

LAS GUACAMAYAS BIOLOGICAL STATION & LAGUNA DEL TIGRE NATIONAL PARK



Quinto Cuento Navideño de Aves Fifth Annual Christmas Bird Count



14 de diciembre del 2014

Apoyado por:



Summary: The fifth annual Christmas Bird Count was held at the Las Guacamayas Biological Station (EBG) in eastern Laguna del Tigre National Park on December 14st, 2014. The count area spanned a 15-mile (24 km) radius around the EBG station as in previous years. Also similar to prior counts, this fifth count was not able to cover most of the count circle due to the remoteness of the area, especially the count circle's northern section (i.e. El Burreal and AFISAP). The counting area was mainly within the tall forests and wetlands of Laguna del Tigre National Park, however, two groups did count birds within Buffer Zone areas along the road between Cruce Perdida and Paso Caballos, and along the Rios Sacluc and San Pedro. These areas included patches of degraded forest habitat and cattle pastures that were recently planted (i.e. within the last 15 years).

During the 2014 count we recorded a total of 3,511 individuals from 247 species; 242 species were recorded during the count day, and 5 additional species during the two days before and after the official count day (i.e. December 13th and 15th). Of the 247 total species recorded, thirty-seven (37) species were registered based on only one individual being detected.

Notable results during the 2014 Christmas Bird Count included:

- **New record for number of species:** The previous record for species registered in a single Christmas Bird Count around the Las Guacamayas Biological Station was 233 species registered during the 2012 count. The 2014 count surpassed this by 14 species (247 species).
- **New record for total number of birds tallied:** The previous record was 3320 individuals registered during 2013; the 2014 count surpassed that by 291 individuals (3511).
- **Most abundant species:** Northern Rough-winged Swallow (178 individuals); White-collared Seedeater (139); Red-winged Blackbird (101); Brown Jay (99); and White-crowned Parrot (86) were the species with the most individuals registered.
- **Other notable registries:** These included a single Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture (*Cathartes burrovianus*), eight (8) King Vultures (*Sarcoramphus papa*), seven (7) Ocellated Turkeys (*Meleagris ocellata*) at the Zacatal guardpost; six (6) Great Antshrikes (*Taraba major*); five (5) Sungrebes (*Heliornis fulica*) finally registered after an absence of 2 years; four (4) wild Muscovy Ducks (*Carinata moschata*); four (4) White-necked Puffbirds (*Notharchus macrorhynchos*); four (4) Ladder-backed Woodpecker (*Picoides scalaris*), three (3) Band-backed Wrens (*Campylorhynchus zonatus*); three (3) White-browed Carolina Wrens (*Thryothorus ludovicianus*); two (2) Orange-breasted Falcons (*Falco deiroleucus*); two (2) Scarlet Macaws (*Ara macao*); two (2) Tropical Mockingbirds (*Mimus gilvus*); one (1) Least Bittern (*Ixobrychus exilis*); one (1) Tricolored Heron (*Egretta tricolor*); one (1) Lovely Cotinga (*Cotinga amabilis*); and one (1) Swainson's Warbler (*Helmitheros swainsonii*). This year, two (2) Common

Potoos (*Nyctibius jamaicensis*) were spotted prior to dawn using a high power spotlight along the Rio San Pedro.

- Absences and low registries: We failed to repeat the registry obtained during the 2013 count of the White-winged Dove (*Zenaida asiatica*), as well as the Crested Caracara (*Caracara plancus*). Only six (6) Fork-tailed Flycatchers (*Tyrannus savana*) were reported in 2014, a marked decrease from the 33 reported in 2013. During 2014 we only registered one (1) Anhinga (*Anhinga anhinga*), returning to the record low of 2010 (i.e. 1, 7, 4, 5, and 1 have been recorded during the 2010-2014 counts, respectively).
- Exceptional registries: Two (2) Aplomado Falcons (*Falco femoralis*) were seen in the area on count day, and photographed before and after the count. The day prior to the count the birds were together as a pair, yet on the count day they were located in different areas, 4 km away from each other. One (1) Short-tailed Nighthawk (*Lurocalis semiorquatus*) was registered in the early morning hours of the count day, with a photograph provided. Finally, one (1) Cinnamon Hummingbird (*Amazilia rutila*) was seen very clearly while feeding on flowers at a road edge, one km north of the Sacluc Station along the dirt road entering into Laguna del Tigre National Park.
- Quality Control of Registries: During the 2014, we instituted a new system of a three-judge panel (“Tribunal”) to evaluate sightings and make recommendations when uncertain or spectacular registries were reported. The three judge panel was composed of Julio Madrid, Marcial Córdova, and John Paul Cahill. Judges did end up filtering out three reports: 1) Nashville Warbler, based on photographic evidence; 2) Broad-winged Hawk, based on photographic evidence; and 3) Zone-tailed Hawk based on a possible confusion with Short-tailed Hawk.

