
Varzea birding in Loreto, Peru 13-15 March, 2017

Cover picture: White-eared Jacamar

Mikko Pyhälä



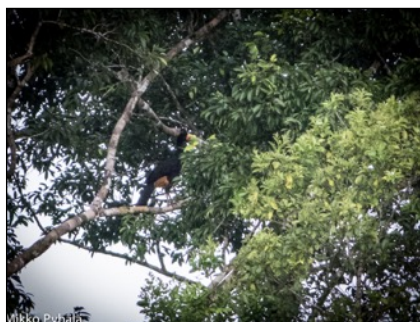
During our two weeks in Peru, I spent with my wife Pia two nights at the Muyuna Amazon Lodge by the Yanayacu River in the buffer zone for the Tamshiyacu-Tahuyayo Communal Regional Conservation Area. We observed by foot the small patch of forest on still dry ground (*restinga*) and by boat and canoe the fully flooded forest (*varzea*). On our walks we were ferociously attacked by swarms of mosquitoes, but in the fully flooded forest there were no mosquitoes at all. Fortunately there is no malaria in this site, as proved by the healthy population of Noisy Night Monkeys (picture of two family members on p. 2) which have no resistance to this disease. We also visited the Buenos Aires Island in the Amazon River to observe some island specialist birds. I had prepared a wish list of about 30 species known to occur in the Muyuna area where about 430 species have been observed.

Within 48 hours, my excellent guide “Moises” showed me over 150 species, out of which 7 were lifers, and additional 8 species which I had not observed in Peru before. Thus my birding list for Peru reached 1060 species in this country which is third richest in the world in avian diversity (close to 1800 species). I used to live in Peru 1998-2002 and have visited occasionally thereafter. Moises has decades of experience as nature guide and worked for four years with the legendary Ted Parker. His helpful assistant was Jairo. An additional day at the lodge could have easily brought some 30 additional species.

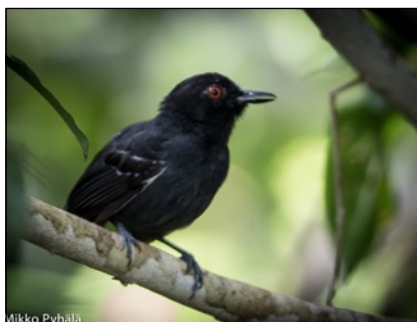


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The most spectacular observation was of a female **Wattled Curassow** high in a very distant tree, one could say miraculously spotted by Moises (picture below left). This is one of the few places where one can reasonably expect to find this critically endangered species in the Amazonia. Moises mentioned that the population could be around 300 individuals. A census was recently carried out by Jean Carla Flores.



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I had previously seen most of the Amazon River specialist birds and was very satisfied in observing several of those I had never seen before such as **Black-tailed Antbird** (picture of male above middle) and **Band-tailed Antbird** (picture of male right; they are usually found together), and **Plain-breasted Piculet**.



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Other Amazon River specialist birds observed were **Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture**, **Short-tailed Parrot** (picture left), **Festive Parrot** (my first in Peru), **Olive-spotted Hummingbird** (only my guide saw it, I had seen it before), **Zimmer's Woodcreeper** (heard), **Red-and-white Spinetail** (picture on p. 3 upper right), **Pale-billed Hornero** (heard), **Castelnau's Antshrike** (heard at the mouth of the Yanayacu river), **Black-and-white Antbird** (picture on p. 3 upper left), **White-headed Marsh-Tyrant** (picture of female in flight p. 3 upper middle), **Yellow-hooded Blackbird** and **Purple-**



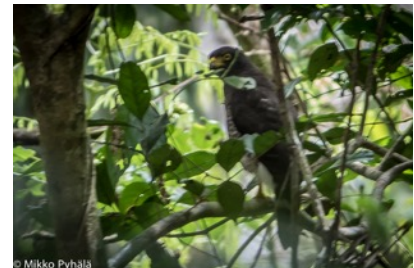
throated Euphonia (not strictly Amazonian). After this trip, the only Amazon River specialist found



Flycatcher (heard), **Fuscous Flycatcher**, **Grey-headed Tanager** and **White-shouldered Tanager**.

in Peru I keep missing is **Spotted Antpitta**. **Riverside Tyrant** - one female and several males were seen right from the Malecón in Iquitos.

