

# Northwest Argentina with Iguazu Falls Extension Species List | March 4 – 20, 2025 with Naturalist Journeys



**Compiled by guide Greg Butcher with local guides Ricardo Clark, Mario Mosqueira, and Martino Esteche, and participants Amy, Aubrey, Charlie, Diane, Laura, Richard, and Sheila**

Seven people joined Naturalist Journeys March 4 for an expedition to Buenos Aires, to northwest Argentina, including Jujuy, Salta, and Tucuman Provinces, and then on to Misiones Province to see Iguazu Falls and the birds of northeastern Argentina. Greg Butcher was the Naturalist Journeys guide throughout, Ricardo Clark was the Buenos Aires guide, Mario Mosqueira was the northwest guide, and Martino Esteche was the northeast guide.

Northwestern Argentina is especially renowned for glorious mountain views and a unique assemblage of Ovenbirds (family Furnariidae), not at all related to the North American ovenbird, which is a wood-warbler. We also enjoyed a couple of songbird groups that represent the Andes Mountains: the sierra-finches and the warbling-finches. On the other hand, northeastern Argentina features the amazing Iguazu Falls and birds of the Parana Forest, an inland portion of the Atlantic Forest, which is found mostly in Brazil.

Unfortunately, the trails at Costanera Sur in Buenos Aires were closed due to muddy trails, but we saw 52 species walking along the sidewalk next to the park. Our day in Buenos Aires was historic: the television was full of stories about the 35 degree Celsius temperature (95 Fahrenheit) that felt like 44 (111!) because of the sun and humidity.

We flew off to Salta the next day and quickly went birding at Parque del Bicentenario in San Lorenzo, where we picked up a nice variety of 49 species in just two hours. In the late afternoon, we drove to a raucous pre-roost gathering of 120(!) rare and range-limited Tucuman Amazons. We visited the Huaico Reserve after dinner for the even rarer Montane Forest Screech-Owl. Reserva del Huaico provided our best sample of the often wet Yungas Forest of northwest Argentina. We encountered a pair of Red-legged Seriemas along the way to Rio Corralito and three different Torrent Ducks along the river.

On Saturday we took the long drive north to Humahuaca. We transitioned from the Yungas Cloud Forest into first pre-puna, then Puna shrublands with many cardones, a columnar cactus similar to a saguaro. We climbed from 5,600 feet to 10,000. En route to Humahuaca, we passed over the Tropic of Capricorn into the southern tropics, even though it was hard to realize that at such a high elevation. Monday was our second day at 10,000-feet-plus elevation, so we weren't surprised to see a Mountain Caracara and several herds of vicunas from the van. The famous Laguna de los Pozuelos was closed because of muddy roads, but we got close. Our first reward was a very cooperative Lesser Rhea! Our best Pozuelos alternative was Lagunillas. We had a flock of 25 Chilean Flamingos and five Andean Flamingos accompanied by about 50 Giant Coots and 100 Slate-colored Coots.

It was time to retreat from Jujuy Province (and the Tropic of Capricorn), but we made a few stops along the way, including of course for the three Andean Condors swirling overhead. Our last stop in Jujuy was our return to the Rio Yala and one of our top targets of the trip: the Rufous-throated Dipper. Success! When we returned to our home-away-from-home Hotel Selva Montana, we found a Slender-tailed Woodstar.

On Wednesday morning, we headed south and west, back into the dry side of the mountains. One stop produced the two rarest birds of the trip: Maquis Canastero and Zimmer's Tapaculo. Now we were in Los Cardones National Park, where we found Tawny-throated Dotterel, among other species. As we drove into Cachi in the morning, we were stopped by gorgeous views of the snow-capped Nevado de Cachi. In the afternoon, we wandered a bit south on National Route 40 where it seemed like every cactus had a White-fronted Woodpecker.

On our mountain-filled drive south to Cafayate Friday on gravel roads, we made several stops, first to buy textiles from local weavers near Seclantes and then to pick up a good bird here and there, including Andean Condors and Coscoroba Swans. In Tucuman Province, we visited the memorable Quilmes Ruins in Tucuman Province. En route, we picked up a Straneck's Tyrannulet and at the ruins itself, a Chaco Earthcreeper. There are many gorgeous rock formations on the drive back to Salta.

