



south face of Roraima, from part way up the ramp (photo by Andy Boyce)

Cerro Roraima, Venezuela

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By Andrew Spencer

Venezuela has long featured prominently on the radar of tropical birders, and for good reason. Not only does it have excellent examples of Andean forests, xerophytic woodland, open llanos, both Amazonian and Guianan rainforest, it has the tepuis. And perhaps no other bioregion is so uniquely Venezuelan as that of the tepui highlands.



Tepui Wren (photo by Joe Veverka)

Unfortunately, the only place that birders can easily access the tepui highlands is the famous “Escalera” on Sierra de Lema, in southeastern Bolivar. However, birding here has its weaknesses. Many species, such as Chapman’s Bristle-Tyrant, Roraiman Flycatcher, Greater Flowerpiercer, among others, are quite hard to find here, and others, like Tepui Wren, don’t occur here at all. And, despite having most of the tepui highland endemics, Sierra de Lema really isn’t a tepui – while scenic, the incomparable grandeur of the tepuis is lacking.

So, for those people who want a better chance at the rarer tepui endemics, as well as to see and ascend a tepui, Roraima provides the simplest solution. Located about 120 kilometers south of Sierra de Lema, ascending Roraima isn’t a light undertaking. However, for those who make the effort, the rewards are substantial.

Logistics:

General Venezuelan logistics: all transport for this trip was either public, or by foot. Travel by bus in Venezuela is fairly straightforward, though nowhere as easy or cheap as in Ecuador. Long distance busses are comfortable, air-conditioned (think Minnesotan winter), and cost about \$2 US per hour of travel. Most of these long-distance busses won’t stop to pick people up just along the road, so they are not a reasonable option for getting dropped off and picked up at random birding spots. There are more local busses that can do this, though they can be harder to find and often don’t go to where a birder needs to go. In this situation, taxis are often the only public transport option. Bargaining skills will lower the prices of these substantially, but in general if you can get to the closest town to the birding spot, you can then take a taxi to the birding area for a reasonable price.

Money: the Venezuelan currency is the Bolivar (Bs.), which Chavez recently chopped three zeroes off of and renamed (temporarily) the Bolivar Fuerte (BsF.). The Venezuela government sets the exchange rate at 2.145 BsF to 1 US dollar, but there is a flourishing black market currency exchange. This rate fluctuates wildly, and as recently as a few months before our trip was as high as 5 BsF to 1 US dollar. At the time of our trip the rate was hovering around 3.1 BsF to the dollar. The most convenient place to change is at the airport when you arrive – just stand around looking like a tourist and someone will approach you offering to change money. The rate here is lower than in Caracas, but if you bargain you should be able to get a reasonable rate. Note, while this is technically illegal, tourists very rarely have trouble.

Roraima logistics: There are basically two ways one can arrange to go to Roraima. As a guide is compulsory on the trek up the mountain, you will need to either arrange one yourself, or go on a package tour. You can book a tour in the states (the most expensive option), Caracas, or Santa Elena (the least expensive), or you can go to San Francisco or Paraitepui and arrange your own guide (significantly less expensive, if you have three or more people). While the latter option takes some more legwork on the part of the participants, it allows a flexibility in your trip not available on the package tours.

If you go on a package tour, all transportation should be arranged for you from Santa Elena. If you are hiring your own guide, you will need to first get to San Francisco. Busses from Caracas take 21 hours and cost 107 BsF. Once in San Francisco you will need to arrange for a jeep to take you up the 20 km road to Paraitepui, a ride of about an hour. This cost us 200 BsF on the way up, and 250 on the way down (try, as we failed to do, to bargain hard). The trek itself starts in Paraitepui.

If you arrange your own guide, you also need to bring all your own gear. At the time we went (supposedly the rainy season), a tent with a reliable rain fly is an absolute necessity. A good sleeping bag, relatively warm, is also a



Kukenán-tepui in the evening, from base camp (photo by Andy Boyce)

necessity. It gets to with a few degrees of freezing on the top at night, so a sleeping pad will also help keep you warm. We only had one stove with us, which technically required the use of white gas. We forgot to get this in Caracas, and there isn't any San Francisco, so we used gasoline instead. While this certainly dirtied the edges of the stove and probably clogged filters, it worked.

