



We all fell for the glorious Puerto Rican endemic Adelaide's Warbler (Mark Van Beirs)

HISPANIOLA (DOMINICAN REPUBLIC) & PUERTO RICO with JAMAICA & THE BAHAMAS

26 MARCH/ 2 APRIL– 15/ 20 APRIL 2019

LEADER: MARK VAN BEIRS



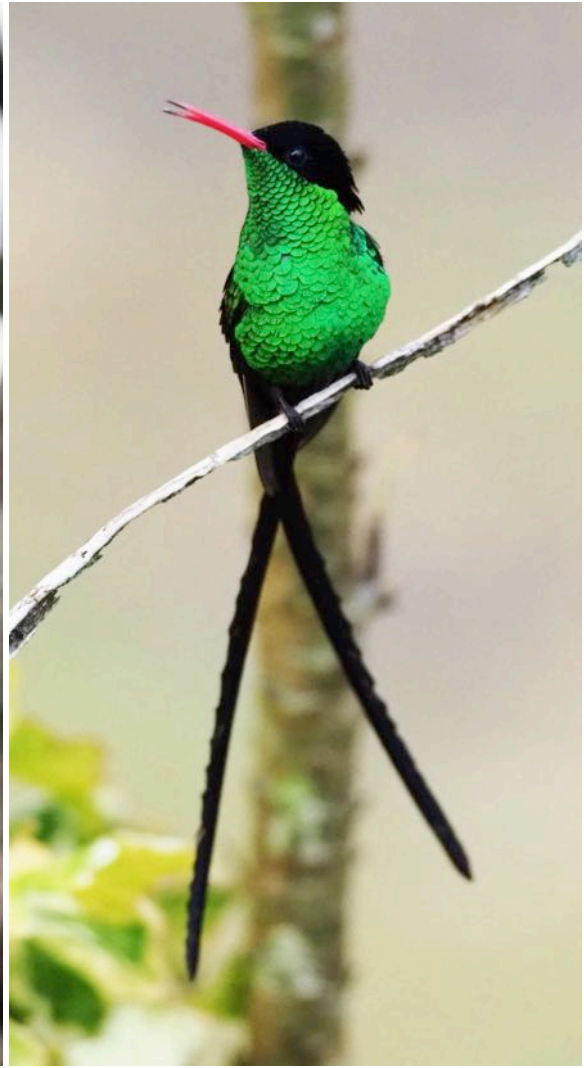
The glorious Todies are very well represented on this tour, as we see four out of the five species; this is a Narrow-billed Tody from the highlands of the Dominican Republic (Mark Van Beirs)

The highlight of our recent Hispaniola and Puerto Rico endemics extravaganza was without a doubt the magnificent male Antillean Crested Hummingbird that showed so very well in a flowering tree in northeastern Puerto Rico. On the Jamaica pre trip the exquisite Crested Quail-Dove was chosen as Bird of the island, while on the short Bahama extension the lovely Bahama Woodstar took our breath away. Our Caribbean adventure gave bird family collectors four families that can only be seen on this particular tour: the unique Palm Chat (the only member of the *Dulidae*), the subtle Puerto Rican Tanager (the only member of the *Nesospingidae*), the Chat Tanagers (family Calyptophilidae – two species) and the Hispaniolan Tanagers (*Phaenicophilidae* - four species). We also observed four out of the five existing members of the alluring Tody family (*Todidae*). Once again we managed to see all the endemics of Jamaica (28), the Dominican Republic (30) and Puerto Rico (17)! In the Bahamas we observed all five endemics of the main islands, but as we don't visit far away Inagua (with its endemic Inagua Woodstar), we can't claim to have seen all the Bahamian endemics. Birds that made a lasting impression in Jamaica included Masked Duck, Least Bittern, Jamaican Owl, the exquisite Red-billed Streamertail, Vervain Hummingbird, Jamaican Tody, Rufous-throated Solitaire and Arrowhead Warbler. The main part of the tour gave us splendid sightings of West Indian Whistling Duck, Ridgway's Hawk, Ashy-faced Owl, Least Poorwill, Puerto Rican Nightjar, Hispaniolan Trogon, Broad-billed, Narrow-billed and Puerto Rican Todies, Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Peregrine, Puerto Rican Amazon, White-necked Crow, Hispaniolan Crossbill, Western Chat Tanager, the adorable White-winged Warbler and the attractive Adelaide's Warbler. In the Bahamas, Hairy Woodpecker, Cuban Amazon, Red-legged Thrush, Western Spindalis, Bahama Oriole and Olive-capped and Bahama Warblers grabbed our attention. The mammal of the tour was the truly amazing Solenodon, which we saw so well in the Dominican Republic. We recorded 245 bird species on this enjoyable trip.