On Monday, we had an early departure from Salta and flew through Buenos Aires to Misiones to see the incomparable Iguazu Falls. We had left the northwestern Argentinian Andes and joined the humid Parana portion of the Atlantic Forest, and the change in species composition was dramatic. We were able to bird in the national park on Sendero Macuco before walking to see the falls; the trail reliably produces 3 species of Manakin: Swallow-tailed, White-bearded, and Band-tailed. As tourists, our group was mesmerized by Iguazu Falls, and as birders, the visit was enhanced by a flock of 100 Great Dusky Swifts. Ruta 101 has a blind next to a wetland that produced two Blackish Rails. A small stream under the road attracted a small mixed-species tanager flock plus a Gray-hooded Flycatcher. Not surprisingly, the falls called us back for a return visit in the afternoon; we visited Garganta del Diablo. On our last day, we had a heck of a time getting away. A family of Brown Capuchins (monkeys) visited our cabins, and just over the van was a pair of Chestnut-eared Aracaris. After visiting the Hummingbird Garden with seven hummingbird species, we were off to the airport, flights to Buenos Aires, transfer to the international airport, and flights home. What a great set of memories to bring home with us!

**BIRDS:** 322 species were recorded in Buenos Aires, Jujuy, Salta, Tucuman, and Misiones Provinces. Details are included in the eBird link below. If you're new to eBird, be sure to click "Show All Details" on the right side of the list to expand the report and reveal where and when each of the birds were seen and how many.

### [Northwest Argentina | March 4 - 20, 2025 | eBird Trip Report](#)

Following is a list of the mammals, reptiles, and amphibians we were fortunate to observe during the trip.

**Family or Species Common Name *Scientific Name*:**

#### **MAMMALS: — (13)**

**Azara's Agouti** *Dasyprocta azarae* — We found several agoutis in Iguazu Falls National Park rooting around on the ground.

**Common Yellow-toothed Cavy** *Galea musteloides* – Cavies are small rodents related to Guinea Pigs. This species was

found in the Andes of Jujuy, en route to Laguna de Pozuelos, and later in Los Cardones National Park.

**Southern Mountain or Dwarf Cavy** *Microcavia australis* – We found this species in the Andes Mountains in Tucuman Province.

**Brazilian Guinea Pig** *Cavia aperea* — This was the species in Iguazu Falls National Park.

**Highland Tuco-tuco** *Ctenomys opimus* – This small mammal produced the large collection of burrows near Laguna de Pozuelo in Jujuy Province. It is ecologically similar to North American pocket gophers, but tuco-tucos are in a separate family.

**Common Mountain Viscacha** *Lagidium viscacia* – Viscachas look like rabbits, but they have a long bushy tail. We saw one high in the Andes near Abra Pampa near treeline.

**Vicuna** *Vicugna vicugna* — We saw vicunas three days in a row in Jujuy Province. Some of the vicunas were mixed in with domestic llamas, which are descended from vicunas.

**Guanaco** *Lama guanicoe* — Guanacos are larger than vicunas, with a larger nose and darker face. We saw them in Los Cardones National Park in southern Salta Province. I don't remember seeing any alpacas, which are the domesticated version of guanacos.

**Common Brown Brocket or Gray Brocket** *Mazama gouazoubira* – We had a pair of these small deer in Huaico Reserve near Salta.

**Culpeo or Red Andean Fox** *Lycalopex culpaeus* — We found this species on several days throughout the Andes. It was surprisingly tolerant of our presence.

**Neotropical Otter** *Lontra longicaudus* – We had good views of an otter in the river above Iguazu Falls.

**Black Capuchin** *Sapajus nigritus* — This species escaped us until the last few minutes of our stay in Misiones Province, when a small group moved onto the roofs of our cabins at Selva de Laurel Lodge.

**South American Coati** *Nasua nasua* — Plush-crested Jays are the avian ambassadors at Iguazu Falls National Park, and the coatis are the mammalian ambassadors. Both have become overly tame because of being fed by visitors.

### **REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS: — (3)**

**Broad-snouted Caiman** *Caiman latirostris* — We had a large caiman at Iguazu Falls.

**Argentine Black-and-white Tegu or Spotted Tupinambis** *Salvator merianae* — We had a good-sized tegu at Costanera Sur in Buenos Aires.

**Lizard** *Liolaemus* sp. – We saw a lizard of this genus near Humahuaca. Related to iguanas, there are 225 or more species in this genus.

### **OTHER INTERESTING SPECIES:**

**Iguazu or Black Shovelnose Catfish** *Pseudoplatystoma tigrinum* – We saw several in the river above Iguazu Falls, including some about a foot long.

**Tarantula** – at Iguazu Falls

**Blue Morpho** *Morpho* spp. (butterfly) – at Iguazu Falls

**Praying Mantis** *Mantis* spp. – at Costanera Sur

**Tiger Ant** *Dinoponera australis* – Several of these huge ants were found at Iguazu Falls.