

Colombia: Birding from Bogota | July 22 – 30, 2026

Trip Report by Tina Greenawalt



With Naturalist Journeys Guide Tina Greenawalt, Local Guide Manuel Espejo, and participants Nancy, Laurie, Melina, Kathy, Kent, Priscilla, Miles, and Jerry



Wed., Jul. 22 Arrivals in Bogota

Everyone arrived in Bogota in time for dinner with the group. Manuel met us at the Hilton where we enjoyed dinner, an overview of the trip, and shared a lot of laughs as we got to know each other.

Thurs., Jul. 23 La Florida | Estancia San Antonio

We left the hotel early at 5:00 AM for La Florida to try and beat some of the traffic in Bogota. We arrived a little over an hour later. Luckily the rain had stopped once we arrived. We immediately saw American Coot, Andean Duck, Bare-faced Ibis, and Pie-billed Grebe. We walked down a trail along the edge of the lake and saw the endemic Spot-flanked Gallinule, a Torrent Tyrannulet, Tropical Kingbird, Yellow-hooded Blackbird, Rufous-collared Sparrow, but no Bogota Rail which was our target species here. Manuel said it would be a challenge due to the degradation of habitat here.

We continued further down the trail and saw a bunch of adorable Brazilian Guinea Pig. As we neared the end of the trail, we heard the rail but did not see it. Further down, we heard it again and after we played the call again we finally got a few glimpses of it going back and forth into the reeds. Before leaving that area, Priscilla saw our first of many Sparkling Violetear above us in a tree. We headed out toward the van and picked up Yellow-backed Oriole near the entrance. Then we got back in the van to head for some breakfast at a nice little breakfast spot that was attached to a bike shop.

After some good coffee and breakfast, we continued to Estancia San Antonio, only about 30 minutes away. It was raining when we got there, but we walked around the property a bit while Manuel was sorting our rooms where we saw a Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager and White-throated Tyrannulet. Manuel eventually joined and we walked further down on the property around a pond and found a Mountain Velvetbreast. Priscilla

spotted a Fawn-breasted Tanager and we got better looks at the Scarlet-bellied Mountain-Tanager. Jerry spotted a close Mountain Elaenia. Then it started to rain harder so we headed back to check into our rooms. After a short break we had a light lunch where most people got soup with avocado and fresh made bread. We also tried some of the juices and hot sugar water while Manuel told us stories of his country.

We had a short break after lunch and left at 3:15 pm to a nearby wetland in hopes of seeing Noble Snipe and better views of Bogota Rail. It rained the whole time but we managed to get good looks at a variety of birds. Before getting out of the van we spotted Andean Teal in the road. Then we had a flock of Western Cattle-Egret, a single Bare-faced Ibis, a few Eared Dove, an Eastern Meadowlark, and some nice views of a Band-tailed Seedeater. Priscilla saw a Neotropic Cormorant fly by at a distance. We walked further down the road where Jerry spotted something on a distant fencepost, which Manuel confirmed was a Noble Snipe! We got some quick scope views and moved further down the road to get a better look while a second one took off flying away from us. As it started raining harder, we got better views and some photos of the Snipe before heading back to the van. The Torrent Tyrannulet reappeared in a small tree by the road and posed for some photos. With the onset of heavier rain we decided to head back to the hotel.

We did the species checklist by the fireplace at the lodge and had an interesting discussion about stroganoff. Dinner was very good and one person from our group indulged in chocolate cake and ice cream for their meal.



Fri., Jul. 24

Guajira Forest | Los Andes Bird Observatory

Those who wanted coffee met at 5:30 AM and we left a little before 6 to head to the Guajira Reserve. We loaded into three 4x4 trucks. We stopped at a pass where there's a chance of Spectacled Bear, but it was foggy so we didn't stay long. We continued toward Guajira Forest and made a few stops along the way. We saw our first Blue-throated Starfrontlet, Green-and-Black Fruiteater, Andean Guan and Streaked-necked Flycatcher. We headed further up the road to see Black-billed Mountain-Toucan, Whistling Heron, Red-crested Cotinga, Spot-breasted Woodpecker, and a beautiful Plushcap.

