

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better the pigeon in the sky"

"A sparrow in hand is better the pigeon in the sky"

About Birds of Colombia and South America

Yuri Orlik^{1*}

¹*professor and emeritus researcher of Universities in Colombia, Brazil, Russia and other countries, founder of the Journal of Scientific Education, JSE

Abstract. It is known that Colombia is the richest bird country in the World - more than 1,900 species. The author shows in this text some common and rare Colombian and South American birds. There is data about habits, living space, alimentation and so on and a lot of images. This informations can be useful for students, teachers and all amateur observers of fauna and Nature.

Keywords: Birds, Colombia, Brazil, S. America, Science education

There are many pictures of animals and birds in my collection of photographs made in different trips. I would like to show in this article some common and exotic birds that I managed to take pictures of in Colombia, Brazil and elsewhere. Many of these photos are taken at zoos - Sao Paulo, Barcelona, Bird Park near the Iguazu Falls, Itaipu Technology Park, PTI (Foz do Iguaçu, Brazil), Santa Cruz Zoo near Bogotá, as well as in the fields and the forests near the towns Tocaima (400 m above sea level) and Sasaima (1400 m above sea level) near Bogotá.

This information may be useful for students, teachers and all amateur observers of fauna and Nature.

Colombia, according to statistics, is the richest bird country in the World - more than 1,900 species. This may seem strange, since the territory of Brazil, for example, is many times larger, and the Brazilian Amazon is also many times larger than its Colombian part.

But this is explained quite simply - there are more climatic and geographical zones in Colombia than in other countries.

For example, if you pass or walk down from the mountains only 100-150 km, you can cross several zones at once, which are very different in their fauna and flora: at an altitude of 3000-5000 m and above there is a cold cordillera zone (where a condor, some large eagles and quite a few other birds live). Then below there is a zone with a height of 3000-2000 m with a temperature of 15-25 degrees centigrade. And even lower to sea level and

¹* professor and emeritus researcher of Universities in Colombia, Brazil, Russia and other countries, founder of the Journal of Scientific Education, JSE, <http://chinakxjy.com/>.

contact: apov2014@inbox.ru

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

temperature 30-35 - the zone of subtropics and ordinary and humid tropics, where the rest of hundreds and hundreds of species of birds live with their diverse and interesting details.

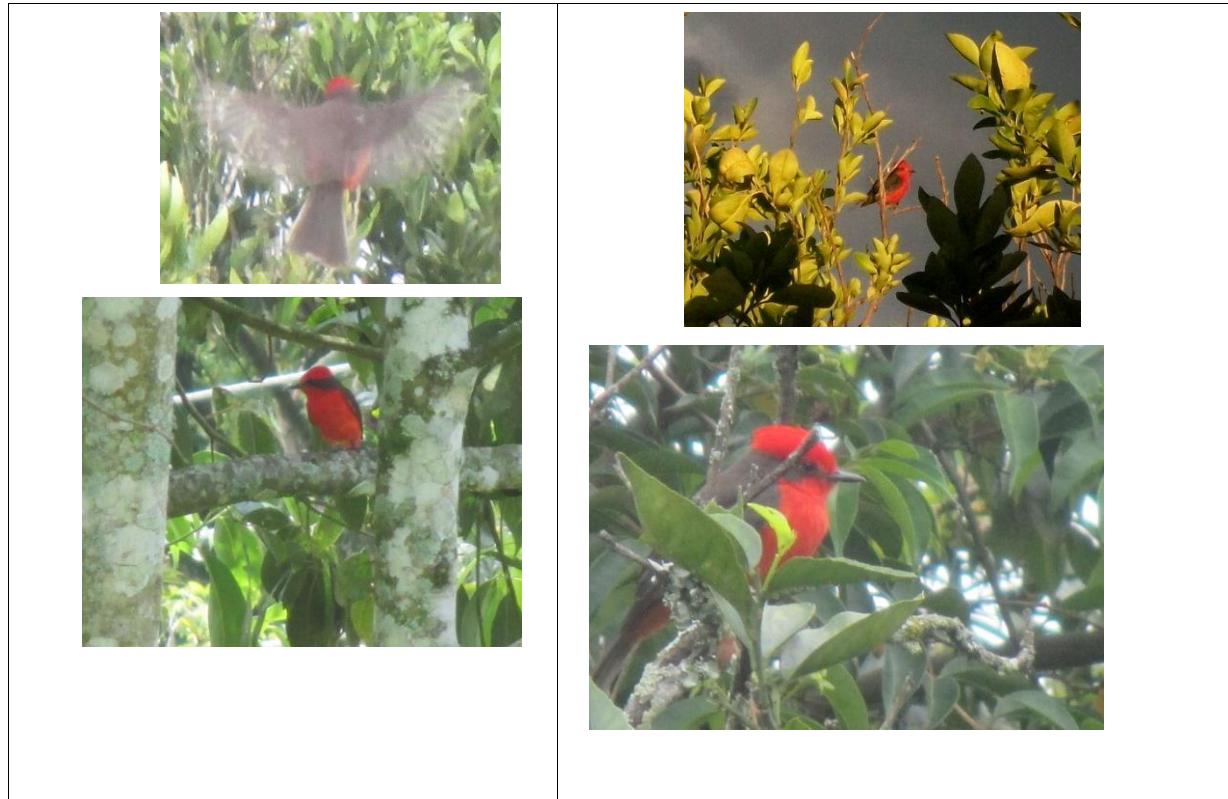
In the following pictures you can see beautiful landscapes of Colombia where many of the birds shown in the text live.