The Palmchat and the Puerto Rican Tanager were particularly important for the bird family collectors (Mark Van Beirs)

The group met at Miami airport, where, while waiting for the plane to Kingston, we received the fantastic news that worldwide, all American Airlines systems were down. Luckily this awful situation only lasted 20 minutes or so, and soon we were flying southeast to the beautiful island of Jamaica. It didn't take long to get organized and the drive east through Kingston to Mandeville went smoothly. Magnificent Frigatebirds, Brown Pelicans, Western Cattle Egrets, Turkey Vultures, Laughing Gulls, Royal Terns, Northern Mockingbirds and Greater Antillean Grackles accompanied us along the way. Upon arrival at Marshall's Pen a rarely-seen Crested Quail-Dove greeted us on the lawn and after checking in we had a splendid hour on the veranda of the "Great White House". As it was drizzling, bird activity was quite poor, but we enjoyed a terrific performance of several endemic, magnificent males Red-billed Streamertails at very close range! What a brilliant hummingbird! Jamaican Woodpecker, Jamaican Pewee, White-chinned Thrush, American Redstart and Yellow-faced Grassquit also showed while host Ann was telling us the history of the Great White House and of the Sutton family. Our first rum punch tasted deliciously and the day ended with a scrumptious dinner.



Jamaican Woodpecker and Red-billed Streamertail were common at Marshall's Pen (Mark Van Beirs)

At dawn we were drinking coffee on the porch and listening to the awakening birds. Several Olive-throated (Jamaican) Parakeets were already feeding in flowering trees and the feisty Red-billed Streamertails were already chasing each other about. For most of the morning we wandered about the gardens and the nearby copses and picked up an excellent selection of Jamaican endemics. A Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo played hide and seek whilst uttering its raucous call, a Jamaican Mango visited the feeders, a cute Jamaican Tody posed ever so well, vociferous Jamaican Woodpeckers made quite a racket, an unobtrusive Jamaican Elaenia flitted about, a Jamaican Pewee did its distinctive flycatching sallies, both Sad and Rufous-tailed Flycatchers posed, a male Jamaican Becard uttered its distinctive song, Jamaican Vireos performed, three jabbering Jamaican Crows flew over, both White-eyed and White-chinned Thrushes played hard to get, Jamaican Orioles (not strictly an endemic as it also occurs on the Colombian island of San Andres) foraged in flowering trees, an Arrowhead Warbler could be directly compared to a Black-and-white Warbler and quaint Orangequits visited rotting oranges. We admired the colony of Cave Swallows in the barn and also found White-crowned Pigeon, Common Ground Dove, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Caribbean, Zenaida and White-winged Doves, Loggerhead Kingbird, Black-whiskered Vireo, a rare Yellow-throated Vireo, Black-throated Blue Warbler, American Redstart, Magnolia Warbler, Rose-breasted Grosbeak, Bananaquit (of the nominate race), Yellow-faced and Black-faced Grassquits and Greater Antillean Bullfinch. In late morning we drove down to the extensive Black River Morass where highlights included a dozen Masked Duck in female plumage (scope studies) and a nice male Least Bittern. A flowering tree held a tiny Vervain Hummingbird and a Jamaican Mango. Other goodies included Blue-winged Teal, Least and Pied-billed Grebes, Green and Tricoloured Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, Purple and Common Gallinules, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer,

Northern Jacana, Spotted Sandpiper, Smooth-billed Ani, Antillean Palm Swift, Belted Kingfisher, American Kestrel, a male Merlin and a Palm Warbler. We heard the distinctive calls of Sora, Yellow-breasted Crape and Spotted Rail emanate from the marsh, but they remained unseen voices. In late afternoon we continued our explorations of the surroundings of the Great White House, where the last bird of the day was a delightful, fluffy young Jamaican Owl.



Marshall's Pen also gave us a fledgling Jamaican Owl and the vocal Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo (Mark Van Beirs)

The unusual Cockpit country, situated in northern central Jamaica, has the appearance of a giant eggbox with its many forested small hills and valleys and is the last real wilderness of Jamaica. The area counts hundreds of endemic plants, many other endemic critters (landsnails amongst others!) and is a haven for several endemic birds. While munching our breakfast a smart male Jamaican Spindalis showed well and not much later we could scope an endemic Ring-tailed Pigeon. A well-groomed Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo had a good look at us and parties of Yellow-billed Amazons regularly flew over, giving fair views. We found a perched Black-billed Amazon that allowed great scope looks and also observed Stolid Flycatcher, Northern Parula and several attractive Prairie Warblers. It started to rain quite heavily in mid-morning, so we returned to Marshall's Pen. Ann showed us around the Great White House, which is full of Jamaican history. André found an adult Jamaican Owl on its day roost in the big Cedar tree (*Cedrela*), so we admired this beauty through the scope. We had good looks again at many Jamaican endemics in the gardens and only added Ovenbird to the tally. An after-dinner walk produced good looks at two very vocal Northern Potoos.