We then continued up the dirt road to the Guajira Forest Reserve with Mambe the Malamute and hummingbird feeders. We got great looks at Sword-billed Hummingbird, Longuemare's Sunangel, Glowing Puffleg, Lesser Violetear, and more Blue-throated Starfrontlet. Mambe got some pets as well as some arepa for breakfast. We then headed back to the lodge, spotting a Yellow-headed Caracara on our way back down the road.

After lunch at the lodge a few of the group found a Crimson-mantled Woodpecker along with Black-backed Grosbeak and Buff-banded Mountain Tanager. Our afternoon birding excursion gave us a few new species

including White-banded Tyrannulet, Golden-fronted Redstart, Bluish Flowerpiercer, and Black-chested Buzzard-Eagle.

Back at the lodge for dinner, we celebrated Kent's birthday with chocolate cake and ice cream before turning in for the evening.



Sat., Jul. 25

Birding Around Estancia San Antonio | El Zoque Reserve

Today we left the lodge early to visit the El Zoque Reserve. The weather was chilly, but the birding was great. We managed to find some tougher species such as Pale-bellied Tapaculo. Muisca Antpitta was stubborn, but eventually came out and ended up seeing two different birds. Both Blue-backed and Rufous-browed Conebill were seen as well as Black-chested and Scarlet-bellied Mountain Tanagers. The hummingbirds put on a great show and we saw many Great Sapphirewing along with Sword-billed Hummingbird, Glowing Puffleg, Tyrian Metaltail, the beautiful Shining Sunbeam, and Longuemare's Sunangel. A short walk to an overlook gave brief views of the Bronze-tailed Thornbill as well.

After a delicious hot lunch at the reserve, the group split up and some stayed by the hummingbird feeders while others went for a walk with Manuel. After spending a good part of the day here, it was time to head back to Bogota. We arrived in late afternoon and had dinner at the hotel and prepared for an early departure tomorrow.

Sun., Jul. 26

Sumapaz National Park | Villavicencio

We left before sunrise and drove to the south where we had breakfast in Mutar Restaurant. We then continued on and up to Sumapaz National Park. We were ready with fresh eggs and treats for the military guards and they gladly accepted our gifts. Here we saw Apolinar's Wren, Chestnut-winged Cinclodes, Andean Duck, Andean Teal, Many-striped Canastero, and a distant Green-bearded Helmetcrest. A Boyaca Antpitta made an appearance near the lake and we saw a few more Bronze-tailed Thornbird. Later in the morning, we headed back to the Mutar Restaurant and had ajiaco for lunch.

We then headed to Villavicencio for the warmer portion of the trip. When we arrived at Hotel Aitabu around 5 PM there was a lot of bird activity. Black-bellied and White-faced Whistling-Ducks greeted us right on the road along with several Gray-cowled Wood-Rail. Wattled Jacana and Southern Lapwing hung out on the lawn and Capybara lazed about on the island in the middle of the lake. While Manuel got people checked in, everyone took off in various directions to look for birds. Palm Tanager, Saffron Finch, Oriole Blackbird, and Bananaquit were seen among the trees on the property.

Everyone got checked into their rooms and we reconvened for a checklist session in the hotel lobby. Dinner in the hotel restaurant followed, which took quite a while but was very good. Empanadas, plantains, whole fish, and seafood stew were enjoyed by many.



Mon., Jul. 27

Villavicencio | Humedales El Silencio

We left at 6 AM to head to the El Silencio Reserve, about 40 minutes from the hotel. Immediately upon arrival, we heard birds singing and people set off in a few different directions in search of new species. We managed to find a Black-crowned Tityra briefly perched in a tree and a nearby Two-banded Puffbird on a wire that posed nicely for photographs. A Rufous-and-white Wren was singing and we found it after a short walk. Soon breakfast was ready and we enjoyed a delicious breakfast of homemade arepas, eggs, sourdough bread, and great coffee.

After breakfast we went on a walk with one of the owners and saw a lot of great birds and butterflies! Amazonian Motmot was a highlight of the walk and we got great views. We saw several Hoatzin the distance, Southern Beardless Tyrannulet, Glittering Emerald, Oriole Blackbird, and several Brown-throated Parakeet. One of the stars of the morning was a Giant Anteater that was running through the grass in front of the group, a rare species that we were excited to see!