Let's start with a little beautiful bird -Common Vermilion Flycatcher (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*)



Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"



The Vermilion Flycatchers eat mainly insects, such as flies, grasshoppers and beetles. Birds usually catch them in flight after a short chase from a branch.

This is the beautiful Great Kiskadee (*Pitangus sulphuratus*)



Information from the Internet: "The Great Kiskadee nests from southern Texas and Mexico to Argentina, in the Caribbean Sea in Trinidad, Bermuda and Tobago, Bermuda the bird nests in an open wooded area with several tall trees and around human settlements."

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

It is a loud, sociable bird that protects its area from large birds. The omnivorous bird eats insects, rodents, lizards, frogs, and fruits. In addition, it catches fish. All parental birds build a large, curved nest on trees or telephone masts. Only the female incubates 2 or 3 cream-colored red-brown spotted eggs."

There are different subspecies of woodpeckers here, for example, this spot-breasted woodpecker (*Colaptes punctigula*)



The behavior of this South American woodpecker is the same as European or N. American, that is, it often opens up the dry trunks and branches of trees and pulls out the larvae. But here the woodpecker has a special habit - next to our house, he sits on a metal lamp cap, which are set high on the poles and begins to beat the shot on this cap. Probably, he likes this knocking sound and wakes us up in the morning instead of cock-singing.

Woodpeckers are unique birds, when they work with their beaks they can withstand enormous loads, read about it here (<https://geektimes.ru/post/280806/> "Physics in the animal world: a woodpecker and his "jackhammer")

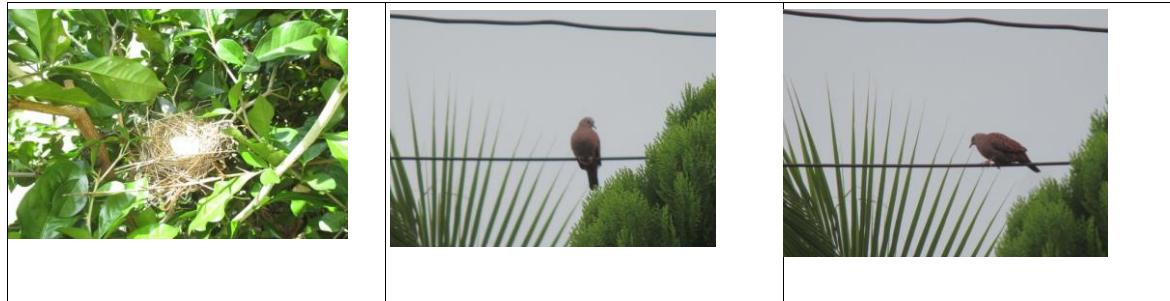
And these are different toucans, which belong to the woodpeckers, in the Park of Birds near the Iguazu Falls



Running head: “A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky”

Here you can read about the astonishing beak of toucan from Physics point of view.
<https://geektimes.ru/post/280312/>

This is the Ruddy Ground-dove (*Columbina talpacoti*), there is also a slightly smaller *Columbina minuta*

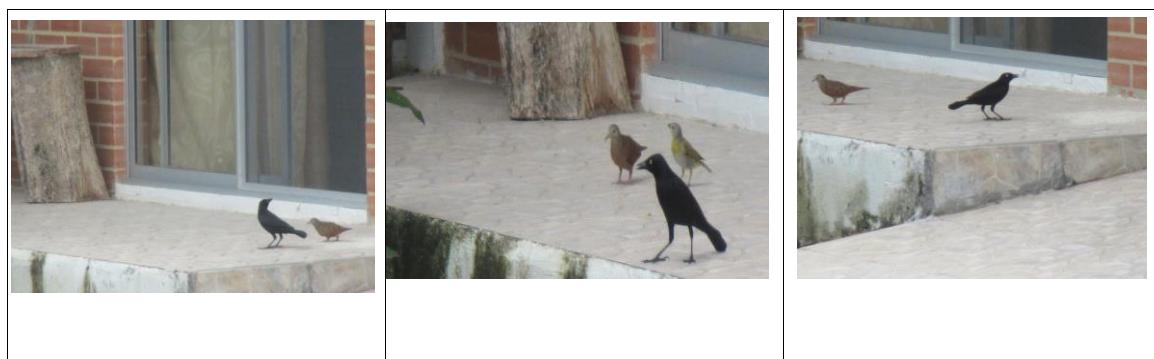


On the right you can see its nest.