You will also need to pack in all your own food. Don't underestimate the amount of food required to do a trek like this – we didn't really have enough food and were quite hungry the first few nights. Water is, luckily, a minor concern, as you can drink out of any stream once you've gone a short distance from Paraitepui. Bring about a liter or two to start out with, and you'll be fine.

We hired a guide in San Francisco – a man by the name of Filipe. Overall, I would have to say he was a pretty good guide once he got over his tendency to try to weasel more money out of us with associated extra “expenses”. Be sure to discuss as many of the logistics and plans of the trip before agreeing to take him (or anyone) as your guide. I would recommend him to others if they are looking for a guide in San Francisco. He charged us 150 BsF per day, which, when we asked other groups on the mountain, is apparently about the going rate.

You can also hire porters if you don't wish to bring all your gear for the hike on your back – we did not hire any, but I believe the price quoted us was BsF 100 per day per porter, each of whom can carry up to 15 kilos. Finally, you are technically required to pack out ALL your waste from the hike, and this includes bathroom waste. Typically, the organized trips hire another guy to come along and carry a portable toilet, and anything that results from the use of said toilet, up and down the mountain. The price quoted to us was also BsF 100 per day. We decided we didn't feel like paying to have to go to the bathroom, so we said we would carry out our own waste. In practice, there is a latrine part way up that you can use, so the amount of waste you need to carry down should be minimal. Also, as expected for a place like Roraima, not only is it a rule that all garbage should be carried out, it is the only ethical thing to do.

Once you get to Paraitepui, you can spend the night before leaving on your hike in small, smurf-hut like shacks, or under a less than perfect shelter in your tent. The shacks cost 100 BsF per night, the shelter 10.

The Hike Up:

The standard route up Roraima is typically done in three days up and two days down. Most of the tour companies only offer five day trips, which is ridiculously short time on top given the effort you spent to get there. We took the standard three up and two down, but also spent two days at the top. This seemed like the perfect amount of time to me.

The hike starts in Paraitepui, and the first day is typically spent hiking to the camp at the Rio Kukenán. This took us about five hours on the way up. Two rivers must be crossed – the Rio Tok about four hours from Paraitepui, and the Rio Kukenán about 45 minutes from the Rio Tok, and just before the camp. The crossings can be treacherous, depending on the water levels, and after heavy rains at the headwaters of the rivers, downright impossible. I found that having a pair of sandals that I could wear while crossing the rivers made the crossings far easier, and I would highly recommend bringing a pair. On the way to the top, the Rio Tok came to just over knee-high on me, and the Rio Kukenán to mid to upper thigh. On the way down both were substantially lower, and the crossings easier.

Other than the excitement of the river crossings, the first day is basically a walk across open savanna, with no net elevation gain from Paraitepui. For those in very good shape, it is possible to go all the way to base camp on the first day, another four hours beyond the Rio Kukenán - though Filipe said he would have to charge us more if we wanted to do this. I think he was just tired and didn't to keep hiking that day.

The camp at the Rio Kukenán has a small shelter with two tables, and costs BsF 70 to use if the owner is there, BsF 0 to use if he is not. There is also a latrine dug behind the buildings, convenient if you don't want to bury or carry out your waste.



Salto Kukenán from Cerro Roraima (photo by Andy Boyce)



The ramp from base camp (photo by Andy Boyce)

The next day we hiked the four hours to the base camp. This beginning of this hike is also a walk across open savanna, though you start to pass small forest patches before long. After about half way into the hike, though, you start ascending (and descending, I'm afraid) some rolling hills. These pick up in intensity, and by the time you've reached base camp you've gained xx meters in elevation. Overall, the hike is reasonably harder than the first day's.

