

# Highlands of Mexico

## A Hundred Million Monarchs

### A Greentours Tour Report

5<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> February 2008

Led by Ian Green & Eric Miranda

#### Day 1      February 5<sup>th</sup>      To Mexico

We departed Heathrow on time in the evening arriving with enough time to find our gate for the onward flight to Mexico which departed smartly on time.

#### Day 2      February 6<sup>th</sup>      Laguna Maria

We arrived pretty much spot on time in Mexico City and were soon all on the Mexicana flight to Guadalajara. This too arrived on time after giving us a marvellous bird's-eye view of the Mexican Highlands including the great Popocatepetl volcano near Mexico City, the twin volcanos of Colima, and the abundant evidence of volcanos in between. Some of the cones, now covered in trees, looked very tiny from the air. Eric and Ivan gave us a great welcome at the airport and we were soon off, passing through the outskirts of the city before finding countryside. We soon descended to the great salt flats of Sayula, the road taking us right through the centre, before reaching Ciudad Guzman and descending into the canyon country between there and Colima. Birds of prey were plentiful along the route. One was hardly out of sight of Black or Turkey Vulture, and there were Red-tailed Hawks, Grey Hawk and a single Crested Caracara to enjoy. Volcán de Fuego, an active volcano, signalled its intent by giving us a little eruptive show. The centre of Colima was a delight and we had a good meal before heading up through quaint Comala to the Laguna Maria, the views of Volcán de Fuego getting better all the while. We pulled in at round three-thirty and quickly got settled into our rooms and readied ourselves for a walk down to the lagoon.

In the garden we familiarised ourselves with some of the commoner birds. Two of these are very colourful – the bright blue and orange (at least the males) Eastern Bluebirds and the brilliant Vermilion Flycatchers. The males are unmistakable and it is difficult to imagine a more brilliant red bird. The females more subtle tones, with just a hint of apricot, caused confusion throughout the holiday! As we walked down the track to the lagoon Peter started spotting some flowers. One of the brightest was the orange and red multi-headed blooms of *Asclepias curassavica*, one of the foodplants of the Monarch Butterfly. Next up in the bird line were Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush, a fine male Yellow-billed Sapsucker, Nashville Warblers, and our first Warbling Vireos, and as we reached the lakeshore, a Ladder-backed Woodpecker.

The little cliff here this year only had a few of the red tubular flowers beloved of hummingbirds and so we only found one Berylline Hummingbird there this evening. On the water were American Coots and later Great Blue Heron and Blue-winged Teal. And to everyone's surprise, an Osprey. In the main picnic area we marvelled at some of the giant fig trees and indeed at the variety of the trees. We noticed our first epiphytes – some ferns, some air plants and bromeliads. The latter had some impressive flower spikes emerging from their dense nests of leaves. There were quite a number of birds in the trees, Hooded Orioles, Black-throated Gray Warblers and Slate-throated Redstart among them. But by now we were feeling in the need of a shower, some rest, and some dinner. I carried on a little into the forest to see what was up the steep slopes by the lagoon. Interestingly the very sharp ridges here had man made holes in them that one goes through (crouched) to stay on the path – no idea when these were made! Only birds I saw as dusk descended were rather good ones – West Mexican Chachalacas.

Dinner was excellent – the Laguna Maria people are very hospitable and they have a great cook. A good introduction to Mexican cuisine and we had lots of that to follow!

### Day 3      February 7<sup>th</sup>      Volcán de Fuego

Dawn saw several of us meeting up at the entrance gate. We spent the next hundred minutes covering perhaps three hundred metres of road, so busy was the birdwatching. The lane was lined with rough grazing fields on one side and on the other by a citrus grove, and down by the corner some more wooded areas. The citrus grove played host to several White-throated Thrushes, some vivacious Spotted Wrens and the most brilliant male Painted Bunting. Out in the fields were lots more buntings, this time mostly Indigo and some Varied, and a number of Blue Grosbeak too. There were several groups of Lark Sparrows and Inca Doves were everywhere. In the trees we spotted several flycatchers. Social were common and in one spot lived up to their name! Kiskadees shouted out their names for us. Vermilion Flycatchers were everywhere, which hardly distracted from their brilliance. And there were two Myiarchus species too, these being Nutting's and Brown-crested Flycatchers. Overhead we watched White-faced Glossy Ibis and several small groups of Lilac-fronted Parrots. Blue Mockingbird, Stripe-headed and Lincoln's Sparrows, lots of White-collared Seedeaters, Rufous-capped Warblers, Rose-throated Beccards and Black-capped Vireos were among the other birds seen! As we got back to the entrance Hooded Orioles and Black-headed Grosbeaks welcomed us in.

After an exceptionally hearty breakfast we all met up by the front gate at nine-thirty. There was plenty to see here before we set off. Golden-crowned Emerald (a hummer) and Happy Wren (both regional endemics) were in the citrus grove. A Grayish Saltator flew in and landed by us and then a Golden-cheeked Woodpecker, and lastly an Ivory-billed Woodcreeper. We got in the vans but had only covered a few hundred metres when we stopped for a flowering tree. The multi-stamened blossoms were very attractive to hummingbirds with Berylline the main visitor. A large pink-mauve pea vine was most attractive. Next we stopped a kilometre up the road amongst dry scrub. Here it was the turn of the Tropical Ground Squirrels though the White-winged Doves tried to distract us. We popped into the village and checked conditions on the volcano with the army and then picked up Chimeno, local Indian guide, herbalist and

shaman all rolled into one. Then we headed up to Las Mesas, a short drive above the village, but into a fabulous scene with the magnificence of Volcán de Fuego rising directly above us and with open pasture about us, this surrounded by plenty of natural forest. We parked the minibuses under a huge strangling fig. This immense tree would have competed with any banyan in India so complex were its many trunks and roots and the vast crown was quite perfect. A great spot for lunch and home to many birds that today included Acorn Woodpeckers, Eastern Bluebirds and several Empidonax flycatchers. Lunch was to wait however as Chimeno was to take us on a circular walk through pasture and forest.

This was an excellent walk though it proved rather harder and took much longer than we had anticipated, resulting in us getting back to lunch at nearly three! Nonetheless it gave us a great insight into the forests and scrub up here. We crossed a grassland seeing various animal tracks as we went and then descended towards some woodland. Black and Turkey Vultures were everywhere and we saw Red-tailed Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk before long. A fabulous Blomfield's Beauty perched up in a tree. Later we saw plenty of Orange-patch Crescents and not a few grass yellows, most of which proved to be Mimosa Yellow. *Cirsium ehrenbergii* was one of the most impressive plants of the walk with many tall specimens, some reaching 4m. Salvias were there in blue and pink forms. Epiphytes included various bromeliads and airplants and ferns, but it was the orchids that stole the show. The first was a tiny purple *Maxillaria*, the second a beautiful little yellow-flowered spray of flowers at head height on a small tree, and the third, the fabulous large yellow and maroon-red spotted flowers of *Oncidium cavendishianum*. Birds had by now quietened down though we still saw plenty. White-striped Woodcreeper was a good find and there were a number of warblers including Wilson's and Townsend's. As we were about to return to the lunch spot we spotted an impressive Magnificent Swallowtail fluttering about on some *Senecios*.

We took a relaxed lunch under the great 'guardian tree' in company with bluebirds and various warblers, the latter including a very confiding Black and White Warbler that made for a great picture on the convoluted hanging roots of the tree. After lunch we walked slowly down the track in the afternoon warmth, keeping a check on volcano activity levels as we went. Butterflies were few but did include De la Maza's Mimic White. Once at the foot of the main descent we split into two groups with some taking Chimeno back to his village and taking a look inside at his shaman lifestyle. Then back to Laguna. Others stayed out for a while enjoying the hummingbird show. We saw a good number of species with Ruby-throated, Rufous (and some that could have been Allen's), a Broad-tailed, Berylline, and best of all, a couple of Bumblebee Hummingbirds. Black-throated Gray Warbler and Orange-crowned Warbler were seen along with Western Tanager and various flycatchers. As we drove down from there we flushed a covey of at least twenty Banded Quail, whilst out in a dry area we found a big flock of Lark Sparrows.

The night drive involved revisiting the same part of the volcano we'd been to earlier in the day. The footprints of Ocelot, Gray Fox and co in the sandy track enticing us back. We encountered neither of these, instead doing very well in the skunk department, with both Hog-nosed, with its extensive white back and tail, and an almost black Hooded Skunk, the only white being a rather small stripe down the side. We also encountered a couple of Virginia Opossums.

## Day 4 February 8<sup>th</sup> Volcan Nevado de Colima & Zapotlan Lake

I got up an hour before sunrise and was rewarded with a fabulous sighting of a Margay watched for five minutes as it slunk about a coffee plantation. For much of this time it was just around ten metres away – and I'd forgotten to bring my camera! An Eared Poorwill was watched for a while and I also saw a White-nosed Coati. This latter was after dawn and was very strange as the animal, it seemed a large male, had no tail at all! Anne saw a Gray Fox down by the Laguna before we left.

Another hearty breakfast consumed, we watched both Golden-crowned Emerald and Mexican Woodnymph, before waving farewell to the hospitable people of Laguna Maria. We passed through some fine looking areas over the next few kilometres, the symmetrical cone of Volcán de Fuego usually visible above it all. No activity this morning, we kept checking! En route to Ciudad Guzman (now known as Zapotlan Grande) we made several brief stops. One by a little wetland yielded Cinnamon Teal, White-faced Ibis and Cactus Wren, another great views of Grey Hawk another was to take pictures of a yellow-flowered tree, and yet another to look at some marvellous bright Yellow-winged Caciques.

After a brief gas station stop in the town we were off to the Nevado. At 4240m (almost 14,000 feet) this is an impressive volcano, it overtops the lively Volcán de Fuego by a few hundred metres and, like its twin, is covered in a marvellous example of zonal vegetation. The changes were marked and often rapid for the large part of the distance to the top is covered by a sixteen kilometre road, meaning it's quite steep – though in truth a very good road. From fields and dry scrub we soon passed into the lower oak zone which soon merged into pine-oak forest, the higher parts of this becoming much more humid before one arrived abruptly into the Oyamel (*Abies reliogosa*) zone. We didn't have time to get any higher. Our lowest stop proved very good for butterflies. The stunning Mexican Elfstreak was the prize though a number of bright and quite large Mexican Silverspots were much appreciated. Gulf Fritillary, various sulphurs and grass yellows were seen. White-eared Hummingbirds were noisy and beautiful. The flowers were simply stunning with banks of *Lobelia laxiflora* mixing with pink-purple *Salvia gracilis* and red *Salvia fulgens*. Further up we stopped for lunch. Here several met with the Magnificent Hummingbird whose shocking shimmering green gorget drew loud appreciation. Red Warbler, Flame-coloured Tanager, Brown Creeper and White-breasted Nuthatch were all seen. The afternoon was spent at a couple of higher areas. The highest of these was at just under 3000m. Here the forest was dense Oyamel, though one track section did have marvellous views out over the slopes below. Anne spotted a Peregrine atop a tree from here and other birds seen in these upper reaches were Pine Flycatcher, Golden-browed Warbler, Mexican Jay and the elusive Grey-breasted Wood-Wren. Up here the *Salvias* became more diverse. A little red *Salvia* was joined by the impressively large and bright red *Salvia gesnerifolia*. There were also pink and blue *Salvias*, a *Stachys* species, two or three *Senecio* species, the lovely orange and yellow hues of *Castilleja tenuiflora*, and the tall pink *Dahlia rosea*. Amongst all the finery were plenty of hummingbirds.

At four we started to descend towards Zapotlan Lake. This is an exceptionally rich little wetland in bird terms and in no time at all we'd seen a good number of species. First up was plenty of American White Pelicans followed by Neotropic Cormorants, and lots of egrets and

herons, these including Little Green, Snowy, Great and Tricolored. Later Night Herons appeared too. Sora Rails pattered here and there as did several waders, notably around fifteen Long-billed Dowitchers, a couple of Western Sandpipers, American Avocet and Black-necked Stilts. The Green Kingfisher sitting on a post got a shock when an Osprey with a fish swooped in and landed, the kingfisher just getting out of the way! Not as much as a shock as the Laughing Gull out on the lake though. Though we cannot say for certain what happened, one moment we were watching a Laughing Gull sitting on the water, the next moment a pelican speared out of the sky, the gull disappeared and we could see the pelican gulping something large in its mouth. And the gull was nowhere to be seen. Surely not? We didn't actually see it happen so probably the gull managed to evade our searching eyes and the pelican just happened to catch what must have been a large fish, just where the gull had been! Great flocks of Yellow-headed Blackbirds wheeled about with large numbers of Brown-headed and Bronzed Cowbirds with a mere few hundred or so grackles and Brewer's Blackbirds. As the evening progressed the flocks flying in became larger and larger like trails of smoke across the sky. A Lesser Nighthawk flew past. Other birds of note were Caspian Tern, an abundance of ducks that included Fulvous and Black-bellied Whistling Ducks, Loggerhead Shrike, Yellowthroat and Violet-Green Swallows. It had been a very productive afternoon and evening enjoyed in fabulous light, and as the sun set we could see a great plume of smoke erupting from Volcán de Fuego, though the top of the volcano was just out of sight behind the bulk of the Nevado de Colima. Dinner was a Mexican style tapas featuring all sorts of great dishes involving enchiladas and tacos – superb!

## Day 5      February 9<sup>th</sup>      to Morelia via Paricutín and Uruapan

A long journey in prospect today so we arose early and were ready for the off at eight thirty. In fact all were assembled ten minutes early so we looked at the view of the Nevado from the parking lot and found a surprising number of birds in pomegranates in the next door garden, given that we were in the town centre. Several Hooded Orioles, a male Varied Bunting, House Finches and a Sinaloa Wren were among them and a Black-vented Oriole flew over.

We left town only to find that a diversion sent us through the middle of a nearby town, slowly covering the back streets before half an hour later joining the main road again. Then we sped off across some rich sugar cane country before ascending into the Sierra del Tigre, a beautiful area of mixed pine-oak woodland and more open subtropical deciduous forest interrupted by lively rustic villages and rough farmland at intervals. Though long the morning drive took us through such interesting country that it was impossible to be bored for long. We made one stop where a stream cut through the dry open woodland. Black Phoebe and Lesser Goldfinches were in the stream and in the dry land around, amongst the white-flowered tree *Ipomoea arborescens* and the occasional 'cardon' cactus *Lemaireocereus doumortei* were Stripe-headed Sparrow and Say's Phoebe. A possible Swainson's Hawk and a Red-tailed Hawk circled overhead whilst bright Blue Grosbeaks flew past.