My other lifers were **Rufous-necked Puffbird** (heard very near but not seen in restinga), **Ruddy Spinetail**, and **Rusty-fronted Tody-Flycatcher**. The other new species for my Peru list were **American Pygmy-Kingfisher**, (female left) **Amazonian Antshrike**, **Eastern Kingbird**, **Euler's**



We were lucky to spot a nesting site of **Horned Screamer** with three chicks that could be photographed, and to see **Lined Forest-Falcon**, also photographed (above juvenile).

My biggest miss was **Zigzag Heron** which had been seen quite recently. When we reached the typical habitat it started to rain so we had to leave. We also missed **Caqueta**



Seedeater which often is seen on Buenos Aires Island. [Other usually common species of the location now missed were.... **Nunlets** etc. Moises please specify]

We observed eight species of primates: **Brown** and **White**



Capuchin Monkeys, **Squirrel Monkey** (picture left), **Dusky Titi Monkey**, **Howler Monkey**, **Noisy Night Monkey** (at homing tree), **Pygmy Marmoset** (at homing tree) and **Saddleback Tamarin** (at lodge). We had a close look at the gorgeous **Rainbow Boa** (picture p. 4 above), plus **Green-crested Iguana**, **Spectacled Caiman**, **Giant Tree Rat**, and at the nest hole, **Yellow-crowned Brush-Tailed Rat** (picture above right). At the mouth of the Yanayacu River, **Grey** and **Pink Dolphins** could be seen constantly harvesting abundant fish emerging from the smaller to the bigger river.

Our Muyuna experience was highly satisfying in all aspects. The lodge was very ecological, comfortable and spacious, and mosquitoes could not enter the living spaces. In our cabin we had a broad double bed and adjoining bathroom and shower. We had excellent meals at the large living-dining room. All buildings could be reached by boardwalks on stilts. The staff was very friendly and knowledgeable, most of them living with their families in the near-by village of San Juan. Some of them come from the large Buenos Aires Island where banana is the main crop. Fishing is not allowed in this protected area.



Access is by speedboat from Iquitos with a three-and-a-half hours ride up, three hours down the river, with a very short stop at the Tamshiyacu village where there is a snack bar with delicious yucca pies and fruit, and a stand-up privacy toilet of two planks above the water.

Pia and I are grateful for the attention shown to us in Iquitos by Instituto de Investigación de la Amazonia Peruana where on 16 March I gave a lecture "Biodiversidad, seguro de vida de la humanidad – en peligro" and received the IIAP Medal of Honor. It was great to be reunited again with old scientist friends like Dennis del Castillo, Kember Mejía, Elsa Rengifo, Juan Díaz, Janet Braga (of UNAP) and others. I worked very closely with them on Finland's many projects when I was Ambassador of Finland in Peru and visited Iquitos often.

We are grateful to Analia Serfati and Pedro Sánchez for reducing the price of our stay at Muyuna Amazon Lodge. Also we were most pleased to meet Ana Maria Gonzáles, Lawyer, and Alejandro Sánchez, Business Management, of Nature and Conservation International, and were informed of the activities of their organization. Our thanks also go to José Álvarez Alonso and Noam Shany for their outstanding advice and coordination.

Here is the complete list of species observed. I have added the subspecies for birds which have such in this location, mostly for species for which I have uploaded a photograph in Internet Bird Collection (ibc.lynxeds.com). I have followed the nomenclature as in Schulenberg et. al *Birds of Peru* (Princeton 2007), except for five cases where I have taken the newer name for a split adopted by *Handbook of the Birds of the World*, and BirdLife.