By the time you reach base camp you are walking through low shrubs, and base camp is set by a stream right at the edge of thick forest. Again, there is a small shelter here (though no tables), to my knowledge free to use. There are no latrines here, and anywhere above the national park sign (just before base camp) you are technically required to pack out all solid waste.

The third day of hiking is usually spent getting to the top. This takes about 4 hours, and is by far the hardest day of the entire trip. The lion's share of the elevation gain happens during this day, and the trail is slippery and muddy, or loose and rocky. The first part of the trail is more like climbing stairs, with small niches cut into mud banks. A slip here would be a very bad thing, so extreme care is required.



south face of Roraima from the ramp (photo by Joe Veverka)

Further up the trail moderates a little bit, and in about an hour from base camp you reach the base of the ramp that brings you up the wall of the tepui. Here the going gets steeper again, though the trail itself is not too slippery. About half way up the ramp you break out of the forest and the trail turns into a scree run. You also have to walk under a waterfall coming off the top of the tepui. You will get wet. Unless, of course, it hasn't rained in a few days, in which case you won't. But chances are you will get wet. Above the waterfall the trail gets even steeper, and the hardest stretch is between the waterfall and the top. Take care when choosing your route through the scree.

Once you reach the top you still have a 20 minute to hour hike, depending on which of the "hotels" you are staying at. We stayed at the "Hotel Principal", the closest to the ramp. These hotels are actually large rock overhangs that protect you from the wind and rain, and make a good place to set up camp. During the high season they are usually all filled up, but as there was only one other group on top for one of our days there, and none on the other, we had our choice of hotels. The walk from the ramp to the hotel is flat and fairly easy, winding your way through crazy rock formations and around pools of water. The hotel itself was barely big enough for our four tents, but we made do.

The Top:

No written description can do justice to the top of Roraima. It simply isn't possible. But before I start with the platitudes, let me say that it gets cold at night. Bring a sleeping pad, bring a warm (30 degrees minimum) sleeping bag, and bring dry clothes. Your wet ones will not dry out on top. Of all the things I wish I had brought on the hike, those that would have kept me warmer at night were the ones I wanted most.

Now that you've reached the top you can actually start to get your money's worth from your guide. While trails to the various highlights on the top are worn into the black stone and are easy to see, there are a myriad of them, and getting lost is easy. Walking isn't always straight forward, either, and you need to navigate around rock formations, pools of water, and bogs. Luckily, after the hike up, elevation change is minimal.

The first thing I would recommend doing on the top is early your first morning, get up and walk back out to the edge near the ramp. The view down onto the Gran Sabana is amazing. The view back along the walls of Roraima is unbelievable. And the view of the incomparably majestic Kukenán-tepui to the west is surely among the top five views in the world. It certainly is the most amazing view I've ever seen, and seeing the sunrise on it instantly makes the whole hike worth it.

On the top itself there are a number of highlights, the ones usually visited by trips being: Punto Triple (the Venezuelan-Guyanese-Brazilian triple point), La Ventana (the window), Fozo Azul (a sinkhole), El Labirinto (the Labyrinth), the Jacuzzi, and the crystal rivers.

On our first day we hiked the three hours (one way) to the triple point, passing the Labyrinth and one of the crystal rivers on the way there, and the Fozo Azul on the way back. The triple point itself is more a place to go to say you've been there. And to see the arrogance of the Venezuelan government, who have taken the metal plate over the Guyana side of the monument and written "zona en reclamacion" instead.

The hike out passes some amazing sandstone rock formations, included arches, arches on top of arches, arches inside arches, pillars and pillars on top of arches, you get the idea. Nearer to the triple point you walk up a small creek whose bed is made entirely of quartz crystals. The site of the white creek bed contrasting with the black sandstone is surreal and beautiful. The scenery around the triple point itself is mostly black sandstone, and looks like the desolation left over after a volcanic eruption.