Then it was on to Los Reyes and thence to the Paricutín Volcano which we arrived at rather late for lunch! As Eric and Ivan set about preparing the picnic we took in the marvellous views out over the landscape below and above. The cone of Paricutín rose some two thousand feet in

front of us, its base nestled in the flank of the much larger Volcan Tancítaro, now extinct, and now part of the Parque Nacional de Pico de Tancítaro. The cinder cone of Paricutín was not active but its main subsidiary vent was busy smoking away, little plumes arising from many spots on its slopes and from one corner of the cone there seemed to be regular emissions of hot ash. Below, the great cinder and lava fields spread out across the landscape that it had conquered since first appearing as a little cinder pimple in a farmer's field some sixty years ago. A village had disappeared though the church remained eerily visible. The little Dainty Sulphur flew about and as we took lunch a few birds were seen. Ravens flew overhead and in the trees were Warbling Vireo, Olive Warbler, Slate-throated Redstart and Yellow-eyed Juncos.

Then it was on to Uruapan. We descended steadily to that town, dropping from the temperate zones into the sub-tropical, evidenced by plenty of banana plantations and avocados which were everywhere. We spent an hour and a half walking down through the amazing little Barranco du Cupatitzio or Eduardo Ruiz National Park. This protects both a fabulous little ravine filled with subtropical vegetation and gorgeous little river whose waters had been engineering do provide a magical scene all the way down. As we wandered back and forth across stone bridges and well-made paths there would be a fountain here (complete with rainbow), a sudden man-made torrent there, or an arcing waterfall here – it had been done so well that at times it was easy to forget that it was man-made. The trees were very varied and had good numbers of epiphytes attached, many ferns and orchids in particular. The latter were mostly not flowering though we did see plenty of the large yellow panicles of *Oncidium cavendishianum*. Busy Lilies were abundant along the rushing torrent and so too a large aroid. Butterflies were none too obvious at this end of the day however we did see the lovely Karwinski's Beauty rested high in a tree. Birds too were rather elusive. We saw plenty of White-throated Thrushes, but other than that had to be content with a pair of Flame-coloured Tanagers. Black and White Warbler, Dusky-capped Flycatcher and Great Pewee. We headed for the exit where some saw Lilac-fronted Parrots in the tree above the many food stalls. Then it was on to Morelia, the fast toll road taking us quickly there though it was still just before eight in the evening when we finally arrived and settled into the lovely old Hotel de la Soledad. Eric took us out for an evening meal at the Mirasoles. This great restaurant reserved its wine cellar dining table for us (or as John put it, the Pompous Room!) and we sat and enjoyed various trout dishes or in my case shank of lamb cooked in a delicious pulque (cactus and chilli) sauce. Of course we had to sample some of the vast wine selection and several chose Mexican wines. My Casa Madero, a rich smooth full-bodied cabernet sauvignon from Coahuila, was excellent, and was one of the cheapest Mexican wines on offer, mind you even that was still £15 a bottle!

## Day 6      February 10<sup>th</sup>      Tacambaro & Cerro Burro

Several of the group took the opportunity for a bit of a lie-in and a morning wander round Morelia whilst the rest of us met up with Ivan at seven and headed south. An hour and a half later and we were in Tacambaro and partaking of a most excellent 'roadside' breakfast. Tacambaro is a prime avocado growing area so what should one expect there for breakfast? Avocado stuffed omelettes obviously! And they were delicious. The Coffee came from the local ground too and no doubt the eggs. Meanwhile there were birds in the trees above. Ladder-

backed Woodpeckers and Nashville Warblers greeted us but it was the Rufous-backed Thrushes that were the most appreciated.

We headed down to the edge of the town and a little canyon that is reached through a track and a few gardens. Already warm there were a few butterflies on the wing, most notably a Queen and also a little Crescent. We failed to find convincing Dusky Hummingbirds here though instead were rewarded with a single Plain Starthroat. After we'd got used to the noisy parrots on someone's verandah we started to track down other species – Warbling Vireo and both Varied and Lazuli Buntings among them. Further up the canyon, with the local kids being very well behaved and staying behind us, we found some choice species. Dwarf Vireo and Rusty Sparrow were good and so too were Hammond's Flycatcher and Greenish Elaenia. A Cooper's Hawk circled overhead and we disturbed a Red-tailed Hawk which promptly dropped its prey as its sped off. This turned out to be a Mexican Gray Squirrel.

Below the town we dropped rapidly into the Terra Caliente (Hotlands). Here we stopped amongst sugar cane and maize and took a walk along a track. The delights of much rubbish and even the odd dead animal tipped into the canyon by the track were soon ignored as we regularly found species of interest. Butterflies were obvious and plentiful. Various 'grass yellows', sulphurs and whites fluttered past and a couple of swallowtails put in an appearance though neither stopped long enough to be sure of the identity. Skippers however were more amenable. There were many species including several long tailed ones – White-striped Longtail being one. Tailed Orange was a fine sight in the dried grass and almost as bright were a few Gulf Fritillaries. Common Buckeye and Banded Peacock were by the stream and on the way back we saw a single Zebra Heliconid. Dragonflies and damselflies were good too with Roseate Skimmers by the water and along the track. What may have been Canyon Rubyspot accompanied several blue damselflies by the ford. A surprise was a huge Ctenosaur that Anne spotted on the far side of the gorge and we saw a couple of lizards nearer to hand. A creeper with curious purple tube flowers and pinky bracts was a fine sight and attracted quite a number of hummingbirds. The regional endemic Dusky Hummingbird was commonest. Lazuli Bunting was among the seedeaters seen, and flycatchers included Hammond's Flycatcher, Greenish Elaenia and Western and Cassin's Kingbirds. Squirrel Cuckoos were seen, also a Grasshopper Sparrow, and Golden Vireo and White-throated Thrush down in the canyon.

It was time to go so we headed uphill, steadily, for an hour, rising from some 3000 feet above sea level below Tacambaro to 10500 feet above sea-level at Cerro Burro. Once all were reunited we took an excellent picnic on the top of the mountain – Eric's salad was really quite excellent! Black-chinned Hummingbird and Rufous-sided Towhee were seen. We then spent a couple of hours gradually walking down the hill. The flora was quite remarkable. There were wonderful shows of the paintbush *Castilleja tenuiflora* (with some *arvensis* at the bottom) and the magnificent specimens of *Cirsium subcoriaceum* were greatly appreciated. Further down we found a large yellow-flowered *Cirsium*. *Salvias* as usual were abundant, here with the red *fulgens* again, though the smaller red one here was new, *Salvia elegans*. Blue labiates included a *Nepeta* species. Oaks were many and varied whilst other trees included *Alnus jorullensis* and *Abies religiosa*. *Senecios* were tremendously varied and we saw perhaps six or seven species, including the giant *angulosus*, and a couple of small compact species. There was a bright pink *Oenothera* growing along the track. American Painted Lady was one of the few butterflies seen though on the start of the ascent in the vehicles we had seen a couple of Mourning Cloaks.

Birding mainly revolved around hummingbirds. The striking Magnificent was reasonably common, especially right near the top, and we saw Calliope, Allen's/Rufous and White-eared. Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Painted Redstart and Mexican Chickadee were among the other birds seen. Then it was back to Morelia for a supper involving some curious hot dishes and some wonderfully cooked strips of beef, chicken, cheese, chorizo sausage, peppers and cactus. Excellent. And happy birthday to Eric's eldest daughter, Carla, nine today. We all enjoyed the excellent birthday cake – thanks all!

## Day 7      February 11<sup>th</sup>      Pátzcuaro & Tzintzuntzan

A perfectly respectable nine o'clock start this morning. A Blue-throated Hummingbird appeared at breakfast – not bad for the middle of a city! The usual early morning clouds soon gave way to sunshine as we drove the hour down to Pátzcuaro, though were later to return on a relatively cool and cloudy day. We stopped off at a petrol station where a field below had numerous seed-eaters in including Savannah, Clay-coloured and House Sparrows. Once at the lake we drove around to the far shore and spent a very happy hour and a half moving precisely one hundred metres from the vehicles! As we got out of them the Canyon Towhees were already jumping around with a Common Yellowthroat and a Canyon Wren. A Curve-billed Thrasher sang from the tv aerial. The wetland below held all manner of birds. Close at hand were Black Phoebes, Northern Waterthrush, Cassin's Kingbirds, and of course Vermilion Flycatchers. A Pied Grebe fished just yards away and ducks in all directions included Cinnamon, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal, Shoveler, Pintail and American Wigeon. Herons were prominent with Great Blue and Little Blue joining a couple of Tricoloureds and Snowy Egret allowed easy comparison with Great Egret. Great flocks of 'blackbirds' were a sight, with Yellow-winged Blackbirds very much outnumbered by Brown-headed Cowbirds. A Northern Harrier cruised past offshore. Waders included only a Common Snipe and a Black-winged Stilt. Other birds here were Sora Rail, Song Sparrows, and a plenty of Violet-Green Swallows.

We drove a kilometre to a bridge. This connects an island to the mainland though now there is little more than a channel in between. And extensive reedbeds. From the bridge we watched the rare endemic Black-pollled Yellowthroat and were able to compare it with the Common Yellowthroat. Wilson's Warblers complicated the small yellow bird in the reeds issue. We all had marvellous views of a Marsh Wren, a secretive but very beautiful species. In the same vein were Sora Rail and Common Snipe both of which posed beautifully. Flocks of Pintail flew over and in a distant open area of water we could see lots of American Wigeon with some Ring-necked Ducks. Little *Oenanthe rosea* flowered in the tight-cropped turf along with some immigrants such as *Medicago lupulina*. Several Mourning Cloaks appeared very out of place in such open marshy habitat. John found a Two-tailed Swallowtail, a spectacular beast and our first of the trip. Walking along the road we saw kingbirds and Brewer's Sparrows and the flowering *Nicotinia glauca* attracted hummingbirds including the brilliant Broad-billed. As we were about to board the vehicles a superb adult Zone-tailed Hawk was spotted soaring amongst the Turkey Vultures – the former mimics the latter in general plumage and flight action!

For lunch we drove across a couple of fields to the lake edge and Eric and Ivan made the final preparations in the shade of some tall willows. Not that the shade was needed for by now clouds had returned and there were even a few sparse raindrops in the air. Meanwhile we pottered about spotting many Killdeer, a few Black-necked Stilts, some Western and Least Sandpipers and a Spotted Sandpiper. Here the Common Yellowthroats were joined by a couple of Gray-crowned Yellowthroats, and Tree Swallows had taken over from Violet-Greens. A large flock of small birds turned out to be American Pipits. Out on the water was a surprise in the form of a Canvasback.

After another excellent picnic we drove into Pátzcuaro. A nail had been spotted embedded in the front tyre so repairs were urgently needed. This was done whilst the group had an hour to take in the delights of Pátzcuaro's zocalo. Meanwhile I popped down to the Ecology Institute to buy a number of volumes of the regional flora. Then it was down to Tzintzuntzan. Though known to have been inhabited long before, it was famous as the site of the Tarascan Capital, and at the time of the Spanish Conquest there were reckoned to be 40,000 people living there. We spent much of the time across the road as Eric took us on a guided tour of the Franciscan Monastery in its fine gardens and the Baroque Church and atrium where the monks attempted to convert the Tarascans! The gardens were full of very old, very wide, and very gnarled, old olive trees as well as other fine trees and the church had an enormous ash growing in its yard.

Meanwhile Ivan took Anne and me out of the village and back along the road about three kilometres. Here a track took us via a rubbish dump into a small valley which was brimful with birds. Golden-naped Woodpeckers joined Hepatic Tanagers and many warblers in the eucalyptus planted here. Lower down in the natural vegetation were plenty of sparrows, especially Chipping which were very common. With them were two new sparrows in the shape of Black-chinned and the very large Rusty. Indigo Buntings, towhees and doves were with them. In the shrubbery we spotted a pair of Sinaloa Wrens, Black-headed Siskins and quite a number of Scott's Orioles – superb. All sated with birds and culture we headed back into Morelia. Early evening I met up with Dr Arturo Nunez Garduno, who generously gave us copies of his excellent books on the mammals of Michoacan. Then it was out to Eric's favourite restaurant, San Miguelito. A great evening here with lots of good food and wine. The trout with macademia nuts was a favourite and so too the steak served with a tomato and mesquite sauce. I chose Fileto "Terra Caliente" a concoction with a tortilla topped by a steak served on a bed of green tomato sauce and topped with loads of shredded fried potato. Eric himself prepared the dessert of crepes served with a tasty sauce made with butter, sugar, milk, vanilla, cinnamon, coffee liquor and brandy – lovely. And having done my checklist later I discovered we'd seen one hundred and five bird species during the day!

## Day 8      February 12<sup>th</sup>      Lago Cuitzeo, Morelia, Mil Cumbres & to Anganguero

A very busy day again, though how depended upon what one did. The more leisurely option was to join Eric at ten for an hour and a half's exploration of Morelia's history and art.

The more masochistic amongst us were up ready to depart at seven. We headed north for just thirty minutes to Lago Cuitzeo. A new road causeway took us across the lake to an area full of wetland species. From the causeway itself we saw Bufflehead and Lesser Scaup and at the margins were Cinnamon, Green-winged and Blue-winged Teal. This was our first major encounter with gulls. It was good to see Franklin's Gulls with one already in summer plumage, and two Laughing Gulls joined the throng of immaculate looking adult Ring-billed Gulls, these with a few Caspian Terns in tow. Posts held abundant egrets, particularly Snowy, and herons too, with Night Herons being very abundant. This is not normally a good tour for waders but today we did rather well. There were fine views of American Avocet and Black-necked Stilt. Lesser and Greater Yellowlegs were seen, the latter much the commoner, and a single Willet too. Smaller species included Least and Western Sandpiper, Semipalmated Plover and Killdeer, and a couple of Solitary Sandpipers. Buff-bellied Pipits fed in the salty grass whilst inland the usual common thorn scrub species were joined by a Cactus Wren and Curve-billed Thrasher. After a hearty breakfast in a nearby café we headed back across the old causeway. A chance sighting of a stocky looking King Rail brought us to a halt and we jumped out to try and see it. No luck on the rail, but instead we found an extraordinary quantity of snakes, some kind of garter snake. There were more than a hundred of them scattered here and there, and in several spots coiled in tight bundles of three or more snakes round the base of reeds – an amazing sight! Next we moved to an area of dry thorn forest. *Ipomoea arborescens* 'trees', Cardon cactuses and assorted thorny bushes made up a promising habitat especially when a small pool was added to the mix. In fact we saw relatively little over the next forty minutes, Normally good for hummingbirds we found only a couple of Broad-billed Hummingbirds. Flycatchers however were rather good with Ash-throated and Gray being seen. Lincoln's and Clay-coloured Sparrows were encountered as well as Bullock's Oriole and a superb little Virginia's Warbler.