Results 2010-2014: The 2014 count added eighteen (18) new species to the area species list from previous Christmas Bird Counts (2010-2013). With the 2014 results included, a total of 296 species have been recorded during the five Christmas Bird Counts held at the Las Guacamayas Biological Station in Laguna del Tigre National Park. The respective totals of species and individuals counted over the five years are detailed in Table 1.

Table 1: Total species and individuals counted 2010-2014 EBG Laguna del Tigre						
	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	Total
Species	211	204	233	227	247	296
Birds	2281	2287	2372	3320	3511	13771

This database provides one of the most complete registries of birds found in the Laguna del Tigre ecosystem to date; previous registries include 173 species obtained by a Rapid Ecological Assessment undertaken by Conservation International in 2000; and 285 species recorded by Mendez et al. in 1998 (ProPetén/CI).

Details on Areas and Participants

The extraordinary participation of enthusiastic birders, including participants from the United States, other regions of Guatemala, and particularly certified tourism guides from the Petén, dictated the creation of two new routes to accommodate all the participants. We also restored the route to the Peñón de Buena Vista, which had been flooded out during the 2013 count. These modifications permitted manageable group sizes, yet there was undoubtedly an increase in area coverage, which may help to explain the new records, both in terms of species and individuals recorded. Forty-two (42) participants were distributed across seven distinct routes: 1) Rio San Pedro, and surrounding beaches and easily accessible trails through forest patches and fallows; 2) Fincas between Cruce Perdida and Paso Caballos, as well as the upper section of the Rio Sacluc; 3) Trail from the El Peru landing to the archaeological site of El Peru, the sibal at the IDAEH camp, and Laguna El Peru; 4) The trails and roads between the EBG and Paso Caballos fallows, principally the ecotone edge areas, with the modification of continuing northward along the Paso Caballos “brecha” towards the AFISAP forest concession; 5) the karstic cliff area of the Peñón de Buena Vista with tall forests and wetlands, where participants spend the night prior to the count, and returned passing by the Yala Lagoon; 6) a new route passing through tall riparian forest from the EBG along a forest road to the El Peru landing; and 7) a new route from the village of Paso Caballos’s eastern edge to the Arroyo Seco, and back along riparian wetlands and fallow areas. The count covered 98 km in total: (53 km walking; 35 km by boat; 10 km driving).