The next is the Saffron finch (*Sicalis flaveola*, in Spanish *canario llanero*), a tanager from South America that is common in open and semi-open areas in lowlands outside the Amazon Basin



Great-tailed Grackle (*Quiscalus mexicanus*)



Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

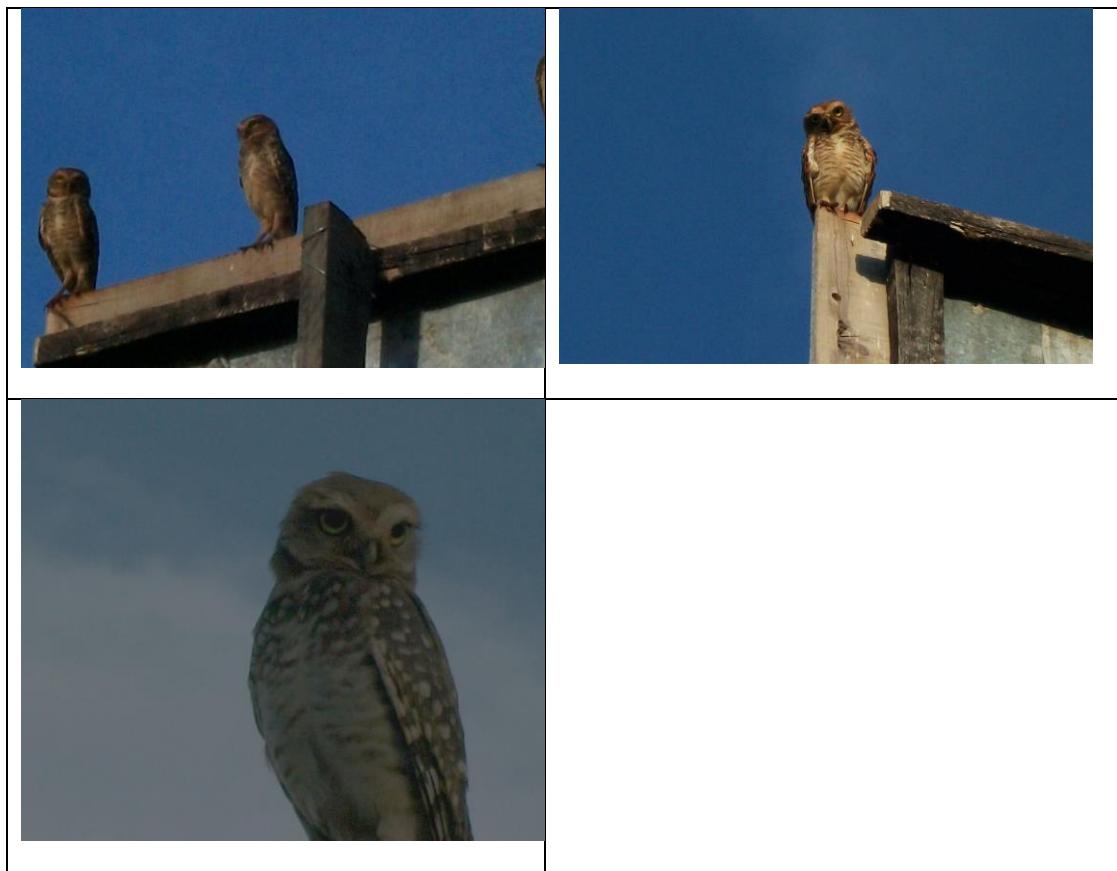
In the first photo, the Grackle is taken with the ground-dove and the saffron finch, but this one is not yet adult, and therefore the feathers are mostly greenish.

About the grackle: "The area extends from the northeast and south of California to Arizona, New Mexico, Texas and Louisiana, to the south to Mexico and the Gulf of Mexico to the north of South America." The large-tailed grackle inhabits an open area with few trees, fields, pastures, mangroves and parks in cities and suburbs. His living spaces are often near water bodies.

The large-tailed grackle stays mostly on the ground during the day and looks for food. They feed on seeds, fruits, insects, small reptiles and amphibians, as well as small fish, eggs and chicks. In the fields they follow tractors and combine harvesters, picking up frightened insects and seeds. Farmers consider birds a disaster when they appear in the fields in large flocks."

Now I will tell you about the Latin American owl, the more accurate name is Burrowing Owl (*Athene cunicularia*). The Internet says that they can live in burrows like rabbits.

The photographs are taken in Foz do Iguaçu, Paraná, Brazil. Foz- is a small town of about 360 thousand inhabitants and there are many forests and green areas, especially on the periphery of the city.



It is a small owl, not more than 30 cm tall, plumage gray-brown, wingspan more than 70 cm.

As usual, they fly out for hunting in the evening, and their food is ordinary - small rodents, birds, etc. Everyone knows that this is a bird of prey and can attack - there was even a case when she, having

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

risen in the air with a cry, tried to attack our little dog - the micro-pincher Kira, but, of course, Kira is too big for her.