A final morning walk at Marshall's Pen gave us excellent looks at the young Jamaican Owl, that was snoozing out in the open on a very visible bough. We located an unobtrusive Greater Antillean Elaenia and admired a pair of Jamaican Becards at their enormous nest. A White-eyed Thrush showed well and a male Yellow-shouldered Grassquit only allowed glimpses. After a lip-smacking breakfast, we reluctantly left Ann Sutton's paradise and drove to the Portland Peninsula in the extreme south of Jamaica. In the dry scrubby woodland we soon connected with an extremely well-behaved Bahama Mockingbird and also with Mangrove Cuckoo and Mangrove Warbler. A sneaky Clapper Rail walked amongst the mangrove roots and at the lagoon we found a prancing white morph Reddish Egret and a Willet. In the heat of the day we hit the road again and drove via busy Kingston to the northeast of the island, where we arrived in late afternoon at our well-situated hotel. In the scenic gardens we managed perfect looks at Jamaican Euphonia and also found Yellow-crowned Night Heron, swirling flocks of White-collared Swifts and smart Black-throated Blue and Prairie Warblers.



The colourful Jamaican Spindalis and the raucous Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo performed in the Cockpit country (Mark Van Beirs)

Our morning along the famous Ecclesdown road, sadly, was a very wet affair. We parked the minibus at one of the wider stretches and waited for the rain to relent, when we were lucky enough to observe a cracking male Black-billed Streamertail visiting a flowering papaya tree! We guarded that tree for quite a while and obtained excellent views of an adult male, two tail-less males and a female of this much-wanted, localized endemic. We were only able to walk about for a short, dry 15 minutes and found Ruddy Quail-Dove and a non-cooperative male Yellow-shouldered Grassquit. In late morning we returned to our base, where an attractive Yellow-crowned Night Heron was hunting the grounds. We packed up, enjoyed a typical, Jamaican “juicy patties” lunch and drove along a narrow winding mountain road high into the fabled Blue Mountains. We arrived at our well positioned hotel in time for some initial exploration and ended the day with great looks at the endemic, restricted range Blue Mountain Vireo. A male Common Yellowthroat, some very smart Prairie and Black-throated Blue Warblers and a lovely male Orangequit were also much appreciated.



In the Blue Mountains we found Black-throated Blue Warbler and Ring-tailed Pigeon (Mark Van Beirs)



The migratory Prairie Warbler is a real cracker (Mark Van Beirs)

A short pre-breakfast drive near our hotel produced perfect looks at the much-wanted, endemic Crested Quail-Dove. We managed to observe this beauty for several minutes as it walked along a shady track allowing exquisite looks at its magnificent finery. Breakfast tasted so very much better after this great start of the day. Later we explored a stretch of fine montane forest, where it didn't take us too long to locate the rare, endemic Jamaican Blackbird. We scoped it as it was bathing and rummaging in a large bromeliad. Lower down the Blue Mountains we searched a patch of dense shrubbery, where we finally scored on our last Jamaican endemic. Although some of us had briefly seen a Yellow-shouldered Grassquit before, now a male of this lovely endemic posed well in the open. Endemic nr 28 was in the proverbial pocket. Everyone had seen all the Jamaican endemics and everyone had seen them very well! While walking about, we had amazing looks at a Ring-tailed Pigeon while it was drinking from a large bromeliad clump. A nice Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo posed well and a sedate Blue Mountain Vireo offered close up views. We had regular encounters with smart Jamaican Spindalises and admired a couple of Arrowhead Warblers. In the afternoon we stayed in the surroundings of our hotel as the nearby slopes were clothed in mist. We enjoyed more great looks at a variety of endemics, including splendours like Red-billed Streamertail and Orangequit.



The fabulous, Jamaican endemic Crested Quail-Dove offered repeated excellent views in the Blue Mountains (Mark Van Beirs)

On our final morning on Jamaica, we birded a couple of sites in the Blue Mountains and came away with more terrific looks at a fabulously showy Crested Quail-Dove and two gorgeous, well-voiced Rufous-throated Solitaires. We also obtained particularly great looks at a feeding Ring-tailed Pigeon, at a tiny Vervain Hummingbird, at several ever so cute Jamaican Todies and at a dashing male Merlin. The Jamaica extension ended at Kingston airport, where Crested Quail-Dove outvoted Red-billed Streamertail and Jamaican Owl as Bird of the pre-trip.



The usually skulking Western Chat Tanager showed amazingly well in the Sierra de Bahoruco (Mark Van Beirs)

The Hispaniolan section of the tour started with a long drive, which began at Santo Domingo airport and took us southwest to the well-situated Barrancoli camp in the middle reaches of the Sierra de Bahoruco. We only picked up a handful of birds on the otherwise uneventful drive. Best of all were a couple of localized Plain Pigeons which showed quite well in their palm habitat.