We high-tailed it back to Morelia and met up with the rest of the group. Some unforeseen traffic and car problems meant we were just half an hour late leaving, but at least it gave us a chance to take a look at the Blue-throated Hummingbirds nest inside the Soledad's courtyard – she was busy building the nest! So then it was on to the wonderful Mil Cumbres. This magically scenic area of forest and mountain occupied our afternoon. Vista after vista unfolded, blue ridge after blue ridge melted into the distance. Some of the hill shapes seemed quite improbable from afar! To our left steep slopes and cliffs reached up to the highest ridges. Our lunch stop, by a small waterfall was very productive. We found the waterfall to host a population of a nice little *Mimulus* and there were fine *Salvias* too. A swallowtail turned out to be a Mexican Dartwhite (in fact a 'White' not a swallowtail!) whilst overhead a Magnificent Swallowtail soared. Ardent Crescent, Spring Azure, Marine Blue, Mexican Silverspot and Orange-barred Sulphur were among the butterflies seen. The largest insect prize went instead to a marvellous five inch long katydid. A fabulous Squirrel Cuckoo had greeted us on arrival and other birds seen were Pine Flycatcher, Hepatic Tanager and Red-tailed Hawk. During the rest of the afternoon we made several stops, the first were largely for flora. On cliffs we admired the strange agave-like *Furcraea bedinghausii*, an uncommon species that this year was putting on a show of several great arcing flower spikes. The succulent *Echeveria mucronata* had its red-tinged rosettes on the cliffs too and in place had put forth flowering spikes, though all out of reach of the camera. An Erinus-like species carpeted grassy areas and on one large wet face was a mass of the *Mimulus*. Striking plants included the many bromeliads and air plants, the latter putting forth purple-blue flowers emerged from red bracts, and the fabulous orchid, *Rhyncho스테le cervantesii*. Out of reach, but we could all appreciate the great beauty of this plant.

Butterflies had by now quietened down but there were plenty of good birds. Red-faced Warbler was found at two spots and we also glimpsed Red Warbler several times. Other warblers included the pretty Hermit and Townsend's Warblers. Near a wonderful mirador we spotted MacGillivray's Warbler, some hummingbirds and Russet Nightingale-Thrush. Grey-barred Warblers and a superb male Abeille's Oriole, regional endemics both, were visiting heavily epiphyte-laden trees.

Then it was on to the Don Bruno in Angageo and an excellent meal in their restaurant.

## Day 9      February 13<sup>th</sup>      El Rosario

After breakfast several of us convened on the upper 'balcony' for a spot of birdwatching. Pine Siskins were in the tree above and two superb male Black-headed Siskins stopped briefly below. In the top of a tall pine a male Red Crossbill sat. Nearer at hand we watched Curve-billed Thrasher, Blue Mockingbird, Black-headed Grosbeaks and Hepatic Tanagers, and a party of Bushtits went through. At the back a superb pink Passiflora draped over a small tree.

We were off a little before nine taking the dirt back road to El Rosario. This is a slow track but it is only a few kilometres and so it took a shorter time than going round by road and also got us to a higher starting point on the path into the reserve. And it took us through some marvelous country. We rose from 8250 feet at the hotel to over ten thousand feet before dropping back slightly into El Rosario. Of course the views were marvelous and the mosaic of little maize fields (now waiting for spring) and villages and forest was just gorgeous.

We arrived at the entrance and got ourselves geared up for the walk up. By the carpark were some good sparrow species - the large and immaculate Striped was common and there were also some strikingly marked Song Sparrows. The Monarchs were apparently at a roost high up this year and so we were expecting a long walk up. In the event we took it very slowly and covered the nine hundred feet raise and mile distance in about two and a half hours - good slow going with plenty to see on the way and everyone made it easily. Sirocco was our local guide and Margaret's bag carrier (good idea Margaret!). We entered *Abies religiosa* (Oyamel) forest right away and this tree was dominant throughout with the occasional pine and understory oak. However the ground flora was rather good particularly with respect to *Salvias* which were represented by no fewer than six species. There was the big red *Salvia fulgens*, smaller red *Salvia elegans*, the pink *Salvia gracilis* as well as *Salvia mexicana* (the common lax flowered one), *Salvia lavanduloides* (uncommon), and *Salvia polystacha* (the one with blue white-marked flowers). A pretty *Stachys* with whorls of orange red flowers was from the same family - probably *Stachys coccinea*. A *Geranium* was a common flower in the damp mossy areas and of course everywhere were the shrubs of yellow flowers and large leaves that were formerly included as groundsels (not very like ours!) but now seem to be in the genus *Roldana*. There was the abundant *Roldana barba-johannis*, the almost palmate-leaved *Roldana angulifolia* and up at the top the narrow leaved *Roldana lineolata*. The morning's birding was rather excellent too. Hummingbirds as ever were a feature and we saw numerous White-eared Hummingbirds. There were a few Green Violet-ears too. Warblers were pretty good with several sightings of the gorgeous Red Warbler, a few Hermit and Townsend's Warblers, and a Colima Warbler.

Green-striped Brushfinch allowed one or two of the group views and so too did several Golden-browed Warblers – both usually elusive species. Brown Creeper, Mexican Chickadee, both Ruby-crowned and Golden-crowned Kinglets, Ravens and Grey Silkies were all seen too.

The sun was shining strongly as we walked upwards and already Monarchs were gently gliding down the valleys and passing us in small numbers. There had been an overnight frost up here and so the warm sun must have been particularly welcome. It still came as a tremendous shock when we walked out on to an open saddle where juniper and other shrubs were dotted around yellow grasslands to see butterflies everywhere. All Monarchs of course and indeed we didn't see another species all day. They were flapping back and forth over the glade or flying strongly higher in the air or just pitching into the ground and occasionally shivering their wings. To one side a little streamlet offered water and the Monarchs were there in their thousands. After a brief dalliance with a Rufous-sided Towhee our guide motioned us up a side track and within moments we found ourselves amid the colony. The air was heaving with butterflies. And the trees were covered in them. Trunks were covered just a layer or two deep but the branches and needles were weighed down with them. The latter looked almost as if the tree had died and all its dead foliage still remained, but the brownish-black-orange things were in fact butterflies. The colony this year, as last, was immense. As we peered into the trees great clouds of orange and black rose in the shafts of sunlight - it was a breathtaking sight. We sat amongst them and had our snacks, or just continued to photograph them - a difficult task but we were up for it! Many landed on us or sat in layers on the paths daring us to pass. Gary and John had managed to continue up the path into the centre of the main colony before all the butterflies landing on the paths caused the wardens to close the path. They ended up by themselves up there with just a couple of local guides for company amid all the splendour – a moving experience by all accounts. And it made great pictures as they gingerly picked their way back through the thronging butterflies to us! Meanwhile we'd been visited by not just the odd million Monarchs, but also a cranky and crotchety man from Chicago who actually ate a Monarch as well as being generally very rude – extraordinary to see such behaviour in a place like this! We just continued to enjoy the spectacle though!

After two hours of this magic we descended quite rapidly, hunger urging us on. Eric had found us a delightful little 'shack' restaurant down in El Rosario where the lady managed to cook ten meals in just a few minutes! Beans, Rice, steak and the most superb quesadillas made with blue corn tacos – great basic fare. Then we boarded our vehicles for the pleasant trip back down to Anganguero. A man ploughing his field with two horses, followed by his wife sowing, and another person hoeing it in meant a picture stop. They were somewhat bemused by this but generously allowed us to take pictures.

After an hour's break back at the hotel we went out back for an introduction to the places one can walk and look for wildlife right behind the Don Bruno. We saw a single orchid (*Spiranthes* sp?) by the track, otherwise it was birds that grabbed the attention. Not many at first though, it wasn't until we staked out a gully as the sun was setting that the action really got going. In half an hour there we saw Hepatic, female Red-headed, and male Flame-coloured Tanagers, Townsend's, Orange-crowned, MacGillivray's and hybrid Townsend's/Hermit Warblers, White-throated Thrushes and American Robins, Magnificent and White-eared Hummingbirds, Green Violet-ear, Yellow-eyed Juncos, Lincoln's Sparrow, Brown-backed Solitaire, Hutton's Vireo, and Blue Mockingbird. A pretty good spot!

## Day 10 February 14<sup>th</sup> Laguna Verdes!

Pre-breakfast I went for a walk up the valley behind the Don Bruno. Both Whiskered Screech Owls and Mountain Pygmy Owls were calling and I had several sightings of Mexican Whip-poor-wills. No animals, but the bonus was Crescent-chested Warbler and a superb Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, an uncommon and rarely seen mountain species.

After breakfast we headed through Ocampo in the valley below Anganguero and thence steadily upwards to the first of the days two Laguna Verdes. We took a walk along the edge of the small lagoon and then back through a small farm to the road. The water-side field was being ploughed with a two-horse drawn plough. However one of the horses was not at all impressed and eventually they bolted dragging the ploughman with them for a way before thankfully he let go. The sound of the plough being dragged down the road at speed was excruciating! Meanwhile we'd spotted a load of birds. A little party on the edge of the furrows included Curve-billed Thrasher, Canyon Towhee, Hermit Thrush, Song Sparrow and Lincoln's Sparrow. Down by the lake shore we flushed a Common Snipe and watched a Marsh Wren and Common Yellowthroat as they skulked away. There were some Savannah Sparrows along with Brown-headed Cowbirds and Red-winged Blackbirds in the *Schoenoplectus* beds that covered much of the lagoon. Where this wasn't dominant a water lily was in leaf and around the wet fringes were lots of the circular leaves of *Hydrocotyle umbellata*. As we walked back through the fields a large flock of Chipping and Clay-coloured Sparrows was found to contain a single Vesper Sparrow.

We drove down to the other Laguna Verde. This lake has on one side, quite good forest backed by steep hills, also forested. We walked slowly in before lunch whilst Ivan and Eric set the picnic up down by the lake. Pine Flycatcher and White-eared Hummingbirds were noted but it was the butterflies and flowers that really grabbed the attention. Several Mexican Silverspots glowed bright orange and an Elfstreak dazzled blue briefly. There were other blues, several skippers, and a pretty little *Mytila Crescent*. We finally identified the pretty little 'pink butterfly flower' *Lopezia racemosa*, seen almost since Day 1, and there was another member of the same family with a single wide upper petal instead of the strange divided one of the *Lopezia*, this latter being *Gaura coccinea*. *Salvias* were as usual abundant with red *fulgens* joined by the smaller *coccinea* here. And the tall *Cirsium anartiolepis* were magnificent!

We took our picnic down by the lake edge, a very fine and peaceful spot. Then we walked along a track hugging the lake shore. The trees along here were superb for epiphytes with many Bromeliads, some with hanging red inflorescences, and lots of ferns and on trees and rocks, the epiphytic cactus *Rhipsalis baccifera*. Finest though were the orchids. There were quite a few of the gorgeous white *Rhyncostele cervantesii*, most out of reach but first Peter found one growing on a fallen log (and a fine Valentine's gift for Cora!) and then Cora spotted some flowering on the bank. There were just a few sprays of the yellow *Oncidium cavendishianum* too. Down in the water amongst all the water lilies and bistort was plenty of the diminutive yellow flowered bladderwort *Utricularia gibba*.

For the last part of the afternoon we walked uphill to the old quarry. Birds were very much in evidence for this part of the visit. Slate-throated Redstarts flitted hither and thither and we had

many encounters with hummingbirds, notably Blue-throated, White-eared, Broad-tailed and the lovely Green Violet-ear. Flycatchers were plentiful too with the delightful little Tufted obvious, a sturdy looking Great Pewee, and a tail-flicking Dusky Flycatcher. Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer was in the undergrowth whilst higher in trees were Gray Silkies, Acorn Woodpeckers and Bullock's Orioles. Best though was the day's second sighting of the beautiful Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo. This at very closer range though deep in a roadside bush. It was devouring some large insect. We found some magnificent specimens of the yellow orchid *Oncidium cavendishianum*, some of which were at ground level. Then it was time to return to the Don Bruno with some time to relax and catch the evening sun on the balcony before dinner.

Later (about 20.30) we went for a night trip. Ivan took us up high onto the Sierra Chincua and to his Godfather's ranch. Godfather wasn't home so we just parked up and walked off across an opening in the forest covered in rough grazed fields. It was stunning being up at over 3000m with a clear starlit sky. And apart from the occasional distant dog noise and one or two distant cars it was so wonderfully quiet! We didn't see a great deal though the Hooded Skunk was very good and seen well as it bounced across a field towards us before disappearing down a hole. A distant Mexican Whip-poor-will sallied from the edge of the forest and a Common Snipe was flushed. Best though were the extraordinary Michoacan Stream Salamanders *Ambystoma ordinarium* in the pools by the farm. Looking like mottled newts they had obvious and large external gills and are in the same genus as the famed Axolotl. Apparently transformed adults of this species are quite rare, hence seeing all these with gills!

## Day 11    February 15<sup>th</sup>    Sierra Chincua

It dawned absolutely clear this morning. Sparkling. After breakfast we were off uphill to the Sierra Chincua. A main road pass takes one up there from Angangueo in just twenty or so minutes and once on the plateau we turned off up a beautiful wide valley where a tiny stream ran down through a mixture of Oyamel (*Abies religiosa*) forest and open meadow colonised in part by large tracts of *Juniperus monticola* and *Bocconia frutescens*. Ten minutes later and we were pulling into a surprisingly organised carpark by a village that for four months of the year hosts the Monarch tourists. The horsemen were only just arriving too and so we had a twenty minute wait for them to get the horses (this bit was quite entertaining at times) and saddle them and prepare them to meet their tourists. So saddled up, we were all led (each horse is led) up a wide and currently very dusty track. Initially very steeply uphill (it had been 3200m at the start!) then gradually. All seemed to settle onto their mounts very comfortably and in truth it was less than half an hour before we got off just a short distance short of the Monarch colony. Guides tipped we said farewell to our mounts (except Ann who was to ride down too) and set off to the colony. There was just one family there ahead of us though later several large (and well-behaved) school parties descended upon the Monarchs. Of course these just got on with being spectacular! After the amazing scenes at El Rosario it was difficult to compare the two. This colony was smaller but all of it was visible at the same time. The warm morning sunshine had already got a goodly number moving and some of these came down and flopped about over the shrubby *Senecio angulosus* bushes.