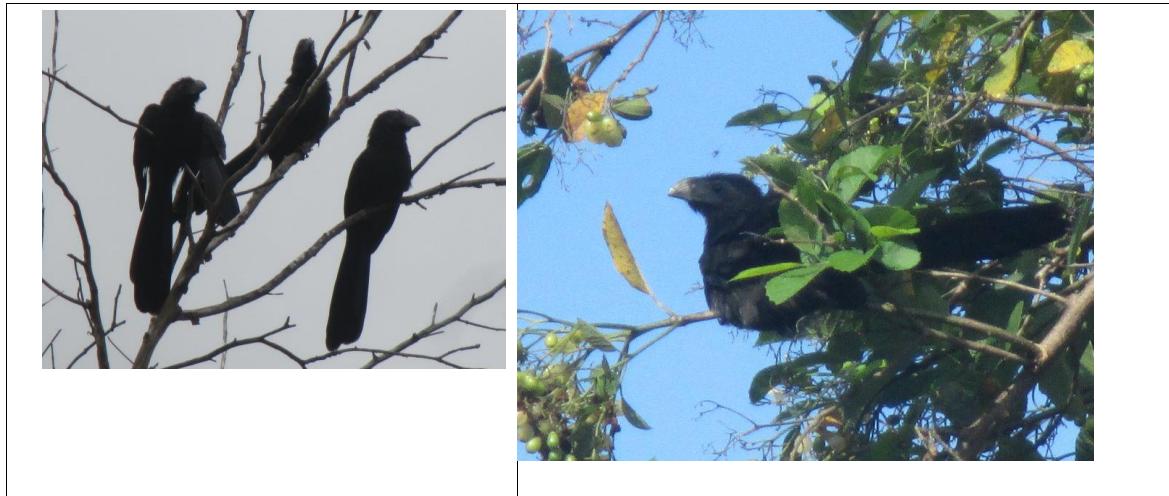
In this family of owls there were parents and 4 chicks, but the children were already large and hunted independently. Then the family broke up, the young, probably, moved to other forests, so that it would be easier to find food.

And here is the information about this owl from the Internet
(<http://www.desertozavr.biz/2014/01/desert-SAdesert-animals-sova.html>):

This is one of the smallest owls. She spends most of the time on the ground. She has long legs, a short tail, a round head, white "eyebrows", "ears" are missing. The adult owl has a length of 21.6-28 cm, the wingspan is 50.8-61.0 cm, weight 170.1-214 g. The female is smaller than the male, which is not typical for owls. Color sandy-brown with white pectoral, breast light brown, a face of light sand color and surrounded by a white border. The females are darker than males. The length of the wings of rabbit owls is the same as that of the body, the legs are unopened, the iris of the eyes is yellow. Chicks have a darker brown color - they have a brown head, back and wings, and the chest and belly are white. In their first summer, they acquire the coloring of an adult owl. This owl can be found in the daytime, when it hunts. She is not frightened and can be approached to her close range.

Among all the small representatives of the owl tribe, the burrowing owl stands out with its high paws, covered with sparse plumage. The owl feeds on insects and small mammals. The chicks are taken out in holes in the ground. The most often occupied are already prepared burrows, excavated by rodents, but in the absence of ready shelters, the owls are able to dig the burrow by themselves if a site with loose sandy soil is found.

And here are two birds from the cuckoo family. The ani (*Crotophaga ani*, in Spanish garapatero)



It is known that ani does not fly very well, he spends a lot of time on the ground, hunting large insects and small vertebrates, such as lizards. Birds were also observed with mites from cattle wool. Seeds and berries complement their nutrition.

Ani build on the spiky trees large nests in the shape of a bowl, in which several females lay their eggs. In the nest are found up to 30 eggs, with one female laying only 3 to 5 eggs. Nesting pairs alternate during incubation and together take care of young birds. Often, the chicks stay in the group and help in producing the next brood.

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

When I was photographing ani in a meadow, this bird unexpectedly took off from the grass and sat on the branch



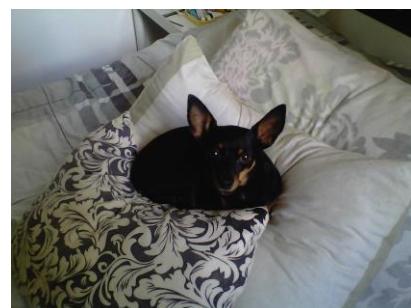
Striped Cuckoo (*Tapera naevia*, in Spanish - Tres pies, sin fin).

Unlike ani in this bird are all habits of a normal cuckoo, ornithologists note the parasitization of this bird in the nests of birds. All owners of the Striped cuckoo have closed spherical or dome-shaped nests. The female cuckoo lays one egg, usually at dawn. The color of the eggs is white or bluish. The baby cuckoo hatches after 15 days and using a sharp beak it inflicts wounds on the chicks of the owners, after which, apparently, the parents themselves throw them out of the nest. After 18-19 days after hatching, the cuckoo flies out. After that, the foster parents feed it for a while.

Shown below is a jaguar, filmed in the zoo of the Itaipu Technology Park, PTI.



And this is - Kira, in Brazil, she learned to attack the jaguars and tear them into small pieces. :)



Running head: “A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky”

The next bird is *the Blue-grey Tanager (Tangara episcopus)*, in Spanish *azulejo*)



This tanagra eats yummy - a fruit by the name of anon fruit.

Now it's time to switch to waterfowl.

Here's a goose in one of the parks of Rio de Janeiro



And next to him is a large rodent - Spotted Paca. "Because of the excellent meat, the paca is hunted by hunters, hunts at night or at dawn with dogs, while at the same time trying to hide in the hole, but the dogs kick it out, and in such a predicament the paca tries to quickly reach the riverbank in order to be saved by swimming. In the boats near the shore the appearance of the beast is expected by hunters, sometimes they are hunted with a lantern, finding the animals in the reflected gleam of the eyes. "

And this is one of the types of the Brazilian duck



This photo of another duck was taken in Tocaima near Bogotá:



Black-bellied whistling duck (*D. autumnalis discolor*). It can be seen that she really has a black tummy.