After our walk, we enjoyed a lunch of either chicken or a lentil patty for the vegetarians, along with vegetables and potatoes. Most people indulged in an acai and banana smoothie that was really tasty. After lunch we took a short walk and saw Lineated Woodpecker, Straight-billed Woodcreeper, Scaled Piculet, Burnished-Buff Tanager, and Chestnut-eared Aracari. Jerry spotted a few Spix's Guan and we heard a Cinereous Tinamou calling in the distant. Back near the house we saw better views of Lineated Woodpecker, Lettered Aracari, Swallow Tanager, Palm Tanager, and a Silver-beaked Tanager.

It was time to go and we had to drag ourselves away from all the great birds. On our drive out, we spotted several Whistling Heron, a Capped Heron, and a pair of Double-striped Thick-Knee. A Crested Caracara briefly posed by a

tree before taking off and Southern Lapwing and Wattled Jacana made an appearance before we got back on the highway toward Villavicencio.

After an afternoon break at the hotel, some of the group met for birding at 3:30 PM. We saw a single Sunbittern that did not give us a chance to see its beautiful wing pattern, Gray-cowled Wood-Rail, Wattled Jacana, Yellow-crowned Tyrannulet, several Hoatzin, Spectacled Parrotlet, Green and Ringed Kingfisher, Bananaquit, Gray seedeater, Yellow-browed Sparrow. Of course, the ever-present Capybara was also lounging around.

Most of the group went to dinner at a local pizza place and enjoyed delicious wood-fired pizza. We shared a Nutella pizza for dessert and it was Pedro's first time trying Nutella, which he really enjoyed. On our way back toward the hotel Manuel spotted a small caiman on the side of the road. We stopped for it and while Manuel was trying to get it off the road so it didn't get hit by a car it latched onto his boot. Luckily no humans or caiman were injured and the caiman was eventually safely escorted out of the road. Shortly after that, we got out of the van to walk the one kilometer back to the hotel and see what we could find at night. Manuel spotted a Common Parakeet in the field and Miles found a few Brumback's Night Monkey high up in a tree. Then it was back to the hotel and to bed.



Tues., Jul. 28 Villavicencio | Bavaria Forest

We spent today birding at the Bavaria Forest, a patch of humid, tropical rainforest, searching for colorful tanagers and other low elevation species. It was a bit quiet at first, but we managed to find some small flocks and good species in the morning. We had brief views of the skulking White-browed Antbird, in addition to Striolated and White-bearded Manakin, as well as a Blue-fronted Lancebill that perched nicely for photos. Our reward for hiking uphill was a Great Potoo perched up in a tree above the road. We had nice views and spent a bit of time with it before heading back down. Shortly after there was a King Vulture soaring in the distance and a Many-banded Aracari hopping around the treetops. Further down we found a small flock of Yellow-billed Nunbird flying back and forth over the road. We also managed to find both Sepia-capped and Slaty-capped Flycatcher. Near the bottom of the road, our local guide had found a White-chested Puffbird, which posed nicely for photographs before taking off.

We headed to lunch at a local cowboy restaurant before going back to the hotel for a brief break during the heat of the day. Our group in the afternoon was smaller as some opted for relaxing or pool time. Back at the Bavaria Forest, we had a nice mixed flock of Masked Tanager, both Purple and Green Honeycreeper, Bay-headed Tanager, Silver-beaked Tanager, and Orange-bellied Euphonia. Shortly after that we had nice, but brief views of Black-faced Antbird and White-chinned Jacamar. A Green-backed Trogon foraged high up in the trees while a Yellow-tufted Woodpecker worked its way up a tree lower down. At the turn around point for our afternoon birding, a White-throated Toucan gave us brief glimpses. On the way back to the van, we had very nice views of three Gilded Barbet and a Russet-backed Oropendola flew overhead.

We headed back to the hotel for a short break before dinner, the evening checklist, and to get ready for the early departure tomorrow morning.