Great Egret *Ardea alba*, very common
 Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*, several seen
 Cocoi Heron *Ardea cocoi*, a few
 Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*, a few
 Striated Heron *Butorides striata*, very common
 Rufescent Tiger-Heron (adult right)
 Horned Screamer *Anhima cornuta*, very common, also chicks (picture at left)



Neotropic Cormorant *Phalacrocorax brasilianus*, very common
Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga*, a few
Muscovy Duck *Cairina moschata*, two birds

11. Wattled Curassow *Crax globulosa*, one female in canopy at sunrise. Used to be widely spread but overhunted, now almost extirpated in Peru. Environmental education has helped.
Amazonian Pygmy-Owl *Glaucidium hardyi*, one in restinga, also heard
Black Vulture *Coragyps atratus*, common, also at lodge
Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*, one seen
Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture *Cathartes burrovianus*, common
Plumbeous Kite *Ictinia plumbea*, common, picture p. 10
Laughing Falcon *Herpetotheres cachinnans*, a few
Lined Forest-Falcon *Micrastur gilvicollis*, one juvenile in restinga, picture p. 3
Slate-colored Hawk *Leucopternis schistaceus*, common (picture of juvenile at right)
Great Black Hawk *Buteogallus urubitinga*, several seen

21. Black-collared Hawk *Busarellus nigricollis*, common near water, picture p. 10
Roadside Hawk *Buteo magnirostris*, common
Black Caracara *Daptrius ater*, small flock flew over
Yellow-headed Caracara *Milvago chimachima*, common, also at lodge
Wattled Jacana *Jacana jacana*, very common
Large-billed Tern *Phaetusa simplex*, very common
White-tipped Dove *Leptotila verreauxi*, heard
Grey-fronted Dove *Leptotila rufifaxilla*, heard and seen
Blue-and-Yellow Macaw *Ara ararauna*, small groups seen and heard
Red-bellied Macaw *Orthopsittaca manilata*, larger flocks seen and heard

31. White-eyed Parakeet *Aratinga leucophthalma*, one individual

White-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris versicolorus*, several flocks

Cobalt-winged Parakeet *Brotogeris cyanoptera*, at least one flock

Tui Parakeet *Brotogeris sanctithomae*, one flock

Dusky-billed Parrotlet *Forpus sclateri*, one individual

Black-headed Parrot *Pionites melanocephalus*, several flocks

White-bellied Parrot *Pionites leucogaster*, together with previous

Short-tailed Parrot *Graydidascalus brachyurus*, small groups moving around, picture p- 2

Festive Parrot *Amazona festiva*, small groups moving around, near-treathened

Yellow-crowned Parrot *Amazona ochrocephala*, at least one group

41. Mealy Parrot *Amazona farinosa*, several pairs separately

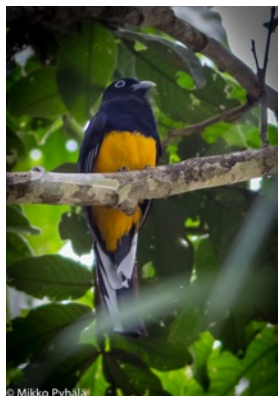
Greater Ani *Crotophaga major*, very common

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*, common



Hoatzin *Opisthocomus hoazin*, two birds, a large colony is near-by
Common Potoo *Nyctibus griseus*, one opposite San Juan village at night
Great Potoo *Nyctibus grandis*, one
Ladder-tailed Nightjar *Hydropsalis climacocerca*, several seen at night by the river
Fork-tailed Palm-Swift *Tchornis squamata*, common
Hermit *Phaetornis sp.*, seen in restinga
Blue-chinned Sapphire *Clorestes notata* (possibly), seen in restinga

51. Black-tailed Trogon *Trogon melanurus*, heard at lodge
Green-backed Trogon *Trogon viridis* (formerly White-tailed Trogon, the northern forms of which now were split away from *viridis* but kept their English name), at lodge, picture of male below middle
Amazon Kingfisher *Chloroceryle amazona*, a few
Ringed Kingfisher *Megaceryle torquata*, common
Green Kingfisher *Chloroceryle americana americana*, several (female in picture below left)
American Pygmy-Kingfisher *Chloroceryle aenea aenea*, in restinga near lodge, picture p. 3
White-eared Jacamar *Galbalcyrhynchus leucotis*, individuals and small groups, picture on cover



Bluish-fronted Jacamar *Galbula cyanescens*, individuals or pairs heard and seen
Collared Puffbird *Bucco capensis*, heard in restinga
Rufous-necked Puffbird *Malacoptila rufa*, heard in restinga