The Black Swan



Different pelicans:



The second photo shows a seashore in Cartagena, Colombia.

Different kinds of herons:



In the first pictures - an ordinary little Latin American heron, they live literally in all countries. In all places where there is water, they eat beetles, tadpoles, frogs, fish, etc. Often accompanied by grazing domestic animals.

I would like to show more cormorants, but I do not have a local one in this collection. So here's the cormorant, but from another place:

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"



Hangan River, Seoul, S. Korea

And here - a tropical bird, which everyone knows - a pink flamingo.



In Brazil there is a very famous football club with the name of this bird - *Flamengo* in Portuguese .

And here, together with the flamingo - a very beautiful bird - a Scarlet Ibis. *Eudocimus ruber*, (photographed in the zoo of the Itapu Technology Park)



"Having taken care of the beauty of these birds, nature seems to have completely forgotten about their protection. The scarlet ibises have a thin, curved beak, suitable only for searching for food in troubled waters, their claws are not sharp at all, and their legs are short and weak."

Therefore, for safety reasons, red ibises are grouped in groups of 30-40 individuals, which are poured into huge flocks of several thousand birds flying with a classic wedge. And even their unpretentious nests in mangrove thickets, they build in close proximity to neighbors.

Like pink flamingos, scarlet ibises are due to their coloration of shrimp-rich carrots, which they eat in large quantities. In addition to crustaceans, these gluttonous birds eat mollusks, all kinds of beetles and fish. "
(<http://www.zoopicture.ru/krasnyj-ibis/> Красный ибис)

And this is a black ibis.



Other birds

This is a rhea (*Rhea americana*) from the order Rheiformes. Externally reminiscent of the African ostrich, but the degree of their relationship remains controversial among scientists.

The rheas are characteristic large animals of the savannah of the subtropical and temperate latitudes of South America.



Zoo Sao Paolo

Look at the ostrich (filmed at the Santa Cruz Zoo near Bogota)



From the internet: " Between ostriches and rheas there are noticeable differences. Even the larger of the two species - the common rhea - does not reach the size of an ostrich and with its growth of 1.4 m approx. is half the size. On a rhea, the neck is covered with feathers, while in the ostrich it is naked. The rhea has three fingers on each foot, but the ostrich has two."

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

The weight of a rhea is about 30 kg (according to other sources up to 40 kg). Although, because of its weight, the rhea, like the ostrich, can not fly, but actively uses its wings while running to maintain balance, and besides spreading the wings can play the role of a sail during running. The rheas are slower runners than African ostriches, but they can also develop considerable speeds up to 60 km / h. In addition, they are good swimmers and are able to cross rivers without problems. The rhea inhabits Argentina, Chile, Paraguay, Uruguay, Brazil and Bolivia. Darwin's rhea (*Rhea pennata*) is found sometimes in the southern part of Peru. The nandu (rhea) prefers open savannah habitats, which include Patagonian lowlands and the Andean plateau.

Since time immemorial, the Indian tribes of South America have used its meat and eggs for food. In relatively recent times, nandu feathers were exported as decorations, in addition, their leather was used in the manufacture of various products.

Hunting for rheas and destruction of their habitat led to the fact that populations of species of nandu decreased. Local farmers claim that the rheas eat the herbs that are needed for their livestock, and also eat grain from the fields. Therefore, nandu are often fired upon if they appear near agricultural land. Another danger for nandu are the fences that surround the farm fences made of barbed wire, which cause the nandu to injure themselves and die.

Now rheas in some places are bred in a semi-domesticated state."

And this very big bird I
photographed also in the
Park of Birds



This is the Cassowary
(*Casuarius casuarius*), but he
does not live in South America, the habitat is Australia and New Guinea.

"Southern cassowaries are large, robust birds with long powerful legs for running and defense; the claws on the toes are up to 12 cm long. Their bodies are covered with dark brown or black feathers which look more like thick, coarse hair. The neck and head have no feathers and are boldly colored blue and red. On their heads there is a large bony casque which is made of trabecular bone and cartilage. The wings are extremely small and there are vestiges of primary feathers in the form of five or six long white spines. Cassowary chicks are brown with black stripes running the length of their bodies for their first three to six months. Juveniles are brown instead of black and have smaller casques. They do not get the vividly colored necks until they are about one year old. Females are 127 to 170 cm long and up to 59 kg, are larger than the males which are 29 to 34 kg. Southern cassowaries are the largest of the three species of cassowary and the only species to have two bright red flaps of skin, called wattles, hanging from their neck." (http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Casuarius_casuarius/)

Cassowaries have almost no natural enemies, except that wild dingoes are a real threat to the young. Adult birds have a terrible weapon - very powerful long legs and a dagger sharp claw on the middle finger, the blow of which the cassowary can kill dingo. On the Internet, there is a video in which a zoo employee, hiding behind a large shield, the same as a policeman, struggles to beat off a courageous attack with his strong "football" kicks.

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"



Crowned Crane (*Balearica regulorum*) also does not live in S. America, only in the Zoos.

This Red-legged seriema (*Cariama cristata*) lives in Brazil.