Shrubby tree from the top (photo by Joe Veverka)

On the hike back you go by the Fozo Azul, a large sink hole with sheer walls. If you want to go swimming (and trust me, it is COLD), you can access the sinkhole by walking around and down to a cave system, and then wading through the water in the cave. Even if you don't go swimming, it's worth hiking down to see the cave, which has a grotto-like quality to it. Not to mention that you can see White-collared Swift nests at eye level right in front of you.



Band-winged Nightjar ssp. roraimae (photo by Andy Boyce)

From the sinkhole to the hotel was about 2 hours, using a similar but less scenic route than the one taken to get to the triple point.

The next day we covered most of the sites we hadn't the day before, starting with the short walk to the Jacuzzi. The Jacuzzi is a series of small, crystal clear pools with their walls embedded with quartz crystals and sandstone benches to sit on. That, by the way, is where the name Jacuzzi comes from, not from the water temperature I can assure you.

From there, we headed to La Ventana, the window, which overlooks the northern face of the tepui. The view of Roraima from here is, if anything, even more amazing than that on the south side. And the forest on the north face stretches way out onto the savanna, much further than that on the south face. A bit further west along the north face there is a place where you can work your way out to a point of rock, and look down over the cliffs and over to the fifth highest waterfall in the world on Kukenán-tepui. When we were there a strong fog rolled in, and the sense of vertigo gained by laying on your belly at the edge and looking out, knowing that the valley floor was over 2000 feet below you, but not being able to see it, is truly exhilarating.

The second half of our second day some of us went with Filipe to the Oilbird colony, about an hour's walk from the hotel. Now, most people who come up here aren't birders and never go to this spot. That's a real shame, as the colony is in a deep (100 meters, minimum – we couldn't really see the bottom, so it was hard to judge) slot canyon, and is one of the coolest sights on the top. If you are a birder, this trip is a must – see more in the birds section of this report. On the way back from the Oilbird colony we made a short foray into a deep cave, not recommended for those with claustrophobia, but otherwise an entertaining detour.



Oreophrynella quelchii (photo by Andy Boyce)

On the evening of our last day on top some of us went to the top of the high point on the southern face of the tepui, apparently the actual peak of Roraima. This is probably the single best place to see the walls of Roraima in all their grandeur spread below you, and is well worth the short hike from the Hotel Principal.

The Hike Down:

Needless to say, the hike down from Roraima is easier than the hike up. That's not to say it's easy, especially the steep descent to base camp. Typically, the first day down is spent hiking all the way back to the camp at the Rio Kukenán, about 6 hours. The second day is spent hiking from there to Paraitepui, which takes about the same 4 hours it took to get up.

The rivers on our way down were quite a bit lower, since it hadn't rained much during our stay on top, and the crossings were fairly easy. Otherwise, the hike out was basically the hike up in reverse, and went off without a hitch.

The Birds:

Here's the part you've been waiting for. Birding Roraima, like birding on Sierra de Lema, isn't particularly easy. Your list won't be very high. But the quality will more than make up for any lack in quantity.

At Paraitepui, it is a short walk from the camping area to a good-sized forest patch below, and we had many birds at the edge here. The birding during the first and most of the second day of hiking is mostly savanna birding, and most of the species typical of the Gran Sabana are fairly easily found. If you have time and the willpower to walk off trail to one of the isolated forest groves you could find some different species.

Around the Rio Kukenán camp, at least when we were there, there were a number of fruiting trees. Roving mixed flocks would come by to visit them, and the birding was quite good.

The real tepui birding begins at base camp. The shrubbery around base camp is actually quite birdy and well worth a couple of hours worth of effort at a minimum. I would also recommend on both the afternoon on your arrival day and the early morning of the next that you continue up the trail and into the forested slopes. Without a heavy pack you could get all the way to the ramp in well under an hour, and the forest and birding is good the whole way. It is harder to bird the area the next day, and on the way down, when you are carrying a heavy pack.

Starting on the upper part of the ramp, and continuing on top, the bird diversity plummets. We only saw eleven species on top. But yet again, quality more than makes up for lack of quantity.