Wed., Jul. 29 La Herreria | Monterredondo | Bogota

We met in the lobby early for those who wanted coffee, graciously prepared by Manuel. Then we headed north about 30 minutes to meet our drivers that would take us to La Herreria. We piled into three 4x4s and made the journey up for about an hour. Views were spectacular and upon arrival we were greeted by a flurry of hummingbird activity at the feeders. Our main target here was the Cundinamarca Antpitta, but everyone enjoyed watching the various feeders by the house. Collared and Bronzy Inca dashed back and forth along with Speckled Hummingbird, Violet-fronted Brilliant, and a beautiful Long-tailed Sylph. A few people saw a Southern Emerald-Toucanet fly by and a Buff-banded Mountain Tanager visited the feeders briefly a couple of times.

Before long, it was time for breakfast and coffee as well as a lovely spread of eggs, arepa, cheese, and fruit that was dished out for everyone. After a delicious and filling meal, it was time for the antpitta's breakfast of mealworms. We headed down the trail to the blind, and we only had to wait a couple of minutes before the Cundinamarca Antpitta showed up. Everyone had good views and the bird ate several mealworms before heading off into the forest. Afterward, we had more time at the feeders while Miles and Priscilla opted for a walk with a local guide. A few new birds came into the feeders including a very shy Lined Quail-Dove and a quick visit from an Azara's Spinetail. After that it was back in the 4x4's for the ride down the mountain.

Back at the van we got to meet a few of the dogs and cats that Manuel helps to feed at a local shop. Then it was back in the van for a short drive to Casa Hillebrand. It was raining when we arrived so the feeders did not have much activity at first. We went behind the house to another set of feeders where we saw activity pick up as the

rain slowed down. An array of tanagers appeared including White-lined, Palm, Blue-gray, Blue-necked, and Silver-beaked while a Golden-olive Woodpecker flew in a nearby avocado tree. Back at the other feeders, we had Green Jay, Russet-backed Oropendola, Spectacled Thrush hopping around the ground, Great Kiskadee, and a beautiful Red-headed Barbet. The hummingbird feeders were busy with White-vented Plumeleteer, Black-throated Mango, and an occasional Green-bellied Hummingbird.

We headed out for a brief walk with Manuel but didn't find the owls we had hoped to see. Back at the house, lunch was ready. We enjoyed a very nice meal and then a smaller group headed back out with Manuel while others stayed at the feeders. Manuel's group managed to find a Cinnamon Becard, Slaty-capped Flycatcher, and Tropical Parula among others. Before heading back, Manuel heard Andean Cock-of-the-rock calling a short distance away and we decided to try and find them. We headed down a slippery path that went deeper into the forest and after a few minutes we spotted the first one! This was our last species of the trip and a really great find. A beautiful male perched above us and we had great views before it flew off out of sight. On the way back to the house, we found a pair of Gray-bellied Night Monkey huddled together high in a bamboo patch, which was the final mammal species for the trip.

We then got back in the van to head to Bogota, arriving in the late afternoon. We said goodbye to our fantastic driver, Pedro, and checked into the Hilton. We had our farewell dinner and final checklist at the hotel. Everyone said goodbye and hopefully we'll cross paths in the future.

Photo Credits: Group Photo (Kent Weakley, KW), Sparkling Violetear (Nancy Siepman, NS), Two-banded Puffbird (Tina Greenawalt, TG), Golden-olive Woodpecker (NS), White-bellied Woodstar (NS), Yellow-tufted Woodpecker (TG), White-faced Whistling Duck (Tina Greenawalt), Blue-necked Tanager (TG), Red-headed Barbet (TG), Saffron Finch (TG), Landscape (KW), Tour Participants (TG), Horse (TG), Collared Inca (TG), Spectacled Parrotlet (TG), Humboldt's Squirrel Monkey (TG), Dirt Road (TG), Sunbittern (NS), Greater Capybara (TG), Brumback's Night Monkey (TG), Caiman (Jerry Britten, JB), Cundimarca Antpitta (TG), Chestnut-eared Aracari (NS), Butterfly (NS), Amazonian Motmot (TG), Andean Emerald (TG), Butterfly (NS), White-chested Puffbird (TG), Hoatzin (TG), Gilded Barbet (TG), Long-tailed Sylph (TG), Cock-of-the-rock (TG)