PTI Zoo



It is the northern screamer (*Chauna chavaria*) that lives in Colombia.



Now about the bird from a poem by famous Russian poet N. Zabolotskiy:

Where a transparent avalanche

Leaves fall from the high branches,

"Sing to me, Oriole, a song deserted,

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

The song of my life...

The Oriole Blackbird (*Gymnomystax mexicanus*), in Spanish Turpial Lagunero.



In the last picture near the oriole is the Pied water tyrant (*Fluvicola pica*), here are more images of this beautiful bird:



Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

"Pair of water tyrants can often be seen along the banks of fresh stagnant water bodies located on the plains. They eat small insects that live on the leaves of plants. The water tyrants are on the ground, low above the ground or they peck the prey from the leaves on branches bent over the water. Waiting on the roost for another prey, the water tyrant often shakes his tail and makes a loud one-syllable scream, reminiscent of a short buzz. (<http://golubevod.net/1452-pegij-vodyanoj-tirann-fluvicola-pica.html>)

And here are different photos of humming birds (The Park of Birds, Iguazu Falls, Parana State, Brazil



About this unique bird and the Physics of its flight can be read here: <https://geektimes.ru/post/280534/>

But we almost forgot about the main bird of the local places - the parrot. There are a lot of them and different kinds. Here you are some of them:



Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

To begin with, when I was recently reading books in Tokaima in the open window there were shouts: "Do you like cocoa!?" It immediately became clear that a large green parrot escaped from the cage of the neighbor. I took the camera and went out to look for it. It was easy - he was sitting on a mango tree and talking:



Then he flew to the electric wire:



and then to other trees. Usually these parrots that escape from their cages do not return home. To avoid this, they need to prune their wings.

And these green little parrots live in the aviary of the biological laboratory of the University of Amazonia in southern Colombia, in which I was several years ago, and are on recovery.



The fact is that the University receives these birds and animals from the police, which confiscates them from smugglers. In this and other neighboring countries, there is the illicit business of trading exotic birds and animals and it prospers. The smugglers often try to transport them across the border in closed boxes and even in suitcases, and therefore the poor birds, if they do not die at the same time, get strong psychological trauma. Therefore, the University's laboratory conducts a special recovery cycle for them, which lasts several weeks. Then they are again released into the forest.

Now others are and even more beautiful



These are large parrots of the order Ara. (Ara ararauna, Ara macao, Ara chloropterus, in Spanish guacamayo)

"Parrots of this kind live in the tropical forests of South and Central America. Among the parrots of the order Ara, there are species that are the largest representatives of the parrot group. The length of individual birds in the species red ara, hyacinth macaw and some others reaches 98 cm. True, a considerable proportion of these sizes is found in a long, tail-like tail (40-50 cm). Large varieties of Ara are mostly brightly colored in color, for example, blue-yellow macaws, green-winged macaws, and hyacinth macaws are all of cobalt-blue saturated color and only a narrow, uncoated stripe of skin near the beak is yellow. Small species of parrots of this order are painted more modestly, mostly their plumage has dark tones of green color."

All kinds of parrots of the order Ara, in addition to similarity in the structure of other parts of the body, unite the presence of a large hooked beak (perhaps, such a powerful and large there is no other representatives of the order)

Large size, powerful beaks, capable of causing a lot of trouble, if the bird is excited or frightened, a very loud and sharp voice - these are the main reasons for the relatively rare distribution of these birds among parrot lovers. Of course, a significant role in this and their high cost, but still the main reasons that limit their number in the amateurs are the size of the birds, the strength of their beaks and an unpleasant voice. In addition, all types of ares do not have great abilities to imitate human speech, although there are among them excellent talkers. Much better imitate the ares sounds produced by animals, as well as creaking, coughing, etc. Fall among the birds, especially the young, having a very affectionate and calm nature. Such parrots, it happens, and rarely cry" (<http://www.romka.biz/vidpir/ara.htm>)

Now let's show some tropical chicken birds, the order Galliformes.

This big bird is the great curassow (*Crax rubra*) and lives in Brazil and other countries.



And these photos are made in the courtyard of the hotel next to the presidential palace in the capital of Brazil:



This is the Helmeted guineafowl (*Numida meleagris*), it is used here and in other countries as a decorative and poultry.

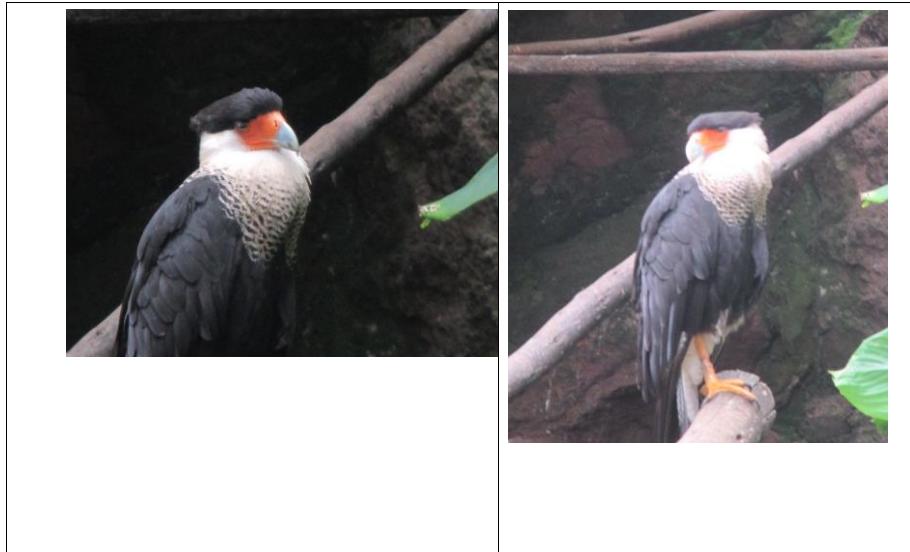
And this is the most decorative of all decorations - Indian peacock *Pavo cristatus*