Nearby was an area of steep rocky slopes and at the top of these were three wonderful viewpoints taking in the impressive panorama below. Several of the multicoloured clearwing moths were vying with Monarchs for space on flowers atop one such viewpoint. Up here we saw several Ravens, Red Warbler and Mexican Chickadee. Growing on the outcrops were two members of the Crassulaceae, *Sedum bourgaei* and *Echeveria secunda*. A surprise was *Gentiana spathacea* in flower. *Fuchsia microphylla* flowered sparsely. Eventually we had to leave all this finery and go down to our vehicles. From there several went directly back to the hotel and the rest of us stayed out for a spot of flora and fauna down the main road. Fauna was not much in evidence though we did see Magnificent and other hummingbirds. Flora however was rather good with some choice species. A delicate white *Lobelia* was new as was the tiniest orchid imaginable *Spiranthes hymnalis*. There was another unidentified Orchid too, the tiny *Hydrocotyle umbellata* in flower, and two *Geraniums*, the white *latum* and the pink *seemannii*. In the evening I explored the valley behind the Don Bruno again, seeing Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush and a host of nice plants. The large *Salvia* there was perhaps new, larger than anything we'd seen so far. There was also the blue and white *polystacha* and a purple-pink species too. Tiny *Calceolaria mexicana* flowered in the gully with two tiny *Lobelias*, and I also found a tiny mallow relative *Kearnemalvastrum subtriflorum*.

## Day 12    February 16<sup>th</sup>    Tlalpujahua & Rancho de los Cedros

We left at nine after another of the Don Bruno's truly excellent breakfasts. We drove again up over the Sierra Chincua and once on the fir covered tableland beyond turned left and slowly descended through some beautiful countryside to Eric and Ivan's home town, Tlalpujahua.

We went directly to the centre. It's only a small place, around five thousand inhabitants, but packed with character. The narrow cobbled streets all seem steep and are lined with houses all different from each other and all cared for to a high degree. The varied colour patterns were quite striking too. We went up to the cathedral and parked. Eric took us through the history of this extraordinary creation and described the significance of the magnificent façade. Inside we were treated to a show of great baroque splendour with the ornate ceilings particularly startling. We walked down the streets for a while. Eric showed us the local bread sellers, they had a bread called *Pandekaha* based on fermented cactus rather than yeast – it was very nice. Though the various delicacies tried at the next stall were perhaps even better – but then toffee, crystallized squash, and various even sweeter things were always going to be hard to beat! Then it was off to the mine that generated such wealth for this settlement. Indeed for a period of a decade or so early in the last century Tlalpujahua had the largest gold mine in the world. Eric took those willing underground for a most informative visit. Claustrophobia suffering me and Anne and Peter took to the road and its environs. The track here always looks good for birds and we saw a few goodies today, only to run out of time all too quickly. A Western Pewee and Ruby-crowned Kinglet were in the trees near the mine and further along we came across Acorn Woodpecker and Audobon's Oriole. Various sparrows, warblers and Canyon Towhees were in the carpark. Butterflies included *Statira Sulphur* and a lovely Gold-banded Dartwhite, and as we were leaving, Mexican Dartwhite.

We drove for an hour, crossing into the state of Mexico, and into the rolling high altitude country that characterises the west of this state. Most is cultivated or grazed though there are large patches of forest on the obviously volcanic peaks. Many stream valleys meander across the landscape and today they were busy, for their entire lengths it seemed, with laundry. It was very nice to see the Agaves used to hold the washing – another way to utilise this versatile plant! As Volcan Toluca hove into view, its peak not today snow-capped though sometimes it is, and Victoria Reservoir too, we reached our destination, the Rancho de los Cedros. A beautiful set of old farm buildings and a house around a hundred and fifty years old sat next to a large dammed pond, an old orchard and a rocky outcrop topped with old oaks. Better still, across the now fallow maize fields was a line of low cliffs, these with some fine woodland and scrub. As Eric, Ivan, and our hosts, Michelle and her eight (almost – tomorrow!) year old daughter Camina, set about preparing lunch we took a walk. Mourning Doves erupted from the scrub and in the big oaks we saw many Tillandsias in flower, the striking red inflorescences hanging from the glaucous leaves. A big surprise up here was a Great Horned Owl that took flight from one of the trees, disappearing rapidly over the cliff. Other birds included Great Pewee, Buff-breasted Flycatcher, Acorn Woodpecker, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, various warblers, and Stripe-headed Sparrow. *Echeveria mucronata* was in flower on a rockface, a most stunning yellow and orange species.

We returned for lunch. And what a great lunch it was. The salad vegetables including the lettuce and raddish had been picked that morning from the organic nursery next door. Beans and rice accompanied, there was pork crackling on the table along with avocados, and there was Eric's succulent barbecued chicken. Wine and Tamarind juice wet our whistle. It was all we could do to move afterwards. We did manage a wander down to the pond. Several, in company with Michelle who explained a little of what they were doing and what they had done so far with the ranch. Meanwhile a superb Belted Kingfisher was by the water and we also saw Blue Grosbeak, Eastern and Black Phoebes, and a party of Bushtits.

Eventually we had to drag ourselves away. It was nearly two hours to the Rancho los Maragaritas which sat above the Valle de Bravo. We stopped just the once, for a mass of parasitic plants. Most obvious was the abundant *Psittacanthus calyculatus*, a species with large yellow-orange flowers. There was also a mistletoe relative *Cladoclea*. Birds here included Cassin's Vireo, Townsend's Warbler and Audubon's Oriole. Then it was time to settle in and enjoy dinner.

## Day 13    February 17<sup>th</sup>    Temascaltepec

A long day in prospect so we arose for a six forty-five breakfast just as it was starting to get light. On our way by quarter past and the sun had barely hauled itself above the horizon. The sky was crystal clear blue and stayed that way all day, nary a cloud in sight. We passed through a sleepy but very posh looking Valle de Bravo and then drove up into the high wooded lands to the south of there. Just over a low pass (still 2500m+) we stopped as two rocky outcrops hove into view. This is always a bird filled place and so in the next hour and a quarter we hardly moved. About a hundred metres in fact. The scenery was really quite fantastic with field, cliffs and forest. Peter found the plant life less than enthralling here with ruderals like the

bright *Ipomoea purpurea* and some spectacular rock-dwelling Bromeliads to entertain him. Birds though were a different story. Gray Silkies were common (they would remain so all day) and the first one had a male Bar-winged Oriole fly in and keep it company. Hummingbirds were represented by Mexico's smallest, the really very tiny Bumblebee Hummingbird, as well as a few Berylline. Flycatchers comprised Pine, Cordilleran and Vermilion. An Orange-billed Nightingale Thrush posed briefly as did Blue Mockingbird and Grey-barred Wren. The latter was almost knocked from its perch by a marauding Acorn Woodpecker. Ladder-backed Woodpecker was seen too. Other birds of note were Red-tailed Hawk, House Wren, Black-throated Gray Warbler and a superb Blue Bunting.

Now we descended towards the valley. After some corrections as to your leader's idea of where he should be, we spotted the swifts just before the correct spot! Once out of the vehicles we enjoyed quite a show from the arcing groups of White-naped Swift. This is the world's largest swift and has a wingspan of almost two feet.

Then into Temascaltepec and after stocking up on ice cream we stopped by the main road bridge. Flycatchers here included Tufted and Black Phoebe, whilst warblers included Nashville, Yellow Warbler and Louisiana Waterthrush. Next Ivan dropped us on the road to Real de Arriba and we spent an hour and half getting to know a little about the wildlife in the area. Butterflies were now on the wing with a few Orange-barred Sulphurs as well as crescents, blues and skippers. The flora along this stretch was exceptional. We started with a pink climber of distinction and then moved through various Asteraceae to *Galinsoga* and Sowthistles. *Calceolaria mexicana* carpeted the base of damp cliffs, and on these damp bits grew the insectivorous *Pinguicula moranensis*. Little shrubs with bright pink flowers surmounted by curved crimson filaments and yellow anthers were the Melanostomacean *Monochaetum calcaratum* and there was just a little of its paler pink, smaller relative *Tibouchnia scabriscula*. We stopped as the track fords the river further up. The hoped for Two-tailed Swallowtail was seen but didn't stop. By the river was a pretty little shrub with panicles of pink starry flowers, this being in the pistachio family – *Spondia purpurea*. Above the village a tall *Kalanchoe* would have looked better if the dust had been a little less all-pervading!

After a brief stop in a village we moved a little into the forest for our lunchstop, this being prepared by Ivan as we walked about a little. This is always a great spot for birds. Acorn Woodpeckers were around in some numbers and flycatchers were numerous and varied with Western Pewee, Tufted, Hammond's, Dusky and Cordilleran. Hummingbirds included Magnificent and White-eared. Rufous-crowned Sparrow and various warblers inhabited the edges of a fallow carnation field. Hepatic Tanagers, Gray Silkies and Warbling Vireos were common. Under a tree was a little colony of the saprophytic *Conopholis alpina*, two plants going over but the rest all just coming out. This broomrape relative lives off decaying pine cones!

We negotiated the hard part of the track next, the deeply rutted road looking pretty difficult in places, but with patience and skill Ivan got us through it. We stopped at the highest point of the road. Atop a hillock one can see the top of Volcan Toluca peering over the hillside. The ground layer here contains a pretty yellow-orange pea sub-shrub which looks very like a *Thermopsis*. White-breasted Nuthatch and a pair of Bar-winged Orioles appeared. As we descended through the forest it was clear that logging had been taking place and on the main descent a large area of forest had been burnt in preparation for agriculture too which is a great

shame. There was still plenty of forest on the lower slopes and as usual lots of birds here. A surprise was a flock of Evening Grosbeaks flying over. Even better was one that sat, rather hidden though quite close, typical of grosbeaks, in a nearby tree. All got 'scope views of that one. A little later we encountered its cousin, the Hooded Grosbeak, this a male, sitting more obligingly in a tree top with Pine and Black-headed Siskins. We checked some little valleys with much *Salvia fulgens* in flower. This large red species attracts many hummingbirds and here there were certainly a few. Magnificent and White-eared, as well as some fine Blue-throated Hummingbirds were seen and there were a few Green Violet-ears too. At one of these we came across Gary who said he'd seen a chunky bird bright red underneath with some green and a long tail – a Mountain Trogon. In another cleared area we spotted a few Monarch butterflies and an American Kestrel sitting atop a tree devouring a small snake. A walk down the last section of the road failed to produce any more trogons though one very nice flock of birds contained Red-faced and Crescent-chested Warbler. Peter found our third Melamostomacean shrub of the day, this time *Tibouchina mexicana*.

Our journey back took us through some great scenery (and past several more White-naped Swifts) and contained two brief stops. One was near the morning's swift stop for photos of the now crystal clear Vulkan Toluca. Clear that is except for a haze of something that spread across the whole sky at about volcano top level, but which was thick and strong only directly to the south of the cone. We could not come up with an easy explanation for this. Needless to say we spotted some birds here – fine Blue Grosbeaks and some Acorn Woodpeckers. The last stop was by the wetland at Valle de Bravo as dusk descended. In the gloom we made out a couple of duck species to make the day's total add up to a quite brilliant 98 bird species – with just five of them wetland species.

## Day 14    February 18<sup>th</sup>    Colones and Santo Tomas Canyon country

My early morning walk revealed a Hare (presumably introduced?) and two good birds in the shape of a pair of Whiskered Screech Owls seen at very close range, and an Eared Poorwill.

After breakfast we headed down to the lake at Valle de Bravo and after winding along its shore we passed over the dam and into the canyon country that descends rapidly to the Terre Caliente below. However we'd only made it metres passed the dam when a fine male Belted Kingfisher stopped us in our tracks. Some good views of this and then back to the vehicles where Jill had been watching something pretty and blue in the trees. This turned out to be a Rufous-browed Motmot. Most of us had great views over the next couple of minutes and of the superb male Hooded Oriole in the same tree, though few got a chance to see the rather dingy Botteri's Sparrow that appeared in the brush at the foot of the tree! Epiphytes were as usual plentiful in the trees and here an orchid was numerous. Mostly it was in bud but we did manage to find some of the delicate white and chocolate lined flowers open - *Encyclia linkiana*.

We moved on downhill parking up a couple of kilometres short of Colones. It was already warm as we walked up the track there. This was the first time we'd been below 1500m since the trip had begun right back in Colima. Lesser Goldfinches and an Ash-throated Flycatcher were around a water seepage whilst a Thick-billed Kingbird was on the tree tops above. John hardly

made it past the start of the track as there were quite a number of butterfly species, most notably two species of metalmark, both Scintillants, the first something akin to Fatal Metalmark, the other, small and golden, unidentified. White-tipped Doves, Rufous-sided Towhees, Lincoln's Sparrows and Orange-billed Nightingale Thrushes were in the undergrowth. Hummingbirds were not common but we did see a couple of Broad-billed and three Duskiess, the latter a regional endemic. A pair of Streak-backed Orioles corrected your leaders earlier oriole misidentification. White-tailed Hawk, an adult, sailed over, looking great in the sharp sunlight. As usual at this site there were numerous finches, grosbeaks and sparrows feeding in the dried 'seedbeds'.

Moving downhill past Colones reservoir and into the canyons beyond we found ourselves in a beguiling landscape of cliffs, waterfalls, slopes covered in subtropical thorn scrub, humid forest in the canyon bottoms and orchards of mangoes, bananas and all sorts of other fruits. We came to a halt just before the magnificently situated church of Santo Tomas. The canyon is quite spectacular here and we'd seen swifts. These turned out to be the Greater Swallow-tailed Swift, Tails stayed firmly closed but they arced through the sky with impressive speed on those scythe like wings. Then it was back up to an impressive waterfall where thankfully the workers at the hydroelectric station had no problem with our presence. As Eric and Ivan set out the picnic under a tree by the cliff face we explored this wonderful spot. Butterflies were everywhere. Little groups of Zebra Heliconids fluttered in the sun and various orange butterflies were no less numerous with Gulf Fritillary, the Julia and Orange Banner among them. Swallowtails mostly sped past but did include Two-tailed Swallowtail and the black and red Dual-spotted Swallowtail. Perhaps the finest butterfly at this site was the Malachite – a large brilliant green and black species that alighted briefly in front of a few of us. There were many less gaudy species here too with various whites and sulphurs including Giant and Great Southern Whites, Apricot, Statira and Dainty Sulphurs and Sleepy Orange. The blues and skippers were practically ignored. A hundred metre walk alongside the river took us to a large waterfall cascading into an enticing looking pool. It was hot ... but there was too much to see to contemplate a swim. Black Phoebes and Spotted Sandpipers were amongst the rocks and up by the falls was a brilliant yellow and black Western Tanager. Roughwing Swallows and two Greater Swallow-tailed Swifts sped through the sky. A striking dragonfly posed on white-washed rocks and a dainty little damselfly with thorax slightly suffused purple was seen. Back by the road were yet more butterflies with crescents and Banded Peacocks joining the many Zebra Heliconids posing on lantana and an orange asteracean. Pretty plants here included a blue herb with vaguely campanula like flowers, and by the river were Comelinas and a yellow Lythracean. Meanwhile the picnic was assembled and so it was time to sample the very large bits of roast chicken purchased in Colones by Ivan & Eric. Very nice, though a parasitic wasp seemed to find them the elixir of life and was intent on biting off whatever its mandibles could manage – quite a bit in one case!