61. Chestnut-capped Puffbird *Bucco macrodactylus*, one juvenile in varzea (picture above right)
Black-fronted Nunbird *Monasa nigrifrons*, very common
Scarlet-crowned Barbet *Capito aurovirens*, seen at lodge
Gilded Barbet *Capito auratus*, a group flew over the river
Lettered Aracari *Pteroglossus inscriptus*, small groups moving around
Chestnut-eared Aracari *Pteroglossus castanotis*, small groups moving around
White-throated Toucan *Ramphastos tucanus*, around in small numbers
Plain-breasted Piculet *Picumnus castelnau*, single birds on Buenos Aires Island and in varzea
Yellow-tufted Woodpecker *Melanerpes cruentatus*, heard in resting
Chestnut Woodpecker *Celeus elegans citreopygius*, one male seen, several heard (picture p. 7)

71. Cream-colored Woodpecker *Celeus flavus peruvianus*, one female seen in restinga (picture p. 7)
Crimson-crested Woodpecker *Campephilus melanoleucus*, one seen in varzea
Red-necked Woodpecker *Campephilus rubricollis*, several heard



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Plain Brown Woodcreeper *Dendrocincla fuliginosa*, seen once in restinga

Strong-billed Woodcreeper *Xiphocolaptes promeropyrhynchus*, a few

Lafresnay's Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus guttatus* (split from Buff-throated Woodcreeper *X. guttatus*), most common Woodcreeper here

Zimmer's Woodpecker *Xiphorhynchus kienerii*, heard

Straight-billed Woodpecker *Xiphorhynchus picus*, a few

Elegant Woodcreeper *Xiphorhynchus elegans*, seen in restinga

Eastern Olivaceous Woodcreeper *Sittasomus griseicapillus*, seen in restinga in mixed group (separated from Western O. W. S. *griseus*)

81. Long-billed Woodcreeper *Nasica longirostris*, heard

Dark-breasted Spinetail *Synallaxis albigularis*, Buenos Aires Island

Ruddy Spinetail *Synallaxis rutilans*, only seen by Mikko and Pia on Buenos Aires Island low in vegetation, did not respond to play-back

Red-and-white Spinetail *Certhiaxis mustelinus*, several pairs on riverside

Pale-billed Hornero *Furnarius torridus*, heard

Great Antshrike *Taraba major*, several males seen

Plain-winged Antshrike *Thamnophilus schistaceus*, female seen in restinga

Castelnau's Antshrike *Thamnophilus cryptoleucus*, several heard

Amazonian Antshrike *Thamnophilus amazonicus amazonicus*, one pair seen (picture of male below)

Bluish Slate Antshrike *Thamnophilus schistogynus*, male and female in mixed group in restinga



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91. Saturnine Antshrike *Thamnomanes saturninus*, heard in restinga

Pygmy Antwren *Myrmotherula brachyura*, heard in restinga

Grey Antwren *Myrmotherula menetriesii*, male in mixed group in restinga
 White-flanked Antwren *Myrmotherula axillaris*, female in mixed group
 Peruvian Antwren *Hypocnemis cantator peruvianus* (formerly called Warbling Antbird *H. cantator*), several heard
 Grey Antbird *Cercomacra cinerascens*, in mixed group in restinga

Ash-breasted Antbird *Myrmoborus lugubri berlepschi*, pair on Buenos Aires Island, singing (picture of male right)
 Black-tailed Antbird *Myrmoborus melanurus*, a few pairs in varzea, singing, near-threatened
 Black-spotted Bare-eye *Phlegopsis nigromaculata*, a group of several heard in restinga
 Silvered Antbird *Sclateria naevia*, several heard in varzea)



101. Band-tailed Antbird *Hypocnemoides maculicauda*, a few pairs in varzea singing

Black-and-white Antbird *Myrmochanes hemileucus*, pair on Buenos Aires Island singing, picture p. 3
 Forest Elaenia *Myiopagis gaimardii*, one seen
 Rusty-Fronted Tody-Flycatcher *Poecilatriccus latirostris*, one or two pairs on Buenos Aires Island singing
 Grey-crowned Flycatcher *Tolmomyias poliocephalus*, heard in restinga
 Yellow-breasted Flycatcher *Tolmomyias flaviventris*, heard in varzea
 Euler's Flycatcher *Lathrotriccus euleri*, heard in restinga and in varzea
 Fuscous Flycatcher *Cnemotriccus fuscatus fuscator*, one on Buenos Aires Island (picture below)
 White-headed Marsh-Tyrant *Arundinicola leucocephala*, several pairs in river vegetation, picture p. 3
 Variegated Flycatcher *Empidonomus varius*, one seen



