sparrow	11	1h	S	C	P	1	<i>Zonotrichia capensis</i>
Yellow-winged Blackbird	4		S	C		3	<i>Agelaius thilius</i>
Long-tailed Meadowlark	14		S	C	P	3	<i>Sturnella loyca</i>
Shiny Cowbird	7		S	C		3	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>
Austral Blackbird	8		S	C	P	3	<i>Curaeus curaeus</i>
MAMMALS							
Old World Rabbit	1		S			1	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
European Brown Hare (Intro)	5				P	3	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>
Muskrat (Introduced)	3				P	1	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>
Nutria (Coypu)	2			C		1	<i>Myocastor coypus</i>
Humboldt's Hog-nosed Skunk	1				P	1	<i>Conepatus humboldtii</i>
Peale's Dolphin	1				P	1	<i>Lagenorhynchus australis</i>
Commerson's Dolphin	1				P	3	<i>Cephalorhynchus commersonii</i>
Southern Grey Fox	4				P	3	<i>Pseudalopex griseus</i>
Culpeo Fox	2		S		P	1	<i>Pseudalopex culpaeus</i>
Southern Sea Lion	2			C	P	1	<i>Otaria byronia</i>
Guanaco	5				P	4	<i>Lama guanicoe</i>

Also several small rodents, tarantulas, various lizards, butterflies and moths were recorded.

This list represents those birds and other animals as seen by party members of the tour.



Vina Santa Cruz



Picnic with Chilean Firebush



Magellanic Woodpecker - male



Stripe-backed Bittern - male



Commerson's Dolphin



Austral Canastero



Austral Rail



Calceolaria uniflora



Porcelain Orchid



Guanacos sparring



Torres del Paine

**Front cover: Black-browed Albatross
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