We started very early the next morning and drove along an atrocious track high up into the Sierra. Several Burrowing Owls escorted us and as we reached the pine zone, we listened out for the endemic Hispaniolan Nightjar, which soon fluttered past us. At dawn we found ourselves in the cloud forest where the rare La Selle Thrush duly performed and where we obtained cracking looks at the usually hard to see Western Chat Tanager. We birded this exciting habitat for most of the morning and added a superb list of fascinating endemics to the list: Hispaniolan Emerald, the colourful Hispaniolan Trogon, the enchanting Narrow-billed

Tody, Antillean Piculet, Hispaniolan Woodpecker, Hispaniolan Pewee, hyperactive Golden Swallows, Hispaniolan Crossbill, Antillean Siskin, Black-crowned Palm Tanager, Green-tailed and splendidly attractive White-winged Warblers and the gaudy Hispaniolan Spindalis. More widespread species included Sharp-shinned Hawk (a displaying pair), Red-tailed Hawk, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Antillean Mango, Vervain Hummingbird, Greater Antillean Elaenia, Loggerhead Kingbird (of the distinctive Hispaniolan race), Stolid Flycatcher, Rufous-throated Solitaire, Red-legged Thrush, Antillean Euphonia and Greater Antillean Bullfinch. In the afternoon we birded the lower reaches where Flat-billed Vireo obliged and Bay-breasted Cuckoo was heard. At dusk we were lucky enough to get excellent looks at the other endemic caprimulgid, the tiny Least Poorwill. A male posed overhead for several minutes in a bare tree. A golden moment!



The colourful Hispaniolan Trogon prefers the highland forests (Mark Van Beirs), while the smart Black-crowned Palm Tanager can be found at all altitudes (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

Just after dawn we were walking through a very nice stretch of habitat at the edge of evergreen and dry woodland, concentrating on the few remaining endemics in this area. We heard the distinctive, fast rolling, but ventriloquial song of a White-fronted Quail-Dove. It took us quite a while to locate this skulker, but eventually we managed excellent scope studies of this exquisite endemic. While watching this beauty, we heard the raucous call of a Bay-breasted Cuckoo and minutes later we were able to observe this marvellous, but timid endemic as it was creeping lizard-like along branches in the canopy. After this success, we moved to an open area at the edge of the forest, where, in quick succession, White-necked Crow and Hispaniolan Amazon performed very nicely. A patch of weedy fields held c150, very well-behaved Antillean Siskins and fruiting avocado trees were being visited by a mixed party of Hispaniolan and Olive-throated Parakeets. We also scored on Hispaniolan Oriole here. Parties of vociferous, much-wanted Palmchats were attending their enormous nests or just sitting about in the impressive Royal Palms. At our camp we had terrific looks at a Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo. Plain Pigeon, Ruddy Quail-Dove, Grey Kingbird, Antillean Euphonia and Yellow-faced and Black-faced Grassquits were other additions to our Dominican Republic list. After a break in the middle of the day, we visited famous Lago Enriquillo, which, at 25 meters below sealevel is the lowest place in the Caribbean and for us, it certainly was the hottest. A short stop along the lake shore gave us White-cheeked Pintail, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Great, Snowy and Reddish Egrets, Tricoloured Heron, Western Osprey, Lesser Yellowlegs and Royal Tern. In late afternoon we transferred to our hotel in the Barahona area. Where on our previous tour this hotel had been ok, it now reminded us of Faulty Towers, as airconditioning, plumbing, door locks and dinner were all found to be totally inadequate... Luckily, the El Presidente beer was ice cold...



Antillean Siskin and White-necked Crow showed near our camp in the Sierra (Mark Van Beirs)

Next morning, the Cabo Rojo area in the extreme south of the country yielded elegant White-tailed Tropicbirds, a couple of Brown Boobies, some distant Black-capped Petrels, five gleaming white Roseate Terns and several Cave Swallows, while a nearby lagoon held American Flamingo, American White Ibis and Stilt and Least Sandpipers. Later, we drove up into the pine zone of the southern slopes of the Sierra de Bahoruco, where we soon found a party of very vocal and very friendly, endemic Hispaniolan Palm Crows. A Plain Pigeon sat up for scope views, but otherwise not much was moving in these pine barrens. We returned to the coast for an excellent seafood lunch and observed interesting reptiles like Rhinoceros Iguana (impressive), Giant Whiptail and Orange-bellied Curlytail on the nearby cliffs. We returned to the pine zone in the heat of the day, where after a bit of a wait we obtained eye-ball to eye-ball looks at four Hispaniolan Crossbills coming to drink at a puddle. A neat Myrtle Warbler also showed well. Lower down the hills, we encountered a flock of Hispaniolan Parakeets and had a fun time with a very well-behaved Broad-billed Tody. The garden of our cosy guesthouse gave us a cracking male Cape May Warbler. In the evening, we joined a local mammal expert in search of the bizarre Hispaniolan Solenodon, a primitive mammal looking like a giant shrew, which is confined to Hispaniola. We spent a good part of the night in the forest, but no luck, sadly. We did find an excellent Ashy-faced Owl, a very impressive Hispaniolan Giant Tarantula and a meter long Island Pointed Snake. Our man on the spot surprised us the next morning, as he had located a male Solenodon, so we enjoyed fantastic looks at this endemic, poisonous, golden-coloured beauty. After admiring this rarely-seen, very special creature, we explored a patch of mosquito-infested forest, where we heard Key West Quail-Dove and had good looks at a selection of already seen endemics. In late morning we transferred to a different, very efficient hotel in the Barahona area, where we enjoyed a leisurely afternoon.