We ended up with a total of 22 tepui endemics, but we missed quite a few that are fairly easy on Sierra de Lema. Two of us had already spent some time birding there on a previous trip, and it was interesting to see how there was surprisingly little overlap in the endemics we found at the two sites; those common at Sierra de Lema were rare or missed on Roraima, and many of those on Roraima were missed entirely on Sierra de Lema. Between the two sites we managed to get all the possible pan-tepui endemics except for Streak-backed Antshrike, Roraiman Antbird, Tepui Tinamou (hard), and Roraiman Nightjar (also hard).

Below is an annotated list of birds seen on the hike, and recommendation on where to look for the specialties; (E) signifies a pan-tepui endemic species, (e) an endemic subspecies, and (s) a specialty of the tepui region. Many of the species below were recorded by me, and recordings can be found on www.xeno-canto.org. Note, the list is only in rough taxonomic order.

King Vulture: two seen soaring over San Francisco while arranging our guide.

Turkey Vulture: one of the ten species seen on top

Yellow-headed Caracara: two seen early in the morning at the Rio Kukenán camp

Crested Caracara: one seen on the ride from Paraitepui to San Francisco

White-tailed Hawk: one of the eleven species seen on top, a light phase. A couple of other light-phase birds seen on the hike, and a dark-phase bird seen well soaring over the Rio Kukenán camp. Apparently there is a higher proportion of this rare phase to light-phase birds here than anywhere else on earth.

Bat Falcon: one seen early in the morning at Paraitepui

Orange-breasted Falcon: a trio was seen every day from base camp to base camp; they spent most of their time cruising the north face of the tepui, especially around the top of the ramp and were the waterfall went off the top. Andy managed to get some excellent photos, and I got some sound recordings. A bird was also seen near the triple point, and another seen a couple of times near La Ventana. Whether these were birds from a different family or not is unknown. Recorded.



Orange-breasted Falcon (photo by Andy Boyce)

Plomado Falcon: a couple seen on the hike, including a pair early in the morning at Rio Kukenán. Recorded.

Roadside Hawk: one seen on the hike near Paraitepui

Crested Bobwhite: a few singing early in the morning at the Rio Kukenán camp. Recorded.

Penelope guan: one flew across the Rio Kukenán while we were crossing it. According to Hilty both Marail and Spix's are possibilities here.

Russet-crowned Crake: a couple heard early in the morning in grassy savanna at Paraitepui

Gray-fronted Dove: a couple frequented the area around the Rio Kukenán camp

Red-bellied Macaw: a flock of xx flew over our heads in San Francisco on our last day

Orange-winged Amazon: a few amazons flying over forest patches lower down near Paraitepui were presumably this species,

Brown-throated Parakeet: a few groups were found in forest patches lower down; none were seen above the Rio Kukenán

Tepui Parrotlet (E): small groups started flying over our heads soon after heading up from Paraitepui, and increased in frequency and size the higher up we went. They were downright abundant on top, easily the most numerous bird there. In the evening vast streams of them would fly to roost on the tepui walls. Recorded.

Dark-billed Cuckoo: one found in a small forest patch at Paraitepui

Little Cuckoo: a singing bird found in a small forest patch by Paraitepui. Recorded

Squirrel Cuckoo: a couple of birds were seen at forested stream crossings near Paraitepui

Oilbird: you may have seen Oilbirds before. You may have even seen them in Venezuela before. It doesn't matter – come to the colony on Roraima if you can. Unlike elsewhere, where they nest in caves or at best deeply shaded walls, the colony on Roraima has nests in full sunlight! The colony, at least 400-500 birds strong, is in a deep slot canyon. I doubt there is anywhere else on earth where views of this bird in sunlight are possible on a predictable basis. Recorded

White-tailed Nightjar: a few calling in the evening and morning at both Paraitepui and the Rio Kukenán camp. Recorded.