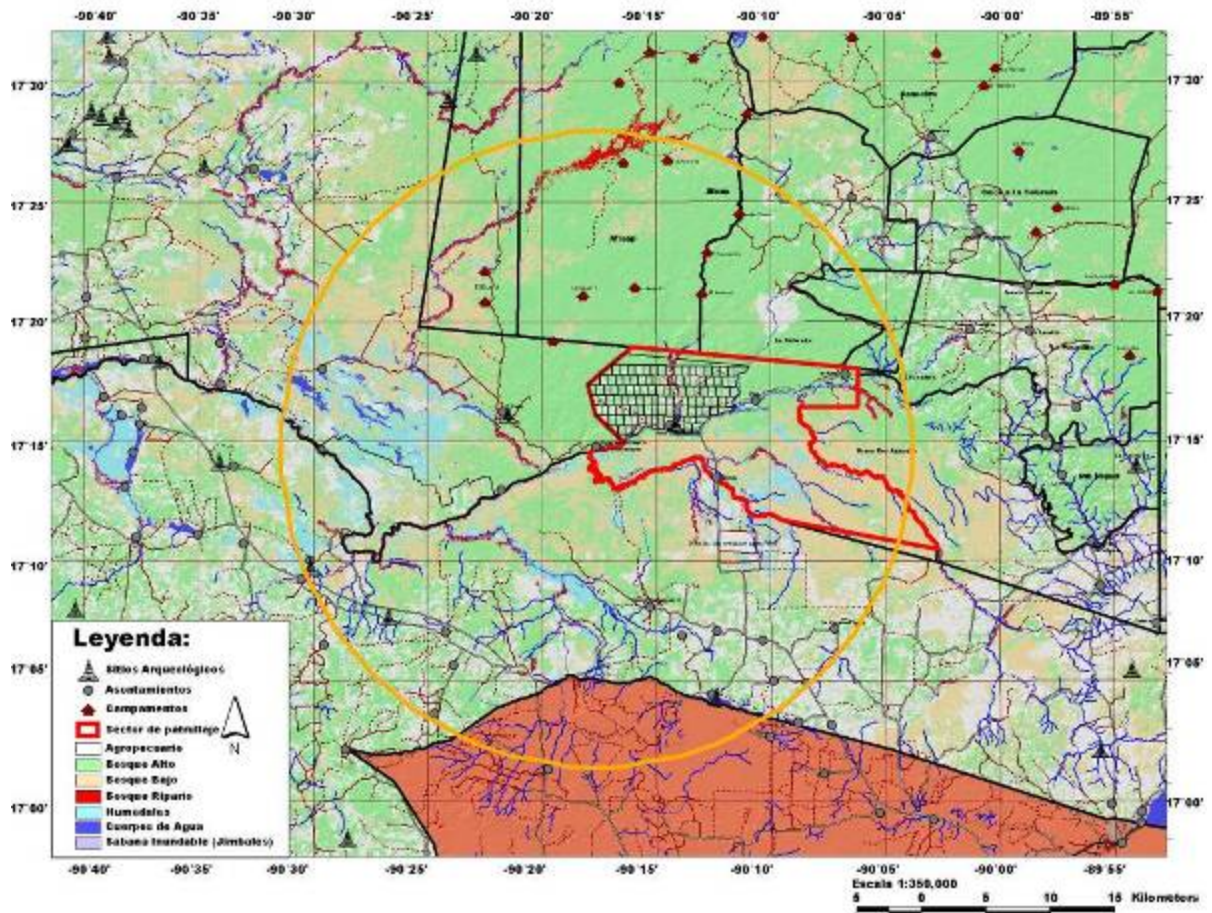
Bird Count Date: December 14th, 2014

Bird Count Area: Eastern Laguna del Tigre National Park and adjacent areas of the Maya Biosphere Reserve Buffer Zone

Weather: The weather was mixed with sun and shade; only one team reported modest showers; the temperature hovered around 80°F throughout the day.

Number of Count Participants: 42

Appendix 2: Map of Count Area



Note: During the 2015 Count, we will reduce the count circle area to the 15-mile diameter (24 km diameter), from the current size of a 15-mile radius, to allow us to register data within the formal Christmas Bird Count system managed by the National Audubon Society.

Appendix 3: Thirty-seven (37) species with one bird recorded in 2014

Species with only one bird recorded - 2014			No.
Anhinga	anhinga	Anhinga	1
Ixobrychus	exilis	Least Bittern	1
Egretta	thula	Snowy Egret	1
Egretta	tricolor	Tricolored Heron	1
Nycticorax	nycticorax	Black-crowned Night Heron	1
Cathartes	burrovianus	Lesser Yellow-headed Vulture	1
Busarellus	nigricollis	Black-collared Hawk	1
Leucopternis	albicollis	White Hawk	1
Spizaetus	ornatus	Ornate Hawk-Eagle	1
Micrastur	semiorquatus	Collared Forest-Falcon	1
Falco	sparverius	American Kestrel	1
Porphyrola	martinica	Purple Gallinule	1
Charadrius	vociferus	Killdeer	1
Columba	cayannensis	Pale-vented Pigeon	1
Leptotila	plumbeiceps	Grey-headed Dove	1
Pulsatrix	perspicillata	Spectacled Owl	1
Lurocalis	semiorquatus	Short-tailed Nighthawk	1
Amazilia	rutila	Cinnamon Hummingbird	1
Chloroceryle	amazona	Amazon Kingfisher	1
Sclerurus	guatemalensis	Scaly-throated Leaf-tosser	1
Glyphorhynchus	spirirus	Wedge-billed Woodcreeper	1
Ornithion	semiflavum	Yellow-bellied Tyrannulet	1
Eleania	flavogaster	Yellow-bellied Elaenia	1
Todirostrum	cinereum	Common Tody-Flycatcher	1
Myiobius	sulphureipygius	Sulphur-rumped Flycatcher	1
Pachyrhamphus	aglaiae	Rose-throated Becard	1
Cotinga	amabilis	Lovely Cotinga	1
Vireo	solitarius	Blue-headed Vireo	1
Vireo	philadelphicus	Philadelphia Vireo	1
Vireo	flavoviridis	Yellow-green Vireo (Red-eyed)	1
Vermivora	pinus	Blue-winged Warbler	1
Parula	americana	Northern Parula Warbler	1
Dendroica	pennsylvanica	Chesnut-sided Warbler	1
Dendroica	coronata	Myrtle Warbler (yellow rumped)	1
Helmitheros	swainsonii	Swainson's Warbler	1
Basileuterus	culicivorus	Golden-crowned Warbler	1
Sporophila	aurita	Variable Seedeater	1

Photographs *(Special thanks to all who provided photos this year!)*

1) Sun Grebe (Brian K. McNab)



2) Aplomado Falcon (John Paul Cahill)



3) Black-collared Hawk (Carlos Echeverría)



4) Great Antshrike (John Paul Cahill)



5) Immature Ornate Hawk-eagle (Carlos Echeverría)



Fotografía:
Carlos Echeverría - WCS

6) Northern Parula Warbler (Kevin Vandevusse)



7) Ocellated Turkeys (Helen Stohlman)



8) Short-tailed NightHawk (Robert & John Paul Cahill)



9) Results (Carlos Echeverría)



10) Spectacled Owl (John Paul Cahill)