Downstream after lunch took us to a little village before the next reservoir. The reservoir distinctive from the drowned church whose churchtower still stood proud of the mud. Here we were right down at just above a thousand metres above sea level, and it showed, for it was quite hot in the sun. We explored a field by the river. Dragonflies were quite common with brilliant Roseate Skimmers and some pretty little Rubyspots. A muddy patch held some great animal prints including skunk and raccoon. It was also attractive to butterflies with several blues arriving and a citrus yellow and orange Sleepy Orange. A rather elegant Physalis had

yellow and green flowers and the Mexican Poppy on the field may have been different from the usual hypoleuca. We continued along the road encountering a flock of birds in the large trees. Western Tanagers, Groove-billed Anis, Rufous-backed Thrushes and Golden Cheeked Woodpeckers along with smaller species, and the day's second Rufous-browed Motmot. Some orange orchids were in flower here.

Our last spot of the day was in the small valley beyond. Here a lovely river came down through a great mix of habitats and a good path took us alongside the river for the first three hundred metres or so. Having said hi to the bathing villagers we moved upstream. Black Phoebes, Yellowthroats and abundant Anis were along here and the large Cardon Cactus had numerous woodpecker holes (which woodpecker?). We looked for Elf Owls but no luck. However along the stream was a most impressive butterfly. Certainly the largest of the trip. It flapped lazily up and down the river like a Barn Owl at dusk. This was the White Morpho, a West Mexican Endemic. Others saw another below the bridge and it seems Peter probably saw this species at the waterfall lunchspot too.

That was it for most but Anne, Ivan and I continued onto the little village by the sunken church. Here we walked up the next door valley a short distance. This proved a great spot with Great Kiskadees, our only Violet-crowned Hummingbirds of the tour, Barred Quail, and an excellent little flock of seedeaters. These contained several Blue-black Grassquits, a Black-chested Sparrow and almost certainly the gaudiest birds of the trip, several fabulous Orange-breasted Buntings. The blues, yellows and oranges were incredibly strong and pure. Maybe it was the male Painted Bunting at the start though?

A night drive near the hotel failed to produce any animals though we did see two distant Mexican Whip-poor-wills, their identity easy as they were calling, and a single Eared Poorwill, the latter seen well.

## Day 15    February 19<sup>th</sup>    Mexico University Botanical Garden & Arroyo Restaurant

A late breakfast this morning so time for a good birdwatch down below the hotel. The fields and scrub just outside the hotel are always good here and though the wrens were absent this morning we still managed some good species. Two Abeille's Orioles and a Hooded Oriole were together in one scope view and later we saw Baltimore Oriole too. Eastern Bluebirds and Vermilion Flycatchers were as usual colourful and common. We were very lucky to see a Grasshopper Sparrow sat out in the open allowing cracking views. Blue Grosbeak, various warblers and Clay-coloured Sparrows were noted too. Down in the pines it was initially quiet but then we found a good-sized bird party. Brown Creepers and Bridled Titmouse, Hutton's Vireo and Tufted Flycatcher, and Bushtits and many warblers, were the constituents. The latter included several Grace's Warblers, an Olive Warbler, as well as Nashville, Black-throated Gray, Yellow-rumped and Hermit Warblers. Back at breakfast Gary and Ann had located a Hairy Woodpecker tapping away at a nut on the lawn!

After breakfast we packed up and left shortly after ten. The journey to Mexico City was interrupted by a dead puma no it's a dog and a dead Whiskered Screech Owl which really was one. The main delay though came in the form of a sponsored cycle which held us back about forty five minutes or so. This, and heavy traffic into Mexico City, meant that we arrived at the University Botanical Garden over an hour late. With just thirty five minutes to look around we did our best – it was a great shame though for the site was very good for both its succulent collection and for its birds. The cacti and Echeverias were both impressive and were planted in a roughly (and naturally) fissured volcanic landscape of great beauty. None of the cacti were in flower – now that really would have been the time to visit. We didn't manage to find any of the regional endemic birds hoped for (only time to find the area they were in then off we had to go) but we still saw some birds, notably Bewick's Wren and, down by the pond, a Little Green Heron, which posed well for us. A superb bright green Xami Hairstreak posed for the cameras.

Then Eric whisked us off for a meal at the Arroyo Restaurant. This large eatery had an interesting menu but we hardly looked as Eric had already convinced us to try the lamb loin and ribs steamed in cactus leaves. Can't get cactus leaves? Try this – place lamb on rack cover with sea salt and then whole skinned onions/shallots and bay leaves. Place water in bottom of pan with a few chillis – steam for about four hours. Then the entertainment started. Now Paul, if you are reading this, I thought you were meant to be in Madagascar? But no, there you were in a natty green and white number doing a real salsa job of entertaining us all. Very professional. Not as pretty as the girl from Merida who swayed beautifully and sang huskily and spoke very good English too. Then there was the 'band' with Eric's godfather on trumpet. Now for someone who hates 'entertainment', I thought it was all very good!

Peter and Cora left half way through for their trip to the Yucatan. At meal's end we went and braved the city's road systems and traffic (you have to battle against both!) en route to the airport. Then it was time for sad goodbyes to Eric and Ivan who had done such a marvellous job of looking after us during the holiday. Eric's cultural knowledge is undoubted and his efficiency superb, however it is his gastronomic insights and knowledge and his story-telling that really make him a great asset to this tour. And Ivan, thoughtful, helpful and ever willing Ivan, driving whenever needed and always making sure the last people know where they are going - the tour would not be the same without either of them.

Check-in proceeded quickly, somewhat quicker than a little money reorganisation involving Canadian dollars and various other currencies! Then it was goodbye to Gary who had a later flight to Toronto, and we were off.

## Day 16    February 20<sup>th</sup>    Return

Some of us managed quite a lot of sleep on the flights and though the Madrid to Heathrow flight was a little late landing all went pretty smoothly. As ever a Heathrow the luggage took an age. As Ann said, now where's the 'entertainment' when we need it!

## Systematic List Number 1                      Mammals

Nomenclature and taxonomic order is a bit of a mish-mash and is borrowed from both 'Neotropical Rainforest Mammals' by Emmons (1997) and 'The Audubon Society Field Guide to North American Mammals' by Whitaker (1993).

Virginia Opossum	<i>Didelphis virginiana</i>	3 seen around Laguna Maria at night
Mexican Gray Squirrel	<i>Sciurus aureogaster</i>	Widespread and common
Tropical Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus adcetus</i>	Quite common in the Laguna Maria area
Ring-tailed Ground Squirrel	<i>Spermophilus annulatus</i>	Pátzcuaro & Temascaltepec
	<i>Lepus</i> species	Presumably introduced? Santo Tomas
Gray Fox	<i>Urocyon cinereoargenteus</i>	1 at night by Laguna Maria (IG only)
Hooded Skunk	<i>Mephitis macroura</i>	Singles noted at night by the Laguna Maria (IG only) and 1 at night on Sierra Chincua
Hog-nosed Skunk	<i>Conepatus mesoleucus</i>	1 seen very well above the Laguna Maria at night (IG only)
Northern Raccoon	<i>Procyon lotor</i>	1 at Laguna Maria at night (IG only)
White-nosed Coati	<i>Nasua narica</i>	1 at dawn at Laguna Maria and 1 at Tacambaro
Margay	<i>Leopardus wiedii</i>	One watched at close quarters for around ten minutes just before dawn near Laguna Maria (IG only – just wish everyone had seen that!)
Red Bat	<i>Lasiurus borealis</i>	?probably this species seen above the Hotel Don Bosco
Muskrat	<i>Ondatra zibethicus</i>	Zapotlan – presumably introduced

## Systematic List Number 2      Birds

Nomenclature and taxonomic order follows The Sibley Guide to Birds (2000) and Howell and Webb's 'A Guide to the Birds of Mexico' (1995). The number of days a species was seen is indicated as 5/14 – so five days out of the 14 in the field (arrival day and landing day at either end not included).

### Itinerary

Day 2 February 6 <sup>th</sup>	Guadalajara to Laguna Maria & Volcán de Fuego
Day 3 February 7 <sup>th</sup>	Laguna Maria & Volcán de Fuego
Day 4 February 8 <sup>th</sup>	Volcan Nevado de Colima & Zapotlan Lake
Day 5 February 9 <sup>th</sup>	to Morelia via Paricutin & Uruapan
Day 6 February 10 <sup>th</sup>	Tacambaro & Cerro Burro
Day 7 February 11 <sup>th</sup>	Pátzcuaro & Tzintzuntán
Day 8 February 12 <sup>th</sup>	Lago Cuitzeo, Morelia & Mil Cumbres – to Angangueo
Day 9 February 13 <sup>th</sup>	El Rosario
Day 10 February 14 <sup>th</sup>	Laguna Verde – both
Day 11 February 15 <sup>th</sup>	El Chincua
Day 12 February 16 <sup>th</sup>	Tlalpujahuá & Rancho de los Cedros & to Valle de Bravo
Day 13 February 17 <sup>th</sup>	Temascaltepec
Day 14 February 18 <sup>th</sup>	Santo Tomas & Colones. Rancho las Margaritas
Day 15 February 19 <sup>th</sup>	to Mexico City & the University Botanical Garden

Clark's Grebe	<i>Aechmophorus clarkii</i>	c.6 at Lago Cuitzeo
Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	Several noted at Zapotlan Lake
Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	Singles at wetlands on three dates. 3/14
American White Pelican	<i>Pelecanus erythrorhynchos</i>	Noted at Zapotlan Lake and c.30 at Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
Neotropical Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax brasilianus</i>	A large breeding colony at Zapotlan
Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	Zapotlan Lake and Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
Cattle Egret	<i>Bubulcus ibis</i>	Widespread. 10/14
Green-backed Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	3 at Zapotlan, one near Lago Cuitzeo and 1 in the Mexico City Uni BG! 3/14
Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	Noted at most wetlands. 5/14
Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	Common at most wetlands. 7/14
Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	Only noted at Lago Pátzcuaro
Great Egret	<i>Carcharodius albus</i>	Widespread at wetlands. 7/14
Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	Scattered. 4/14
White-faced Ibis	<i>Plegadis chihi</i>	Scattered. 5/14
Wood Stork	<i>Mycteria americana</i>	Singles over Queseria and Cuitzeo
Fulvous Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna bicolor</i>	30+ at Zapotlan Lake
Black-bellied Whistling Duck	<i>Dendrocygna autumnalis</i>	1 at Zapotlan
Muscovy Duck	<i>Cairina moschata</i>	1 seen in flight over Zapotlan Lake may have been a wild bird
Mexican Duck	<i>Anas platyrhynchos diazi</i>	1 at Lago Pátzcuaro & 2 at Laguna Verde. 2/14
Green-winged Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>	Scattered. 3/14
American Wigeon	<i>Anas americana</i>	Noted at most larger wetlands. 4/14
Northern Pintail	<i>Anas acuta</i>	Lago Pátzcuaro
Northern Shoveler	<i>Anas clypeata</i>	Noted at most larger wetlands. 3/14

Blue-winged Teal	<i>Anas discors</i>	Widespread at wetlands. 5/14
Cinnamon Teal	<i>Anas cyanoptera</i>	Noted at most wetlands. 3/14
Canvasback	<i>Aythya valisineria</i>	1 at Lago Pátzcuaro
Ring-necked Duck	<i>Aythya collaris</i>	5+ at Lago Pátzcuaro
Lesser Scaup	<i>Aythya affinis</i>	Noted at most larger wetlands. 3/14
Bufflehead	<i>Bucephala albeola</i>	1 at Lago Cuitzeo
Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	Noted at most larger wetlands. 3/14
Black Vulture	<i>Coragyps atratus</i>	Widespread. 11/14
Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	Widespread and common. 13/14
White-tailed Kite	<i>Elanus leucurus</i>	Scattered in west of region. 4/14
Northern Harrier	<i>Circus cyaneus</i>	2 at Lago Pátzcuaro
Sharp-shinned Hawk	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Cooper's Hawk	<i>Accipiter cooperii</i>	1 at Tacambaro and 1 at Laguna Verde
Common Black Hawk	<i>Buteogallus anthracinus</i>	1 at Laguna Maria
Gray Hawk	<i>Buteo nitidus</i>	Several in Laguna Maria area. 2/14
Zone-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albonotatus</i>	1 above Lago Pátzcuaro and 1 Temascaltepec
Broad-winged Hawk	<i>Buteo platypterus</i>	1 on Volcan Fuego
Short-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo brachyurus</i>	Frequent in west of region. 4/14
Swainson's Hawk	<i>Buteo swainsonii</i>	2 Lago Cuitzeo
White-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo albicaudatus</i>	Singles noted at Tacambaro, Temescaltepec & Santo Tomas
Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	Reasonably common. 9/14
Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	1 at Laguna Maria and 3 at Zapotlan
Crested Caracara	<i>Caracara plancus</i>	1 near Ciudad Guzman
American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	Widespread. 13/14
Peregrine	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	1 on Nevado de Colima
West Mexican Chachalaca	<i>Ortalis poliocephala</i>	Noted both days at Laguna Maria. 2/14
Banded Quail	<i>Philortyx fasciatus</i>	c.20 above Lagun Maria and many near Santo Tomas. 2/14
King Rail	<i>Rallus longirostris/elegans</i>	1 at Lago Cuitzeo
Sora Rail	<i>Porzana carolina</i>	5+ at Zapotlan Lake and 3 at Pátzcuaro
Common Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	Frequent at some wetlands. 5/14
American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	Widespread at wetlands. 9/14
Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferous</i>	Lago Pátzcuaro & Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
American Avocet	<i>Recurvirostra americana</i>	Zapotlan and Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	Most larger wetlands . 3/14
Northern Jacana	<i>Jacana spinosa</i>	Most larger wetlands . 3/14
Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoluca</i>	Several at Lago Cuitzeo
Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	2 at Lago Cuitzeo
Solitary Sandpiper	<i>Tringa solitaria</i>	2 at Lago Cuitzeo
Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularia</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Long-billed Dowitcher	<i>Limnodromus scolopaceus</i>	12+ at Zapotlan Lake and 1 at Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
Common (Wilson's) Snipe	<i>Gallinago gallinago delicata</i>	Singles at Lago Pátzcuaro and Laguna Verde. 2/14
Western Sandpiper	<i>Calidris mauri</i>	Noted at several wetlands. 3/14
Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	Lago Pátzcuaro & Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
Laughing Gull	<i>Larus atricilla</i>	1 at Zapotland and 2 at Lago Cuitzeo
Franklin's Gull	<i>Larus pipixican</i>	4 at Lago Cuitzeo
Ring-billed Gull	<i>Larus delawarensis</i>	Common at Zapotlan and Lago Cuitzeo

Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	1 at Zapotlan
Caspian Tern	<i>Sterna caspia</i>	Zapotlan Lake and Lago Cuitzeo
Band-tailed Pigeon	<i>Columba fasciata</i>	1 on Nevado de Colima
Rock Dove	<i>Columba livia</i>	Widespread. 12/14
Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	Scattered. 2/14
White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	c.6 above Laguna Maria
Ruddy Ground-Dove	<i>Columbina talpacoti</i>	Scattered around Laguna Maria. 2/14
Inca Dove	<i>Columbina inca</i>	Locally common. 11/14
White-tipped Dove	<i>Leptoptila verreauxi</i>	Scattered throughout. 4/14
Lilac-crowned Parrot	<i>Amazona finschii</i>	Noted at Laguna Maria & at Uruapan
Squirrel Cuckoo	<i>Piaya cayana</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Lesser Roadrunner	<i>Geococcyx velox</i>	a feather found at Laguna Maria!
Groove-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga sulcirostris</i>	Quite common at Laguna Maria & Morelia. 4/14
Great Horned Owl	<i>Bubo virginianus</i>	1 flushed at Rancho de los Cedros (IG only)
Mottled Owl	<i>Strix virgata</i>	Heard in the grounds of the Laguna Maria at night
Long-eared Owl	<i>Asio otus wilsonianus</i>	Heard on the Sierra Chincua
Whiskered Screech-Owl	<i>Otus trichopsis</i>	Heard frequently in Anganguero, 2 seen at night (IG only) at Rancho de las Margaritas and a dead one found near there
Mountain Pygmy-Owl	<i>Glaucidium gnoma</i>	Heard all nights above Don Bruno
Mexican Whip-poor-will	<i>Caprimulgus arizonae</i>	Seen many times in Anganguero and Rancho de las Margaritas at night (mostly, but not all, IG only)
Buff-collared Nighthawk	<i>Caprimulgus ridgwayi</i>	1 at night at Laguna Maria (IG only)
Eared Poorwill	<i>Nyctiphrynus mcleodii</i>	1 above Laguna Maria and 2 Rancho de las Margaritas. All at night and IG only
Lesser Nighthawk	<i>Chordeiles acutipennis</i>	1 at dusk above Zapotlan
Chestnut-collared Swift	<i>Cypseloides naxos</i>	1 on Volcan Fuego and several Temascaltepec. 2/14
White-naped Swift	<i>Streptoprocne semicollaris</i>	Many of these amazing huge swifts at and near Temascaltepec
Vaux's Swift	<i>Chaetura vauxi</i>	Volcan Fuego and a few above Temascaltepec
Greater Swallow-tailed Swift	<i>Panyptila sanctihieronymi</i>	c.10 near Colones
Green Violet-ear	<i>Colibri thalassinus</i>	Locally common around Anganguero. Also noted at Laguna Maria and Temascaltepec. 4/14
Golden-crowned Emerald	<i>Chlorostilbon auriceps</i>	Singles at Laguna Maria twice. 2/14
Broad-billed Hummingbird	<i>Cyananthus latirostris</i>	Noted at Lago Pátzcuaro and by Lago Cuitzeo. Also Temascaltepec and Santo Tomas. 4/14
Dusky Hummingbird	<i>Cyananthus sordidus</i>	6+ at Tacambaro, 1 Temascaltepec and 3 in Colones/Santo Tomas area. 3/14
Mexican Woodnymph	<i>Thalurania ridgwayi</i>	A total of 3 seen at Laguna Maria. 2/14
White-eared Hummingbird	<i>Basilinna leuctois</i>	Widespread and common. 9/14
Berylline Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia beryllina</i>	Scattered throughout. 7/14
Violet-crowned Hummingbird	<i>Amazilia violiceps</i>	2 near Colones

Amethyst-throated Hummingbird	<i>Lampornis amethystinus</i>	Singles at Pátzcuaro and behind the Don Bruno. 2/14
Blue-throated Hummingbird	<i>Lampornis clemenciae</i>	Scattered throughout. Breeding in the garden of the Hotel de la Soledad. 5/14
Magnificent Hummingbird	<i>Eugenes fulgens</i>	Common especially in the higher areas. 7/14
Plain-capped Starthroat	<i>Helioaster constantii</i>	1 at Tacambaro
Ruby-throated Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus colubris</i>	A female at Laguna Maria
Black-chinned Hummingbird	<i>Archilochus alexandri</i>	A male on Cerro Burro
Broad-tailed Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus platycercus</i>	Scattered – low numbers this year. 4/14
Rufous/Allen's Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus rufus/sasin</i>	1 male above Laguna Maria, and noted at Cerro Burro. 2/14
Bumble-Bee Hummingbird	<i>Selasphorus heliosa</i>	2 above Laguna Maria and 1 at Temascaltepec. 2/14
Mountain Trogon	<i>Trogon mexicanus</i>	1 at Temascaltepec
Elegant Trogon	<i>Trogon elegans</i>	1 at Laguna Maria
Russet-crowned Motmot	<i>Momotus mexicanus</i>	three seen in the Colones/Santo Tomas area
Green Kingfisher	<i>Chloroceryle americana</i>	1 at Zapotlan Lake and 1 Valle de Bravo
Belted Kingfisher	<i>Ceryle alcyon</i>	1 at Rancho de los Cedros and 1 at Valle de Bravo. 2/14
Acorn Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes formicivorus</i>	Widespread in eastern part. 6/14
Golden-cheeked Woodpecker	<i>Centurus chrysogenys</i>	Singles twice at Laguna Maria and 2 at Santo Tomas. 3/14
Golden-fronted Woodpecker	<i>Centurus aurifrons</i>	3 at Pátzcuaro
Hairy Woodpecker	<i>Picoides villosus</i>	1 at Mil Cumbres and 1 on the lawn at Rancho las Margaritas. 2/14
Ladder-backed Woodpecker	<i>Picoides scalaris</i>	Scattered throughout. 5/14
Yellow-bellied Sapsucker	<i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Ivory-billed Woodcreeper	<i>Xiphorhynchus flavigaster</i>	1 at Laguna Maria
White-striped Woodcreeper	<i>Lepidocolaptes leucogaster</i>	1 at Laguna Maria
Northern Beardless Tyrannulet	<i>Camptostoma imberbe</i>	1 in woods by Rancho de las Margaritas
Greenish Elaenia	<i>Mysiopagis viridicata</i>	2 at Tacambaro
Tufted Flycatcher	<i>Mitrephanes phaeocercus</i>	Widespread. 8/14
Cassin's Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus vociferans</i>	Widespread. 11/14
Tropical Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus melancholicus</i>	Only seen for sure at Zapotlan
Western Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus verticalis</i>	Scattered in the western part. 4/14
Thick-billed Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus crassirostris</i>	2 at Laguna Maria and 1 at Colones. 2/14
Ash-throated Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus cinerascens</i>	2 by Lago Cuitzeo and noted at Santa Thomas. 2/14
Dusky-capped Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tuberculifer</i>	Not uncommon around Laguna Maria. 2/14
Nutting's Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus nuttingi</i>	Noted at Laguna Maria
Brown-crested Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus tyrannulus</i>	Noted at Laguna Maria
Great Kiskadee	<i>Pitangus sulphuratus</i>	Common in Laguna Maria area, also noted at Santo Tomas. 4/14
Social Flycatcher	<i>Myiozetetes similis</i>	Laguna Maria. 2/14
Western Wood-Pewee	<i>Contopus sordidulus</i>	Scattered in eastern areas. 3/14
Greater Pewee	<i>Contopus pertinax</i>	Scattered in west. 3/14
Black Phoebe	<i>Sayornis nigricans</i>	Scattered throughout. 6/14

Eastern Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	1 at Rancho de las Cedros
Say's Phoebe	<i>Sayornis phoebe</i>	1 en route to Paricutin
Vermilion Flycatcher	<i>Pyrocephalus rubinus</i>	Widespread and common. 12/14
Least Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax minimus</i>	1 at Santo Tomas
Pine Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax affinis</i>	Scattered. 4/14 Many unidentified <i>Empidonax</i> flycatchers
Dusky Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax oberholseri</i>	1 at Laguna Verde and 1 at Temascaltepec. 2/14
Willow Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax traillii</i>	Noted at Laguna Maria
White-throated Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax albigularis</i>	1 at Rancho de las Cedros
Hammond's Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax hammondii</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Cordilleran Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax occidentalis</i>	Scattered throughout. 6/14
Buff-breasted Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax fulvifrons</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Gray Flycatcher	<i>Empidonax wrightii</i>	1 at Lago Cuitzeo
Rose-throated Becard	<i>Pachyramphus aglaiae</i>	Noted at Laguna Maria
Grey-breasted Jay	<i>Aphelocoma ultramarina</i>	A party on Nevado de Colima and 1 seen at Temascaltepec. 2/14
Steller's Jay	<i>Cyanocitta stelleri</i>	Singles Cerro Burro and Mil Cumbres. 2/14
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Scattered. 6/14
Tree Swallow	<i>Tachycineta bicolor</i>	Noted only at Lago Pátzcuaro
Violet-Green Swallow	<i>Tachycineta thalassina</i>	Locally common. 7/14
Northern Rough-winged Swallow	<i>Stelgidopteryx serripennis</i>	Widespread. 9/14
Cliff Swallow	<i>Hirundo pyrrhonota</i>	2 at Don Bruno on two mornings. 2/14
Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Widespread in low numbers. 9/14
Mexican Chickadee	<i>Parus sclateri</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Bridled Titmouse	<i>Parus wollweberi</i>	2 at Temascaltepec and 1 at the BG in Mexico City Uni. 2/14
Bushtit	<i>Psaltriparus minimus</i>	Scattered throughout. 7/14
Brown Creeper	<i>Certhia americana</i>	1-2 on four days
White-breasted Nuthatch	<i>Sitta carolinensis</i>	2 on the Nevado de Colima & 2 Temascaltepec. 2/14
House Wren	<i>Troglodytes aedon</i>	1t Temascaltepec
Brown-throated Wren	<i>Troglodytes brunneicollis</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Bewick's Wren	<i>Thryothorus bewickii</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Happy Wren	<i>Thryothorus felix</i>	2 at Laguna Maria
Sinaloa Wren	<i>Thryothorus sinaloa</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Marsh Wren	<i>Cistothorus palustris</i>	2 at Pátzcuaro & 1 at Laguna Verde
Grey-breasted Wood-Wren	<i>Henicorhina leucophrys</i>	1 on Nevado de Colima
Grey-barred Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus megalopterus</i>	6+ on Mil Cumbres and 2 Temascaltepec. 2/14
Spotted Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus gularis</i>	Common at Laguna Maria and also noted at Santo Tomas/Colones. 3/14
Cactus Wren	<i>Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus</i>	1 at Lago Cuitzeo
Canyon Wren	<i>Catherpes mexicanus</i>	1 at Pátzcuaro
Golden-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus satrapa</i>	Noted at El Rosario
Ruby-crowned Kinglet	<i>Regulus calendula</i>	Widespread and common. 11/14
Blue-gray Gnatcatcher	<i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	Common except at Angangueo. 11/14
Eastern Bluebird	<i>Sialia sialis</i>	Widespread and common. 12/14
Brown-backed Solitaire	<i>Myadestes occidentalis</i>	Locally common. Heard more often than seen. 5(seen)/14

Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus aurantiirostris</i>	Scattered. 3/14
Russet Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus occidentalis</i>	Locally frequent in higher areas. 3/14
Ruddy-capped Nightingale-Thrush	<i>Catharus frantzii</i>	2 above Don Bruno
Swainson's Thrush	<i>Catharus ustulatus</i>	Noted at Laguna Maria and Santa Thomas. 2/14
White-throated Thrush	<i>Turdus assimilis</i>	Widespread. 8/14
Rufous-backed Thrush	<i>Turdus rufopalliatu</i> s	Noted at Tacambaro and Santo Tomas and Mexico City (in the city!). 3/14
American Robin	<i>Turdus migratorius</i>	Widespread and locally common. 9/14
Blue Mockingbird	<i>Melanotis caerulescens</i>	Widespread. Amazing, as some years we hardly see them! 10/14
Curve-billed Thrasher	<i>Toxostoma curvirostre</i>	Widespread in centre and east. 9/14
American Pipit	<i>Anthus rubescens</i>	Noted at Pátzcuaro and Lago Cuitzeo
Grey Silky	<i>Ptilogonys cinereus</i>	Scattered throughout. 6/14
Loggerhead Shrike	<i>Lanius ludovicianus</i>	Scattered. 5/14
Black-capped Vireo	<i>Vireo atricapillus</i>	1 at Laguna Maria
Dwarf Vireo	<i>Vireo nelsoni</i>	2 at Tacambaro and 1 Temascaltepec
Cassin's Vireo	<i>Vireo cassinii</i>	1 at Rancho de las Cedros
Hutton's Vireo	<i>Vireo huttoni</i>	Noted at Anganguero and BG in Mexico City
Golden Vireo	<i>Vireo hypochryseus</i>	1 at Tacambaro
Warbling Vireo	<i>Vireo gilvus</i>	Widespread. 9/14
Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo	<i>Vireolanius melitophrys</i>	1 above the Don Bruno and 1 at Laguna Verde
Orange-crowned Warbler	<i>Vermivora celata</i>	Widespread. 11/14
Colima Warbler	<i>Vermivora crissalis</i>	Singles at Nevado de Colima, and Colones
Nashville Warbler	<i>Vermivora ruficapilla</i>	Widespread. 11/14
Virginia's Warbler	<i>Vermivora virginiae</i>	1 Lago Cuitzeo
Crescent-chested Warbler	<i>Vermivora superciliosa</i>	Singles at Laguna Verde & Temascaltepec
Yellow-rumped Warbler	<i>Dendroica coronata</i>	Widespread and common. 14/14
Black-throated Gray Warbler	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>	Widespread in low numbers. 7/14
Black-throated Green Warbler	<i>Dendroica nigrescens</i>	Locally common around Laguna Maria. 3/14
Townsend's Warbler	<i>Dendroica townsendi</i>	Scattered – mostly in highlands. 4/14
Hermit Warbler	<i>Dendroica occidentalis</i>	Scattered throughout. 8/14. A hybrid Townsend's/Hermit Warbler was seen behind the Don Bruno
Grace's Warbler	<i>Dendroica graciae</i>	1 neat Tzintzuntzan and Mexico City BG. 2/14
Yellow Warbler	<i>Dendroica petechia</i>	1 Temascaltepec
Black-and-White Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	Scattered. 5/14
MacGillivray's Warbler	<i>Oporornis tolmiei</i>	Scattered throughout. 8/14
Wilson's Warbler	<i>Wilsonia pusilla</i>	Widespread and common. 13/14
Northern Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus noveboracensis</i>	1 at Laguna Maria & 1 at Pátzcuaro
Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Seiurus motacilla</i>	Singles Temascaltepec & Santo Tomas
Common Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	Scattered. 5/14
Black-polled Yellowthroat	<i>Geothlypis speciosa</i>	5+ at Pátzcuaro
Gray-crowned Yellowthroat	<i>Chamaethlypis poliocephala</i>	2 near Pátzcuaro
Red-faced Warbler	<i>Cardellina rubrifrons</i>	2 Mil Cumbres and 1 Temascaltepec