Band-winged Nightjar (e): in an event of pure serendipity, one flew in and landed right at our feet as we were having dinner on top. It proceeded to use the same perch as a fly-catching point, and would allow us to approach to within inches of it. Another sang from nearby, and a third could be heard in the distance. The subspecies here, *roraimae*, has a very different voice than the other subspecies and is surely a good species. If split, it would become another pan-tepui endemic, and one not gettable on Sierra de Lema. Recorded.



juvenile White-collared Swift (photo by Andy Boyce)

White-collared Swift: many seen flying overhead on the hike, and a few nests and old nestlings found in the grotto at Pozo Azul on top.

Tepui Swift (E): common to abundant on both the hike and flying overhead on top. Recorded.

Gray-rumped Swift: a couple seen flying overhead on the lower portions of the hike.

Neotropical Palm-Swift: a few seen flying around San Francisco.

Sooty-capped Hermit: a single bird was found lekking at the Rio Kukenán camp, and seen there a few times. Recorded.

Tufted Coquette: a female was seen at the edge of the forest patch at Paraitepui.

Golden-tailed Sapphire: a few seen at the edge of the forest patch at Paraitepui.

Rufous-breasted Sabrewing (E): common in the forested slopes above base camp, though not seen above the bottom of the ramp. The best time to find this bird seems to be early in the morning, when many were singing. Recorded.

Green Violetear: a couple seen on the lower portions of the ramp.

Copper-tailed Hummingbird (E): seen on the lower portions of the forested slopes, though not identified until later; sometimes considered a subspecies of Green-bellied Hummingbird.

Tepui Goldenthrout (E): a single bird was visiting a flowering tree in San Francisco

Black-throated Mango: a female was visiting a flowering tree in San Francisco

Brown Jacamar: a vocal pair was found in a forest patch not far above the Rio Kukenán

Gold-spangled Piculet: a single bird was seen on the edge of the forest patch at Paraitepui

McConnell's Spinetail (E): common along the higher portions of the hike, until base camp. Recorded.

Pale-breasted Spinetail: common along the lower portions of the hike, until not far above Rio Kukenán camp. Recorded.

Tepui Spinetail (E): a few small flocks seen on the forested slopes. Recorded.

Roraiman Barbtail (E): at least six different birds seen. An old nest and an occupied nest were found at the second stream crossing above base camp, which also proved to be the most reliable place to find it. According to Hilty, the nest of this species is undescribed. Another bird was seen down at base camp. Recorded.

Tepui Foliage-gleaner (E): one recorded and seen briefly mid-way up the forested slopes

Sharp-tailed Streamcreeper: one was seen at the first stream crossing above base camp, early in the morning.

Roraiman Antwren (E): a few were heard in forest patches from Paraitepui to just above the Rio Kukenán camp, but not encountered in the forested slopes higher up.

Tepui Antpitta (E): very common by voice on the forested slopes, and could even be heard singing way below from the top. Two were seen well by a few of us. Recorded.

Golden-crowned Manakin: a male was seen at the edge of the forest patch by Paraitepui

Olive Manakin (E): one was recorded in the forested slopes, but not identified until later. Knowledge of the voice of this species would be useful for finding it.

Rufous-tailed Tyrant: one was seen in base camp

Roraiman Flycatcher (s): a couple were seen in base camp and in the forested area immediately above it

Sierran Elaenia (e): common in base camp and in the shrubbier areas on the forested slopes; a few were also found lower down towards the Rio Kukenán camp. The subspecies on the tepuis, *olvina*, has a very different voice than elsewhere in its range and likely represents a separate species and another pan-tepui endemic. Recorded.

Great Elaenia (E): a pair frequented the area around base camp and was pretty easy to find. Recorded.

Plain-crested Elaenia: abundant on the lower portions of the hike, especially around Rio Kukenán camp.

Rufous-crested Elaenia: a single bird was found in a forest patch just below the Rio Tok.