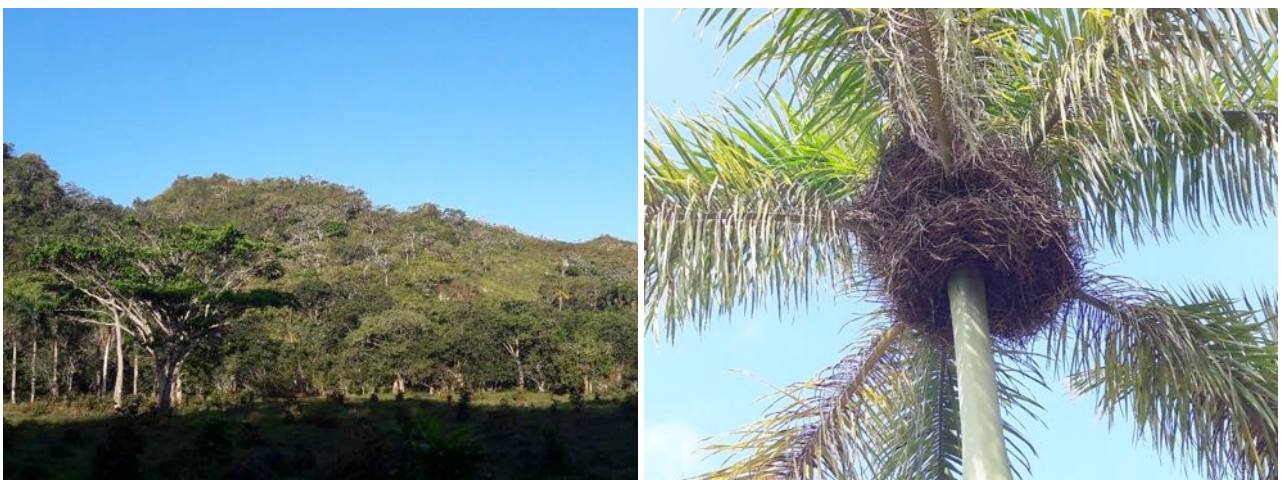
The unique Hispaniolan Solenodon was the mammal highlight of the tour (Mark Van Beirs)

At dawn we were at a chilly 1,400m above sea level in the eastern Sierra de Bahoruco, listening to the glissading song of the localized, endemic Eastern Chat Tanager. It took a while to get decent looks at this inveterate skulker, but eventually we all managed to see its yellow orbital ring and rather dinghy plumage as it was hiding within the dense foliage. Narrow-billed Tody showed exceptionally well and Rufous-throated Solitaire and White-winged Warbler obliged beautifully. A Bicknell's Thrush was glimpsed by some of us and several Greater Antillean Elaenias flitted about. In late morning we returned to base for a rest and in the afternoon, we visited a nearby freshwater lake, where the highlight was a sitting, very reluctant to fly Peregrine Falcon on the shore. Next to this gorgeous falcon, we observed Glossy Ibis, Least Bittern, Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Heron, American Coot (of the Caribbean variety with its large all white frontal shield), Limpkin, Greater Yellowlegs and several Palm Warblers. We heard the distinctive calls of Sora and Spotted Rail emanate from the cattailbeds.



West Indian Whistling Duck are usually crepuscular (Mark Van Beirs)

A travel day followed whereby we drove from the southwest of the country to the far northeast. A short stop in the busy capital of Santa Domingo produced mega views of several West Indian Whistling Ducks at very close range. The superb views of the rarest of the eight Whistling Ducks were very much appreciated. Upon