Red Warbler	<i>Ergaticus ruber</i>	Locally common in highlands. 5/14
Red-breasted Chat	<i>Granatellus venustus</i>	An immature at Laguna Maria
Olive Warbler	<i>Peucedramus taeniatus</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Rufous-capped Warbler	<i>Basileuterus rufifrons</i>	Scattered. 6/14
Golden-browed Warbler	<i>Basileuterus belli</i>	Scattered, highlands. 3/14
Slate-throated Redstart	<i>Myioborus miniatus</i>	Widespread and locally common. 12/14
Painted Redstart	<i>Myioborus pictus</i>	Scattered. 3/14
American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	A female at Laguna Maria
Red-headed Tanager	<i>Spermagra erythrocephala</i>	A female above Don Bruno
Hepatic Tanager	<i>Piranga flava</i>	Widespread in highlands. 7/14
Summer Tanager	<i>Piranga ruber</i>	A male at Uruapan and a female above the Don Bruno. 2/14
Flame-coloured Tanager	<i>Piranga bidentata</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Western Tanager	<i>Piranga ludoviciana</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Black-headed Grosbeak	<i>Pheucticus melanocephalus</i>	Widespread. 13/14
Blue Grosbeak	<i>Guiraca caerulea</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Blue Bunting	<i>Cyanocompsa parellina</i>	A male Temascaltepec
Grayish Saltator	<i>Saltator coerulescens</i>	1 at Laguna Maria
Orange-breasted Bunting	<i>Passerina leclancherii</i>	12+ at Santo Tomas – simply stunning!
Painted Bunting	<i>Passerina ciris</i>	A male at Laguna Maria – sadly hard to see under the crop!
Varied Bunting	<i>Passerina versicolor</i>	Scattered. 6/14
Indigo Bunting	<i>Passerina cyanea</i>	Scattered. 7/14
Lazuli Bunting	<i>Passerina amoena</i>	2 at the waterfall at Tacambaro
Green-striped Brushfinch	<i>Atlapetes virenticeps</i>	2 above the Don Bruno
Rusty-crowned Ground-Sparrow	<i>Melospiza kieneri</i>	Quite frequent at Laguna Maria. 3/14
White-collared Seedeater	<i>Sporophila torqueola</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Blue-black Grassquit	<i>Volatinia jacarina</i>	Several at Santo Tomas
Cinnamon-bellied Flowerpiercer	<i>Diglossa baritula</i>	Scattered in the highlands. 3/14
Rufous-sided Towhee	<i>Pipilo erythrophthalmus</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Canyon Towhee	<i>Pipilo fuscus</i>	Widespread. 9/14
Black-chested Sparrow	<i>Aimophila humeralis</i>	1 at Santo Tomas
Stripe-headed Sparrow	<i>Aimophila ruficauda</i>	Locally common. 5/14
Botteri's Sparrow	<i>Aimophila botterii</i>	1 at Colones
Rufous-crowned Sparrow	<i>Aimophila ruficeps</i>	1 Temascaltepec
Rusty Sparrow	<i>Aimophila rufescens</i>	1 at Tzintzuntzan
Striped Sparrow	<i>Oriturus superciliosus</i>	Only noted at El Rosario
Black-chinned Sparrow	<i>Amphispiza atrogularis</i>	1 at Tzintzuntzan
Grasshopper Sparrow	<i>Ammodramus savannarum</i>	1 at Tacambaro & 1 in Mexico City BG
Vesper Sparrow	<i>Pooectes gramineus</i>	1 at Laguna Verde
Savannah Sparrow	<i>Passerculus sandwichensis</i>	1 at Tzintzuntzan and several at Laguna Verde. 2/14
Song Sparrow	<i>Melospiza melodia</i>	Scattered – the strange heavily marked highland form. 3/14
Lincoln's Sparrow	<i>Melospiza lincolnii</i>	Widespread. 10/14
Lark Sparrow	<i>Chondestes grammacus</i>	Small flocks at Laguna Maria and Lago Cuitzeo. 2/14
Chipping Sparrow	<i>Spizella passerina</i>	Widespread. 10/14
Clay-colored Sparrow	<i>Spizella pallida</i>	Scattered. 4/14
Brewer's Sparrow	<i>Spizella breweri</i>	2 at Tzintzuntzan
Yellow-eyed Junco	<i>Junco phaeonotus</i>	Widespread from Morelia east. 8/14

Yellow-headed Blackbird	<i>Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus</i>	Locally common at wetlands. 2/14
Red-winged Blackbird	<i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	Scattered. 2/14
Brewer's Blackbird	<i>Euphagus cyanocephalus</i>	Scarce. 2/14
Brown-headed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus ater</i>	Scattered but some sizeable flocks. 6/14
Bronzed Cowbird	<i>Molothrus aeneus</i>	Scattered. 2/14
Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	Widespread. 11/14
Bar-winged Oriole	<i>Icterus maculialatus</i>	3 Temascaltepec
Orchard Oriole	<i>Icterus spurius</i>	1 en route to Uruapan
Hooded Oriole	<i>Icterus cucullatus</i>	Scattered throughout. 7/14
Black-vented Oriole	<i>Icterus wagleri</i>	1 from Ciudad Guzman
Audobon's Oriole	<i>Icterus graduacauda</i>	2 at Rancho de los Cedros and 1 Temascaltepec. 2/14
Streak-backed Oriole	<i>Icterus pustulatus</i>	A pair at Santo Tomas
Bullock's Oriole	<i>Icterus bullocki</i>	Scattered throughout. 4/14
Scott's Oriole	<i>Icterus parisorum</i>	5+ Lago Cuitzeo
Abeille's Oriole	<i>Icterus abeillei</i>	Locally frequent in highlands. 6/14
Baltimore Oriole	<i>Icterus galbula</i>	Scattered. 5/14
Yellow-winged Cacique	<i>Cacicus melanicterus</i>	4 near Queseria
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Widespread. By habitation. 13/14
Red Crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>	Don Bruno. 3/14
Pine Siskin	<i>Carduelis pinus</i>	Locally common in highlands. 6/14
Black-headed Siskin	<i>Carduelis notata</i>	Locally common in higher areas. 6/14
Lesser Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis psaltria</i>	Widespread. 11/14
Hooded Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes abeillei</i>	A male Temascaltepec
Evening Grosbeak	<i>Coccothraustes vespertinus</i>	c.8 Temascaltepec
House Finch	<i>Carpodacus mexicanus</i>	Widespread. 11/14

## Systematic List Number 3      Butterflies

Nomenclature and taxonomic order taken from Butterflies of Mexico and Central America (Glassberg 2007).

### *Papilionidae*

Dual-spotted Swallowtail	Mimoides ilus	1 Colones (may have been Variable Cattleheart Parides erithalion?)
Magnificent Swallowtail	Papilio garamus	1 on Volcan Fuego and 1 Mil Cumbres
Two-tailed Swallowtail	Papilio multicaudatus	Scattered, most common in Valle de Bravo area

### *Pieridae*

Mexican Dartwhite	Catasticta nimbice	1 Mil Cumbres and several Colones
Golden-banded Dartwhite	Catasticta teutila	1 in Tlalpujahua
Surprising White	Pereute charops	Several on Volcan Fuego
Great Southern White	Ascia monuste	Colones
Giant White	Ganyra josephina	Colones
Orange Sulphur	Colias eurytheme	1 Rancho de los Cedros
White Angled-Sulphur	Anteos clorinde	Common Laguna Maria
Yellow Angled-Sulphur	Anteos maerula	Common Laguna Maria
Orange-barred Sulphur	Phoebis philea	Scattered throughout. 4/14
Apricot Sulphur	Phoebis argante	Colones
Statira Sulphur	Phoebis statira	Colones
Mimosa Yellow	Eurema nise	Laguna Maria
Salome Yellow	Eurema salome	Locally common volcano and Morelia areas
Sleepy Orange	Eurema nicippe	Colones
Tailed Orange	Eurema proterpia	Scattered
Dainty Sulphur	Nathalis iole	Scattered throughout. 3/14
De la Maza's Mimic-White	Enantia mazai	Laguna Maria

### *Lycaenidae*

Oppia Hairstreak	Thereus oppia	1 photographed Tacambaro
Mexican Elfstreak	Laothus erybathis	2 on Nevado de Colima and this or another elfstreak species at Laguna Verde
Zebra Cross-streak	Panhiades bathildis	Probably this species at Colones
Xami Hairstreak	Callophrys xami	This stunner was in Mexico City BG
Ceraunus Blue	Hemiargus ceraunus	Scattered
Cyna Blue	Zizula cyna	Tacambaro
Spring Azure	Celastrina ladon	widespread
Marine Blue	Leptotes marina	Lago Cuitzeo

### *Riodinidae*

White-rayed Pixie	Melanis cephise	1 Colones
Rounded Metalmark	Calephelis perditalis	several Colones
Fatal Metalmark		Colones
Scintillant sp	Calephelis sp	at least one 'golden' species Colones

## *Nymphalidae*

Variegated Fritillary	<i>Euptoieta claudia</i>	1 at Nevado de Colima
Gulf Fritillary	<i>Agraulis vanillae</i>	Rather uncommon
Mexican Silverspot	<i>Dione moneta</i>	Widespread
Julia Heliconian	<i>Dryas iulia</i>	Colones
Zebra Heliconian	<i>Heliconius charithonia</i>	1 at Tacambaro and very common at Colones
Banded Orange Heliconian	<i>Dryadula phaetusa</i>	Colones
Erato Heliconian	<i>Heliconius erato</i>	Volcan Fuego
Guatemalan Tegosa	<i>Tegosa guatemalena</i>	Tacambaro
Orange-patch Crescent	<i>Phyciodes drusilla</i>	widespread
Ardent Crescent	<i>Phyciodes ardys</i>	Laguna Maria and Lago Cuitzeo
Mylitta Crescent	<i>Phyciodes mylitta</i>	Sierra Chincua
Common Buckeye	<i>Junonia coenia</i>	Scattered. 4/14
West Coast Lady	<i>Vanessa annabella</i>	Scattered
Painted Lady	<i>Vanessa cardui</i>	same as ours! 2 at Rancho de los Cedros
Mourning Cloak	<i>Nymphalis antiopa</i>	our Camberwell Beauty. 1 at Nevado de Colima and 3 at Paztacuaro
Banded Peacock	<i>Anartia fatima</i>	Tacambaro
Malachite	<i>Siproeta stelenes</i>	Spectacular butterfly. 1 at Colones
Orange Banner	<i>Temenis laothoe</i>	Colones
Blomfield's Beauty	<i>Smyrna blomfieldia</i>	2 on Volcan Fuego
Karwinski's Beauty	<i>Smyrna karwinskii</i>	1 in Uruapan
Ruddy Daggerwing	<i>Marpesia petreus</i>	1 at Colones
White Morpho	<i>Morpho polyphemus</i>	3 or so just north of Santo Tomas
Patchy Gemmed-Satyr	<i>Cyllopsis hilaria</i>	Colones
Gemmed-Satyr sp	<i>Cyllopsis sp</i>	Tacambaro
Queen	<i>Danaus gilippus</i>	Only noted at Pátzcuaro. A Monarch mimic
Soldier	<i>Danaus eresimus</i>	Uruapan. A Monarch mimic
Monarch	<i>Danaus plexippus</i>	Quite a few MILLION!

## *Hesperiidae*

White-striped Longtail	<i>Chioides catillus</i>	Scattered
Common Checkered Skipper	<i>Pyrgus communis</i>	Scattered
White Checkered Skipper	<i>Pyrgus albescens</i>	Tacambaro
Tropical Checkered Skipper	<i>Pyrgus oileus</i>	Laguna Maria
Erichson's White Skipper	<i>Heliopetes domicilla</i>	Laguna Maria
Many other skippers were seen but not identified!		

## Selected List    Flowers

Identification, nomenclature and taxonomy are taken from a variety of sources. We are still scratching at the surface – the flora is very diverse!