And now about predatory birds, which are found in abundance here - different falcons, hawks and eagles.

Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

The northern crested caracara (*Caracara cheriway*) of the family Falconidae.



They feel comfortable in Cuba, in Central and South America.

"These omnivorous birds will find prey wherever it can be: they dig under the leaves, from the ground, they will be caught in a drying pond or they will simply be taken away from smaller rivals. Unlike other representatives of their family, the northern carakaras do not take off and hunt on rodents, birds and reptiles, bouncing on their long legs."

And this is another caracara, which I photographed in Tocama.



The Yellow-headed Caracara (*Milvago chimachima*),

" This bird lives in savannas, shrubby plains, in open areas near agricultural land at an altitude of 2,600 m above sea level. It occurs in Costa Rica (on the southern slopes of the Pacific coast), Panama (mountain areas, canal zone and near islands), Colombia (at an altitude of 1800 m, rarely -2600 m, in the valleys of the Amazonian rivers and in the Gulf, Venezuela (in the north of the Orinoco river basin), Trinidad, to Uruguay and Argentina "

This is the Chilean blue eagle (*Geranoaetus melanoleucus*) of the family Accipitridae.



The wingspan is 1.7 m. Weight is 2.5 kg. "It inhabits the plains and highlands of South America, a particularly large population lives in Chile, which is why the bird of prey has its second name, it is a very unsociable and cautious bird, avoiding settling near human habitation. This buzzard buzzes long in the air, using its ascending flows, and looks for prey. East sight allows him to notice from the great height on the ground the movement of a mouse, a rabbit, a snake, a lizard, a partridge. Folding the wings, blue eagle falls on the prey as a stone, pierces sharp claws into it and finishes it by a strong beak. Then, rises into the air, holding the victim in the legs, and in his home quietly eating her, or breaking into pieces feeds the chicks."

And this huge hawk is a Harpy *Harpia harpyja*, the family Accipitridae lives in the Park of Birds near the Iguazu Falls. His paws and claws are huge in size too.

In ancient mythology, the harpy is a creature with a bird body and an old woman's head. It was the embodiment of vicious passions. The harpy is a bird, which got its name because of the cruelty with which it eats its prey.



"With their fearless attitude they can strike terror into the hearts of many species in its habitat. Being at the top of the food chain, this apex avian predator is capable of hunting animals as large as monkeys and sloths.

With a massive 2-meter wide wingspan, large talons and a hooked beak, the harpy eagle simply looks like a brutal killer of the skies. But hidden behind the gruesome looks of this mysterious creature, there is a caring parent, a true lover, and a survivor fighting hard for its existence.

Like most eagles, the harpy eagle has an exceptional sense of vision. The eyes consist of several tiny sensory cells that allow this predator to spot a prey from great distances. Harpy eagles are also equipped with an acute sense of hearing. The hearing is further enhanced by the facial feathers, which form a disc shape around its ears. This feature is quite common among owls; the disc shape projects the sound waves directly to the ears of the bird, allowing the bird to hear the smallest movements around it".

On the Red List of the international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) the harpies are on the early warning list, which means they have the status of being "near threatened"

(<https://www.aboutanimals.com/bird/harpy-eagle/>)

An important group of birds of prey here are the vultures.

The most typical of them is the black vulture (*Coragyps atratus*) - the most common of the birds of prey in America.



Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"



And here these vultures gathered for lunch:



"King vultures have a very colorful look that distinguishes them from their vulture relatives. They are predominately white, with black tails and wing tips. They have piercing, often straw-colored eyes and multicolored (yellow, orange, and red) heads and necks."

(<https://www.nationalgeographic.com/animals/birds/k/king-vulture/>)

And, finally, the most important bird of America and maybe the whole world:



Running head: "A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky"

The Andean condor (*Vultur gryphus*). We get acquainted with him in childhood as one of the most popular books by J. Verne "Children of Captain Grant". By the way the question to the students: "What mistake did the author make with the condor in this book?"

"Andean condors inhabit most of western South America in the mountains and deserts ranging from western Venezuela south to Tierra del Fuego. Andean condors can be found in Colombia, Bolivia, Ecuador, Peru, Chile, and Argentina. The wild population was thought to be extirpated from Venezuela but is very rarely still seen there. In an isolated network of mountain peaks in the Andes of Columbia and Ecuador, the population is thought to be in decline. Populations reach much higher densities in the regions south of the Northern Peruvian Low, where they inhabit vast areas of highland prairie, desert, and coastal regions."