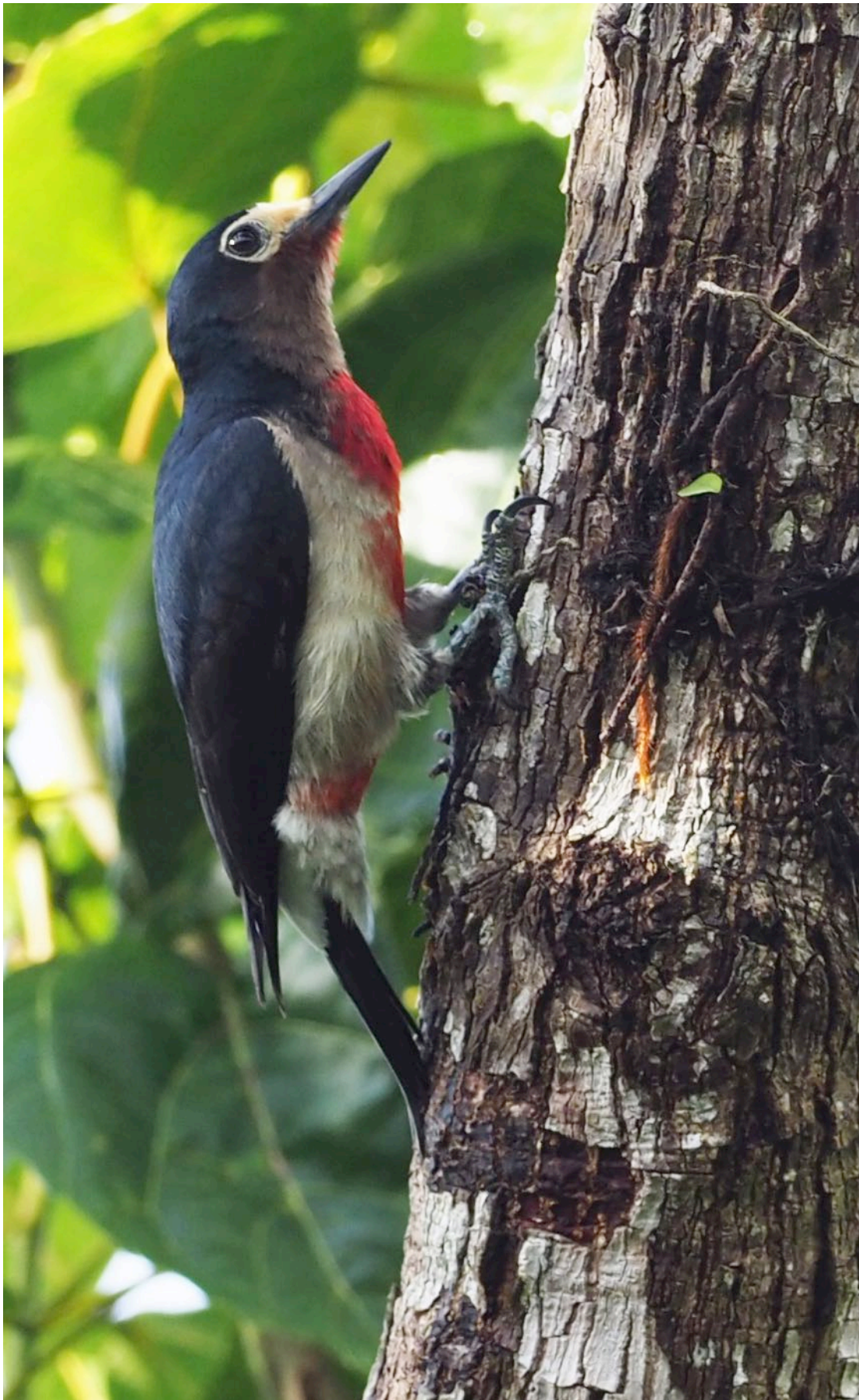
Los Haitises National Park scenery; the amazing communal nest of Palmchats (Mark Van Beirs)

arrival at our very unusual hotel at the edge of the Los Haitises National Park, we checked in and enjoyed an early dinner. The ensuing owling session didn't produce anything at all, sadly.



We located the two endemic raptors of Hispaniola at Los Haitises: Ridgway's Hawk and Ashy-faced Owl (Mark Van Beirs)

Dawn found us in the attractive limestone hills of the Los Haitises National Park. We walked along isolated patches of woodland interspersed with bushy meadows dotted with beautiful palm trees. Palmchats proved to be extremely common and we had nice looks at a Plain Pigeon. Our man on the spot took us to a particular forested slope, where after a bit of scanning and waiting we located a pair of rare Ridgway's Hawks. The male was quite skittish, but the female just sat sunning herself on a bough of a big tree, allowing us to study this threatened bird of prey at length and in depth. This small buteo now only occurs in the northwest of the country, but introductions are planned in different areas. Only a few hundred pairs are known to survive. We had scored on the final and rarest endemic of Hispaniola (with the exception of the Grey-crowned Palm Tanager, which is confined to southern Haiti). For the rest of the day we enjoyed the nice selection of endemic birds in the gardens of the hotel. A Louisiana Waterthrush was found foraging at the hotel pond. In the evening we went out looking for Ashy-faced Owl and, not long after dusk, obtained terrific looks at this magnificent endemic as it flew out of the forest and sat looking at us from a high perch at the forest edge. A cracking end to our Dominican Republic birding!



The terrific Puerto Rican Woodpecker is a real stunner (Mark Van Beirs)

In the middle of the night we said goodbye to the peculiar Caño Hondo hotel and drove to Santa Domingo airport for our early flight to San Juan, the capital of the island of Puerto Rico. Some Caribbean Martins waved us goodbye from the international terminal. Upon arrival we organized our transport and made a first exploration of the nearby El Yunque National Forest. Sadly, rain disturbed our birding efforts, but we still managed to get to grips with new birds like Puerto Rican Tanager (important, as it is now placed in its own family!), Puerto Rican Woodpecker, Loggerhead Kingbird (of the Puerto Rican race) and Puerto Rican Bullfinch. Several Scaly-naped Pigeons showed well. In the afternoon we transferred to our hotel near the ocean, and only introduced White-winged Parakeets and Hispaniolan Spindalis were noted.



Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo and Puerto Rican Tody were easy to find at El Yunque (Mark Van Beirs)

Just before dawn, in the forested hills of the El Yunque State Forest, we heard the calls of several Puerto Rican Screech Owls, but they remained unseen within dense cover. As it was getting light, we heard Black-whiskered Vireos sing everywhere. A couple of Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoos performed ever so well, an endemic Green Mango flitted about, a Puerto Rican Tody showed (our fourth tody of the tour), Puerto Rican Woodpeckers were active all around us, a pair of Puerto Rican Flycatchers performed, several Puerto Rican Tanagers were foraging on Cecropia catkins, Puerto Rican Spindalises added a splash of colour and Puerto Rican Orioles were feeding their modestly-coloured young. Eagle-eyed Richard found a perched Puerto Rican Amazon, which allowed fantastic scope studies. This is now by far the hardest to get Puerto Rican endemic, so we were all extremely satisfied. In the middle of the morning the rain came in, so we retreated to the coast, but none of the usual stake out flowering trees were being visited by the two localized, mainly Lesser Antillean hummingbirds. After an excellent lunch and a break, we located a great looking flowering tree near our hotel and soon a Green-throated Carib paid an extended visit. Later, a cracking male Antillean Crested Hummingbird flew in and allowed superb views at close range of its exquisite green and blue crest. A splendid little fellow full of character! A couple of Caribbean Martins flew overhead and a pair of introduced Orange-fronted Parakeets was quite a surprise. In the evening we tried again for the Puerto Rican Screech Owl in the forest and it didn't take long to obtain terrific looks at this lovely endemic. Several other Screech Owls were emitting their maniacal calls nearby, while all around us the ringing sound of the Coqui Frogs echoed. Great atmosphere!



Back and frontal view of the same male Antillean Crested Hummingbird (Mark Van Beirs)

Next morning, we crossed the whole island of Puerto Rico from the extreme northeast to the southwest. A short leg stretch stop on the way gave us an endemic, dainty and highly attractive Adelaide's Warbler. We also took a walk along the Guanica State Forest shoreline and found Least Sandpipers, introduced, colourful Venezuelan Troupials and more fabulous Adelaide's Warblers. After checking in into our accommodation in the colonial town of San German and an excellent lunch, we drove to the south coast, where it only took minutes to find the endangered, endemic Yellow-shouldered Blackbird. Several parties showed very well, but we also found parasitic Shiny Cowbirds with them... In the nearby mangroves a Clapper Rail foraged unconcernedly and Mangrove Warblers flitted about. In late afternoon, we returned to the Guanica State



The endangered Yellow-shouldered Blackbird (Mark Van Beirs) and the widespread Clapper Rail obliged on Puerto Rico's south coast (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

Forest, where after enjoying a picnic dinner at dusk, we heard several Puerto Rican Nightjars call. After a bit of effort, we obtained excellent looks at a singing male, perched low and partly hidden in a thorny bush. A great end of the day.



We easily found the modestly-plumaged Puerto Rican Vireo and the vocal Puerto Rican Screech Owl in western Puerto Rico (Mark Van Beirs)

We had a very enjoyable morning's birding along a wide track in the hill forest of the delightful Maricao Reserve. The two remaining Puerto Rican endemics gave themselves up without too much of a fight: several endearing Elfin Woods Warblers were found in the lower canopy and a pair of rather attractively-patterned Puerto Rican Vireos performed very well. We had great looks at cute Puerto Rican Todies, found a single Lesser Antillean Pewee and admired several Puerto Rican Tanagers in a fruiting bush. In the afternoon we visited the freshwater Cartagena Lagoon where Ruddy Duck, Glossy Ibis, several Western Osprey, Sora, Purple Gallinule and Solitary Sandpiper were found. Just before dusk we stood at a strategic spot from where we were able to observe the spectacular display flight of Antillean Nighthawk. Impressive! A couple of



The colourful Puerto Rican Spindalis and the mean-looking Pearly-eyed Thrasher were noted at Susua (Mark Van Beirs)

parties of introduced White-winged Parakeets screeched past. Several participants wanted to have another go at the Puerto Rican Screech Owl, which soon performed very nicely in the gardens near our accommodation.

The Susua State Forest consists of forested low hills and our morning here produced an excellent selection of Puerto Rican endemics. As we had seen all of these, we took a relaxed, pleasant walk getting terrific looks at the local specialities. Puerto Rican Tody showed extremely well again, as did Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo. Adorable Adelaide's Warblers and rather retiring Puerto Rican Bullfinches obliged very nicely and we had brief looks at a Key West Quail-Dove. In the afternoon we explored the mudflats at Cabo Rojo, at the extreme southwest corner of the island. In the heat of the day, we observed a great variety of waterbirds, which included new species for the list like Grey, Semipalmated, Wilson's and Snowy Plovers, Ruddy Turnstone, Semipalmated Sandpiper and Cabot's and Least Terns. Later we drove to the north coast of the island for an overnight stay at the town of Hatillo.



On our final morning on Puerto Rico we padded the list with widespread waders like Semipalmated Plover and Least Sandpiper (Mark Van Beirs)

Our final birding walk on Puerto Rico took us to a freshwater pond and the seashore near our hotel. The pond held lots of Great Egrets in splendid breeding attire, as well as other widespread species. Mike and Jane found a nice male Masked Duck. The rocky and sandy coast produced new birds like Sanderling and American Oystercatcher, next to good numbers of Semipalmated and Grey Plovers, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, Ruddy Turnstones and Royal Terns. We scoped a single perched Cabot's Tern and after an excellent breakfast we transferred to San Juan airport, where the main section of the tour ended.