### **Aspleniaceae**

*Asplenium monanthes*                      Common small fern in the higher forests

### **Polypodiaceae**

*Pleopeltis mexicana*                      roadsides between Angangueo and El Rosario  
*Polypodium madrense*                      scattered

### **Pteridaceae**

*Adiantum andicola*                      Widespread in higher forests

### **Cupressaceae**

*Juniperus deppeana*                      Tlalpujahua  
*Juniperus monticola*                      Common in glades at higher levels

### **Pinaceae**

*Abies religiosa*                              Oyamel. Locally dominant 'fir' at higher levels in all areas  
*Pinus hartwegii*                              Volcan Nevado de Colima  
*Pinus montezumae*                          Scattered at higher altitudes  
*Pinus oocarpa*                                Common in Valle de Bravo  
*Pinus pseudostrobus*                        Locally common

### **Anacardiaceae**

*Mangifera indica*                            Plantations off. Lower areas.  
*Spondia purpurea*                            Red Mombin. Pistachia-like pinnate pointed leaves. Fleshy red/pink flowers. Temascaltepec

### **Apiaceae**

*Hydrocotyle umbellata*                      Highlands – damp areas

### **Apocynaceae**

*Vinca major*                                 Periwinkle. Scattered

### **Araliaceae**

*Opopanax peltatum*                        looks like a papaya! Lower areas, roadsides

### **Aristolochiaceae**

*Aristolochia* spp                              Santo Tomas

### **Asclepiadaceae**

*Asclepias currassavica*                      Quite common around Laguna Maria

### **Asteraceae**

*Baccharis conferta*                        widespread in pine-oak forest  
*Bides triplinervia*                          scattered  
*Cirsium anartiolepis*                        Scattered – pine/oak woodlands – all these *Cirsiums* are much more

	spectacular than most European species
<i>Cirsium ehrenbergii</i>	the large thistle on Volcanos Fuego and Nevado de Colima
<i>Cirsium subcoriaceum</i>	Cerro Burro and Angangueo area
<i>Cirsium</i> sp	yellow flowered species on Cerro Burro
<i>Conyza coronopifolia</i>	scattered
<i>Cosmos bipinnatus</i>	scattered. Pink flowers.
<i>Dahlia rosea</i>	Cerro Burro – in flower
<i>Galinosoga quadriradiata</i>	scattered
<i>Gnaphaliothamnus salicifolius</i>	Highlands
<i>Melampodium divaricatum</i>	Temascaltepec. Yellow ragwort-flowered shrub
<i>Roldana angulifolia</i>	Large groundsel with distinctive pentagonal leaves
<i>Roldana barba-johannis</i>	Widespread
<i>Roldana lineolata</i>	Scattered
<i>Senecio callosus</i>	scattered in the highlands
<i>Senecio toluccanus</i>	Scattered. Oval toothed leaves, stems 30cm high.
<i>Sonchus asper</i>	Scattered
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Roadsides
<i>Tagetes lucida</i>	Another yellow daisy with fine pinnate leaves
<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	Roadsides

### **Balsamaceae**

<i>Impatiens wallerana</i>	Volcanos area
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### **Betulaceae**

<i>Alnus acuminata</i>	Scattered throughout
<i>Alnus jorullensis</i>	Tlalpujahua

### **Bignoniaceae**

<i>Jacaranda acutifolia</i>	widespread, but only a few in flower, especially around Tacambaro
<i>Spathodea campanulata</i>	scattered. Large orange-red flowers – e.g. Uruapan
<i>Tabebuia donell-smithii</i>	A stunning yellow flowered tree on canyon sides near Queseria
<i>Tecoma stans</i>	widespread yellow flowered small tree

### **Bombacaceae**

<i>Bombax palmeri</i>	Silk Cotton Tree. Common in dry thorn forest e.g. north of Morelia
<i>Ceiba pentandra</i>	Silk Cotton Tree. Scattered, fields, roadsides, lower altitudes
<i>Pseudobombax ellipticum</i>	Shaving Brush Tree. Leafless with sprays of pink flowers. Laguna Maria & Santo Tomas

### **Brassicaceae**

<i>Brassica rapa</i>	Scattered
<i>Cardamine flaccida</i>	small bittercress in the highlands
<i>Eruca sativa</i>	Roadsides

### **Buddlejaceae**

<i>Buddleia sesseliflora</i>	Locally common in higher forests
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### **Burseraceae**

<i>Bursera</i> sp	reddish-barked elephant-tree in Volcan Fuego area
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### **Cactaceae**

Pachycereus grandis	Tall cardon cactus in dry thorn forest north of Morelia
Lemaireocereus doumorteri	Zapotlan area
Rhipsalis baccifera	Epiphytic species common at Laguna Verde

### Campanulaceae

Lobelia laxiflora	Widespread
Lobelia nana	small blue species around Anganguero etc
Lobelia plebeia	small white species around Anganguero. Another white species in Temascaltepec

### Caprifoliaceae

Sambucus nigra	Roadsides
Symphoricarpos microphyllus	Mil Cumbres. Twin tubular white flowered honeysuckle

### Caryophyllaceae

Arenaria bourgaei	Highlands
Cerastium vulcanicum	?probably this species at El Chincua
Stellaria cuspidata	scattered

### Clethraceae

Clethra mexicana	Road up to Sierra Chincua
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### Cochlospermaceae

Cochlospermum vitifolium	Buttercup Tree. Scattered. Beautiful open yellow flowered small tree
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### Convolvulaceae

Ipomoea arborescens	Morning Glory Tree. Dry forests north of Morelia
Ipomoea murucoides	White-flowered tree species in Colones area
Ipomoea purpurea	widespread

### Crassulaceae

Echeveria mucronata	?probably this species. Cliffs in Mil Cumbres
Echeveria secunda	rocks in Sierra Chincua
Sedum bourgaei	rocks in Sierra Chincua
Sedum minimum	Tlalpujahu

### Ericaceae

Arbutus xalapensis	Widespread
Arctostaphylos pungens	A considerable tree! El Chincua
Comarostaphylis longifolia	Widespread
Comarostaphylis rupestris	Anganguero area – lower altitude than next species
Comarostaphylis discolor	El Rosario – above 10,000 feet

### Euphorbiaceae

Ricinus communis	Castor Oil Plant. Roadside weed
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### Fabaceae

Bauhinia variegata	widely planted
Dalea bicolor	Purple flowered vetch common in highlands
Desmodium aparines	Trifoliate leaves. Laguna Verde
Lupinus montanus	El Rosario

Medicago lupulina roadsides at Pátzcuaro  
Vicia americana El Chincua and El Rosario

### Fagaceae

Quercus candicans ?probably this species. Has drip tips to the leaves. Volcan Fuego  
Quercus castanea Volcans Fuego & Nevado de Colima  
Quercus crassifolia Widespread  
Quercus crassipes Volcans Fuego & Nevado de Colima  
Quercus laeta Scattered in higher areas  
Quercus laurina Widespread  
Quercus magnoliifolia Volcans Fuego & Nevado de Colima  
Quercus obtusata Scattered in higher areas  
Quercus rugosa Widespread  
Quercus scytophylla long acute leaved species from Volcans Fuego & Nevado de Colima

### Gentianaceae

Gentiana spathacea Sierra Chincua – in flower

### Geraniaceae

Geranium deltoideum Volcan Fuego  
Geranium latum scattered  
Geranium lilacinum Volcan Nevado de Colima  
Geranium seemannii Laguna Verde

### Grossulariaceae

Ribes affine Scattered in highlands

### Lamiaceae

Leonotis nepetifolia widespread orange-flowered Leonotis – weed of fields, road edge etc.  
Salvia amarissima rangy species with many small blue flowers – popular with hummingbirds  
Salvia coccinea orange flowers – pointing up 45 deg – scattered in Colima area  
Salvia elegans red flowers – small and narrow. Widespread  
Salvia fulgens large red flowers and wide leaves. Common in pine oak forest  
Salvia gesnerifolia another large red flowered species – huge in fact!  
Salvia gracilis pink-purple species with white marks on flower. Widespread  
Salvia iodantha pink-purple flowers in clusters, velvety flowers with stamens long extruded. Volcan Fuego  
Salvia lavanduloides blue with purple calyces – monarch sanctuaries  
Salvia leucantha wands of purple/pink and white flowers. Velvety. Volcan Fuego and Lago Cuitzeo  
Salvia longistyla narrow peachy-red flowers. Lowest slopes of Nevado de Colima  
Salvia mexicana purple-blue. Scattered  
Salvia polystacha shrubby weedy species along roadsides with blue & white flowers  
Salvia prunelloides blue. Small. El Rosario  
Stachys coccinea orange-red. Widespread  
Stachys sanchezii ?probably this species at El Rosario

### Lentibulaceae

Pinguicula moranensis var moranensis. Not in flower. Nice rosettes near Temascaltepec

**Loranthaceae**  
Cladoclea

On trees north of Valle de Bravo

*Psittacanthus calyculatus* the large yellow/orange flowered parasite weighing the trees down between Anganguero and Valle de Bravo  
*Psittacanthus mayanus* ?something similar to this species at the entrance to Laguna Maria

### Lythraceae

*Cuphea calaminthifolia* Mil Cumbres

### Malpigiaceae

*Glaphimia glauca* beautiful spires of yellow flowers. Above Laguna Verde

### Malvaceae

*Abutilon ellipticum* Yellow-orange. Temascaltepec  
*Kearnemalvastrum subtriflorum* In valley above Don Bruno. Small pale pink flowers.

### Melastomataceae

*Monochaetum calcaratum* Deep bright pink flowers on small shrubs. Cliffs and wet banks. Temascaltepec  
*Tibouchina scabriuscula* Paler pink and smaller flowers than previous species. Temascaltepec  
*Tibouchina mexicana* Pinky-blue flowers. Temascaltepec

### Moraceae

*Ficus* species A variety of species at Laguna Maria

### Nyctaginaceae

*Mirabilis jalapa* Long-stalked convolvulus like pink (or yellow) flowers. Volcan Fuego

### Onagraceae

*Epilobium ciliatum* Scattered in damp areas at higher levels  
*Fuschia microphylla* still a few tiny red flowers evident in the Sierra Chincua  
*Gaura coccinea* Pink 'butterfly' flowers. Highlands. Single wide upper petals  
*Lopezia racemosa* More. Pink 'butterfly' flowers. Scattered throughout. Divided upper petal  
*Oenothera rosea* short turf at Pátzcuaro

### Orobanchaceae

*Conopholis alpina* Parasitic species under trees a usual picnic spot past the highest village on the Temascaltepec loop

### Oxalidaceae

*Oxalis corniculata* scattered throughout

### Papaveraceae

*Argemone ochroleuca* Mexican Prickly Poppy. Scattered along roadsides etc.  
*Bocconia frutescens* locally dominant. Leaves a little like a red oak

### Phytolaccaceae

*Phytolacca icosandra* Common along roadsides

### Plantaginaceae

*Plantago australis* scattered

## **Plumbaginaeae**

Plumbago scandens white flowered. Santo Tomas  
Plumbago pulchella pink flowered. Santo Tomas

## **Polemoniaceae**

Cobaea scandens Climber. Large purple trumpet flowers. Tacambaro and Temascaltepec  
Loeselia mexicana Small red trumpet flowers – hummingbirds love them. Woody shrub with wands of dark green leaves and red flowers. Scattered

## **Polygonaceae**

Polygonum lapathifolium Roadsides  
Rumex acetosella Scattered  
Rumex crispus Scattered

## **Primulaceae**

Anagallis arvensis roadsides

## **Ranunculaceae**

Clematis dioica widespread – in seed  
Ranunculus dichotomus scattered

## **Resedaceae**

Reseda lutea Roadsides

## **Roseaceae**

Acaena elongata Leaves like an agrimonia and spikes probably similar but with distinctive spiny oval fruits  
Alchemilla pringlei tracks in the highlands  
Crataegus mexicana Scattered  
Ribes pringlei Volcan Nevado de Colima

## **Rubiaceae**

Bouvardia ternifolia Scarlet Trompetilla. Scattered throughout. One of several red-flowered hummingbird pollinated species in the area  
Coffea arabica Coffee. crops here and there, e.g. at Laguna Maria

## **Salicaceae**

Salix paradoxa Highlands

## **Saxifragaceae**

Heuchera orizabensis El Chincua

## **Scrophulariaceae**

Calceolaria mexicana Small yellow flowers. Streams above Don Bruno and above Anganguero  
Calceolaria spp Two more compact mat-forming species by streams and wet cliffs, Mil Cumbres and Temascaltepec  
Castilleja arvensis Widespread  
Castilleja lithospermoides road cuttings above Anganguero  
Castilleja tenuiflora scattered  
Mimulus glabratus Wet cliffs – e.g. Temascaltepec  
Penstemon campanulatus ?probably this species between Anganguero and El Chincua

Penstemon roseus	Highlands
Vernica arvensis	scattered
<b>Solanaceae</b>	
Physalis coztomatl	Uncommon in the Oyamel forests at El Rosario
Nicotinia glauca	roadsides, esp around Pátzcuaro
Solanum diversifolium	scattered
Wigandia urens	Tall herb with purple flowers like a solanum. Roadsides, esp Laguna Maria area
<b>Sterculiaceae</b>	
Guazuma ulmifolia	Small tree with pinnate leaves and strange short prickled fruits. Colones
<b>Styracaceae</b>	
Styrax argenteus	Common in understory at El Rosario etc
<b>Theaceae</b>	
Cleyera integrifolia	Common in understory at El Rosario etc
<b>Utrichulariaceae</b>	
Utrichularia gibba	Common in Laguna Verde
<b>Verbenaceae</b>	
Verbena recta	One of several Verbena species seen
<b>Violaceae</b>	
Viola humilis	Highlands
<b>Viscaceae</b>	
Arceuthobium abietis-religiosae	Noted on the Oyamel trees at El Rosario etc
<b>Monocotyledons</b>	
<b>Agavaceae</b>	
Agave attenuata	Mil Cumbres
Agave atrovirens	scattered
Agave tequilana	source of tequila. Extensive crops spreading in Gaudalajara area
Furcraea bedinghausii	Scattered in the highlands esp Mil Cumbres. Also Temascaltepec
<b>Bromeliaceae</b>	
Tillandsia prodigiosa	branched bromeliad in Valle de Bravo. Many other species present throughout – a difficult group taxonomically.
<b>Cyperaceae</b>	
Carex peucophila	One clump by stream in El Rosario village
Schoenoplectus americanus	Common around shores of Laguna Verde
<b>Iridaceae</b>	
Sisyrinchium sp	One yellow one above Anganguero

## **Juncaceae**

*Juncus arcticus* Scattered in highlands  
*Juncus ebracteatus* Highlands

## **Liliaceae**

*Yucca elephantides* spectacular plants between Pátzcuaro and Morelia

## **Orchidaceae**

*Corallorhiza involuta* ?probably this species at various sites in the highlands (not in 2008)  
*Corallorhiza maculata* Mil Cumbres  
*Encyclia linkiana* Santo Tomas  
*Maxillaria* sp fine purple species on trees at Volcan Fuego  
*Oncidium cavendishianum* the garish orange and yellow spotted epiphytic orchid at Laguna Verde, Laguna Maria etc  
*Oncidium cebolleta* Santo Tomas – similar to above species, much narrower leaves  
*Prescotia tubulosa* Highlands  
*Rhynchosstele cervantesii* Beautiful white flowered epiphyte with red and yellow markings on the large flowers. Scattered throughout, noted especially in the Mil Cumbres and in the Laguna Verde areas.  
*Spiranthes hyemalis* Scattered

## **Poaceae**

*Saccharum officinarum* Sugar Cane. Main crop in some lower areas.

## **Smilacaceae**

*Smilax moranensis* Highlands