Yellow-bellied Elaenia: a couple were seen around the Rio Kukenán camp

Ruddy Tody-Flycatcher (E): two found as part of a small flock on the forested slopes, just below the base of the ramp

White-throated Tyrannulet: common at base camp and in the forested slopes. Recorded.

Chapman's Bristle-Tyrant (E): a couple seen on the forested slopes. All sightings were independent of a flock, and came from the areas not far above base camp,

Tropical Kingbird: common on the lower portions of the hike. Recorded.

White-throated Kingbird: a pair was found visiting a fruiting tree at Rio Kukenán camp early in the morning. Recorded.

Fork-tailed Flycatcher: a couple seen on the lower portions of the hike

Swainson's Flycatcher: one seen at the forest patch near Paraitepui

Tropical Mockingbird: common on the lower portions of the hike

Red-banded Fruiteater (E): a pair seen and quite a few heard on the forested slopes

Tawny-headed Swallow: common to very common on the lower portions of the hike and in Paraitepui

Blue-and-white Swallow: common on the lower portions of the hike

Tepui Wren (E): common to very common from base camp to the top; one of the eleven species found on the top. I got recordings of the call, which according to Restall (2006) is undescribed. Recorded.

Sedge (Grass) Wren: common in the savanna along the lower portions of the hike

Coraya Wren: a couple were found around base camp; the subspecies here looks very different than the illustration in Hilty; the one in Restall is better.

Flutist Wren (E): commonly heard on the forested slopes. Recorded



Greater Flowerpiercer (photo by Andy Boyce)

Rufous-brown Solitaire (s): a couple were heard on the forested slopes, though never seen

Black-billed Thrush: common, especially around base camp. Recorded.

Black-hooded Thrush: common, especially around base camp and on the forested slopes

Roraiman Warbler (E): the only one found was on a small forested island at Rio Kukenán camp

Tepui Whitestart (E): common on the forested slopes; the lowest ones seen were at base camp. Recorded.

Greater Flowerpiercer (E): downright abundant on the forested slopes, where it was mostly found in brushy areas. Also quite common on top. The lowest individuals were at base camp, where at least two-three birds were singing early in the morning. Recorded.

Hepatic Tanager: a couple were found visiting fruiting trees at the Rio Kukenán camp

Red-legged Honeycreeper: a few were seen at the edge of the forest patch near Paraitepui

Green Honeycreeper: one was seen in a mixed flock along the first forested stream crossing above Paraitepui

Guira Tanager: a couple were seen in a mixed flock along the first forested stream crossing above Paraitepui

Burnished-buff Tanager: abundant at Rio Kukenán camp

Black-headed Tanager: fairly common on the forested slopes; the illustration of the female in Hilty looks nothing like the birds here, and even the one in Restall isn't very good. Recorded.

Speckled Tanager: a couple seen in a mixed flock along the first forested stream crossing above Paraitepui



Tepui Brush-Finch (photo by Joe Veverka)

Orange-bellied Euphonia: a few seen on the lower portions of the hike.

Palm Tanager: a couple seen visiting fruiting trees at Rio Kukenán camp

Blue-gray Tanager: a few seen along the lower portions of the hike

Red-shouldered Tanager: a couple seen visiting fruiting trees at Rio Kukenán camp. Recorded.

Black-faced Tanager: fairly common between Rio Kukenán camp and base camp

Tepui Brush-Finch (E): common to very common from base camp to the forested slopes. Recorded.

Paramo Seed-eater (e): a few seen on top; the subspecies here is paler than I am used to from the Andes

Plumbeous Seed-eater: fairly common in the open savanna on the hike up

Ruddy-breasted Seed-eater: abundant in the savanna along the hike up

Yellow-bellied Seed-eater: uncommon in the savanna along the hike up

Hooded Siskin: a few found in the savanna on the hike up

Rufous-collared Sparrow: abundant everywhere, from Paraitepui to the top

Wedge-tailed Grass-Finch: common in the savanna from Paraitepui to base camp. Recorded.

Green Oropendola: a single bird singing a weird song in the forest patch at Paraitepui. Recorded.