111. Streaked Flycatcher *Myiodynastus maculatus*, heard
 Boat-billed Flycatcher *Megarhynchus pitangua*, heard frequently at lodge

Lesser Kiskadee *Pitangus lictor*, very common near water
 Great Kiskadee *Pitangus sulphuratus*, very common
 Social Flycatcher *Myiozetetes similis*, one seen in riverine vegetation

Fork-tailed Flycatcher *Tyrannus savana*, large migratory flocks
 Eastern Kingbird *Tyrannus tyrannus*, together with previous
 Tropical Kingbird *Tyrannus melancholicus*, several pairs
 Dusky-capped Flycatcher *Myiarchus tuberculifer tuberculifer*, one in varzea
 White-winged Becard *Pachyramphus polycopterus*, heard

121. Black-capped Becard *Pachyramphus marginatus*, in a tree in varzea
 Cinnamon Attila *Attila cinnamomeus*, in tree canopy with other species
 Dull-capped Attila *Attila bolivianus*, heard
 Black-tailed Tityra *Tityra cayana*, one in tree canopy
 Purple-throated Fruitcrow *Querula purpurata*, heard in restinga
 Bare-necked Fruitcrow *Gymnoderus foetidus*, one flew over the river
 Dwarf Tyrant-Manakin *Tyrannetes stoltzmanni*, several heard and seen vocalizing in restinga

White-bearded Manakin *Manacus manacus*, heard in restinga
Wire-tailed Manakin *Pipra filicauda*, lek near lodge in restinga, males and females seen
Brown-chested Martin *Progne tapera*, by the river

131. Southern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx ruficollis*, by the river
White-winged Swallow *Tachycineta albiventer*, several by the river
Trush-like Wren *Campolorhynchus turdinus*, heard
Buff-breasted Wren *Tryothorus leucotis*, several heard in restinga
Moustached Wren *Tryothorus genibarbis*, several heard and seen in restinga
Black-capped Donacobius *Donacobius atricapilla*, common in varzea, picture p. 10
Long-billed Gnatwren *Ramphocaenus melanurus*, several heard in restinga
Black-billed Thrush *Turdus ignobilis*, one seen in canopy
Varzea Thrush *Turdus*
(separated from Hauxwell's Thrush *T. hauxwelli*), collecting food in restinga
Silver-beaked Tanager *Ramphocelus carbo*, several seen and heard

141. White-shouldered Tanager *Tachyphonus luctuosus*, one male seen
Grey-headed Tanager *Eucometis penicillata penicillata*, frequent and vocal in mixed groups
Palm Tanager *Thraupis palmarum*, common
Blue-gray Tanager *Thraupis episcopus*, a few
Yellow-bellied Dacnis *Dacnis flaviventer*, twice in treetops near San Juan village
Hooded Tanager *Nemosia pileata*, one flock seen in varzea
Yellow-browed Sparrow *Ammodramus aurifrons*, a few on Buenos Aires Island
Chestnut-bellied Seedeater *Sporophila castaneiventris*, one male in riverine grass (picture below)



Above Plumbeous Kite sunbathing at sunrise

Red-capped Cardinal *Poroaria gularis*, a few on Victoria Regina leaves
Russet-backed Oropendola *Psarocolius angustifrons*, several colonies, also at lodge

151. Yellow-rumped Cacique *Cacicus cela*, same as previous
Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis*, flocks at lodge
Oriole Blackbird *Gymnomystax mexicanus*, in open areas
Yellow-hooded Blackbird *Chrysomus icterocephalus*, several in riverine vegetation
Purple-throated Euphonia *Euphonia chlorotica*, female in restinga
Golden-bellied Euphonia *Euphonia chrysopasta* (was it there??)



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**Picture above Grey-headed
Tanager, to the right Black-
capped Donacobius, below
Black-collared Hawk**

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