"Andean condors have dark feathers in maturity (while juveniles are olive-grey and brown), with a white collar or downy plumage around the base of their necks. They also have white flight feathers on their wings as adults, with those of the male being more pronounced. When extended, the wing tips have gaps between the primaries which is an adaptation for soaring. The head and neck of adult condors are bare of feathers and are generally black to dark reddish brown, while juveniles have much darker skin and young hatchlings have fluffy grey down on their bodies. This baldness is presumably a hygienic adaptation, as the bare skin is easier to keep clean and dry after feeding on carrion. The beak is hooked at the end and functions in tearing rotting meat off a corpse. The bases of their upper and lower mandibles are dark with the rest of the beak being ivory colored. Andean condors weigh between 7.7 and 15 kg and range from 97.5 to 128 cm in length. Their wingspan of 3.2 m is the longest wingspan of any land bird.

Andean condors are the only species in the family Cathartidae that exhibit drastic sexual dimorphism. Unlike many other birds of prey, male Andean condors are considerably larger than the females. Also, males have a large caruncle (comb) and wattle which females lack. Sexes differ in eye color as well, with males having brown irises and females having red. Both sexes have the ability to change the color of the bare skin on their neck and face in association with mood. This is used for communication between individuals and males also use this for displays during mating season.

The feet of Andean condors are much less powerful with shorter blunted talons compared to those of other birds of prey. This adaption is well suited for a lifestyle of walking and scavenging. The hind toe is less developed, but the middle toe is much longer than the other toes. Their feet and legs are covered in circular scales that are dark grey in color. " Andean condors are listed as 'Near Threatened' on the IUCN Red List as they have faced significant population declines in recent years (http://animaldiversity.org/accounts/Vultur_gryphus/)

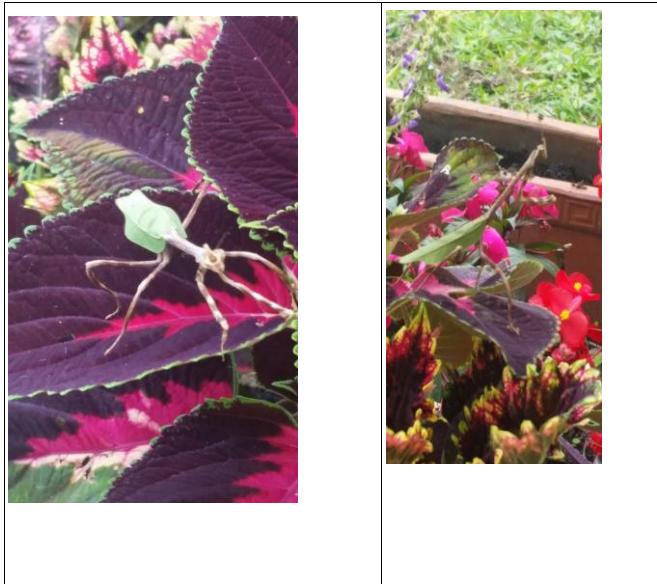
This bird is depicted on the coat of arms of Colombia



In the culture of the Andes, this bird plays a very important role. For example, the ancient Indian Andean melody "Flight of the Condor" (Condor Pasa in Spanish)

Running head: “A sparrow in hand is better than the pigeon in the sky”

is widely known. You can listen to it here in the performance of the famous Peruvian singer Yma Sumac <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tc6xzHaSDKoWell>, for a snack we show one tropical insect, which in size is larger than some of the birds shown here:



This is the Praying Mantis (*Mantis religiosa*). Here its size is about 15 cm, read about it: <https://www.keepinginsects.com/praying-mantis>

And the last - the most famous waterfalls in the world - Iguazu Falls, divided into two parts - one in Brazil, the other in Argentina. Here also live many birds, which are described in this article.



Acknowledgements

To Mr. C. Hollenbeck (CA, USA) for the text corrections.

Bibliography

S. Hilty. Birds of Venezuela. 2d ed. Princeton U. Press, 2003.

Ber van Perlo. A field guide to the birds of Brazil. Oxford U. Press, 2009

The Encyclopedia of Birds. International Masters Publ. 2007.

Grzimek's Animal Life Encyclopedia. 2d Edition, Volume 9, Birds II, Farmington Hills, MI: Gale Group, 2002.

Fauna of the World. Birds (Eds V. Sokolov, V. Illichev), Agropromizdat, Moscow, 2002, in Russian.

Peña R. Manuel y Zaida Tatiana Quirama. 2014. Guía Ilustrada Aves Cañón del río Porce - Antioquia. EPM E.S.P. Universidad de Antioquia, Herbario Universidad de Antioquia - Medellín, Colombia. 2014.

O. Laverde-R. & F. Gómez. Las aves de Santa María (Boyacá, Colombia). Universidad Nacional de Colombia, Bogotá, 2016.

<http://birdsofcolombia.org/>

<http://colombiabirdwatch.com/1>

<http://www.world-birds.com/birds/a/colombia>

<http://www.planetstillalive.com/america/colombia/colombia-birds-3/page/4/>

<http://www.world-birds.com/birds/a/colombia>

<https://www.zoomet.ru/ptica.html?start=1>

http://www.pbase.com/rsscanlon/birds_of_colombia

https://howlingpixel.com/wiki-ru/Андский_кондор