The Bahama extension started at the small airport of Marsh Harbour on the island of Abaco. After checking in into our well-appointed seaside accommodation, we enjoyed a light lunch which also gave us a Double-crested Cormorant. Later we explored a stretch of pine forest interspersed with coppices (the local name for patches of evergreen forest). A first stop along the main road produced a perched pair of endemic, attractive Bahama Swallows, a couple of showy La Sagra's Flycatchers and a nosy Thick-billed Vireo. We obtained nice looks at an active Bahama Warbler at our next stop, and we also got our first looks at a rather skulking, endemic Bahama Yellowthroat. Closer to the coast we had terrific scope views of a pair of very well-behaved, gorgeous-looking Cuban Amazons munching fruit in a small tree. We also admired several ever so striking Western Spindalises at close range. Cuban Emerald, West Indian Woodpecker and Red-winged Blackbird were other additions to the list here.



The colourful Cuban Amazon gave a sterling performance in southern Abaco (Mark Van Beirs)

In the early morning, a leisurely visit to the extensive pine woods of southern Abaco produced fantastic, prolonged observations of Bahama Swallow, the very smart Bahama Warbler and Bahama Yellowthroat. These three Bahama endemics performed extremely well at very close range. We also had point blank views of Hairy Woodpecker (of the northern Bahamas race *piger*), Cuban Emerald, Cuban Pewee, Loggerhead Kingbird (of the race *bahamensis*), the lovely Olive-capped Warbler and Red-legged Thrush (of the nominate Bahama race). We also heard the distinctive calls of a Northern Bobwhite. Along a mangrove-lined shore we scoped a Western Osprey of the white-headed, localized Caribbean form *ridgwayi*. After a break in the heat of the day we explored a stretch of coastline, where the only new bird was a Grey Catbird. A stop in a nice



The long-billed Bahama Warbler often behaves like a nuthatch; smart Bahama Swallows nest in disused woodpecker holes (Mark Van Beirs)

patch of pine forest gave us more excellent looks at Hairy Woodpecker, Bahama, Olive-capped and Pine Warblers and Western Spindalis.



The Bahama Yellowthroat prefers dense undergrowth; the smart Olive-capped Warbler also occurs in Cuba (Mark Van Beirs)

Another morning in the pine and evergreen woodlands of southern Abaco gave us more excellent looks at the Swallow, the striking Warbler and the Yellowthroat. Cuban Emerald, Cuban Pewee, the cracking Olive-capped Warbler and the glorious Western Spindalis showed very well again and we added Northern Bobwhite to the tally



The splendid Western Spindalis and the more humble Cuban Emerald also occur on Cuba (Mark Van Beirs)

In early afternoon we waved goodbye to the lovely island of Abaco and flew to the busy capital of Nassau on the island of New Providence. Our flight was delayed, which caused us to lose our connection to the island

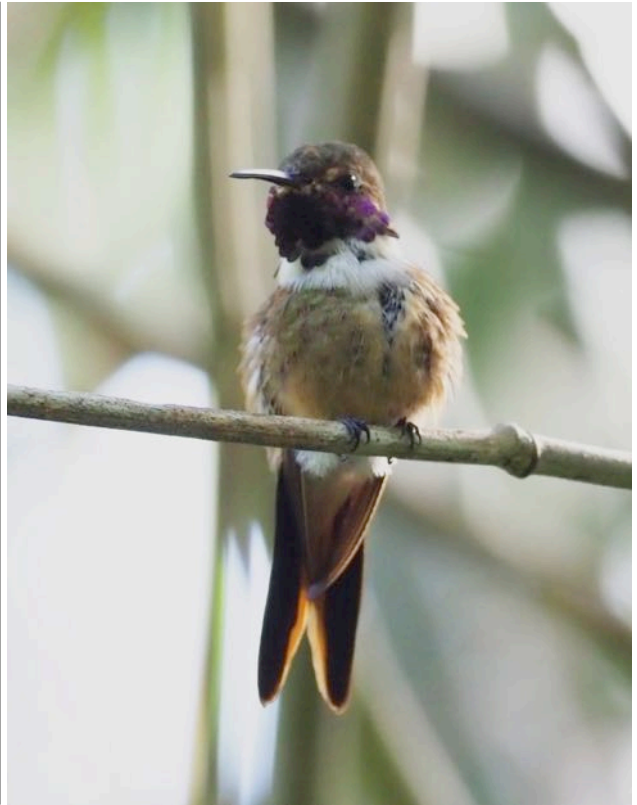
of Andros, but Western Air easily and quite informally solved the issue by putting us on a chartered Piper Aztec. This short, exciting flight was really lovely and after arranging our vehicle, we drove along a newly paved road to our splendid accommodation at Andros Town.



The Great Lizard Cuckoo has a heavier bill than its namesakes (Mark Van Beirs)

Our exploration of a coppice near our chalets gave us terrific looks at a beautiful, but rare Bahama Oriole and at several impressive Great Lizard Cuckoos. We admired an adorable, still rather bald youngster Hairy Woodpecker that must just have crawled out of the nesthole and connected with the subtly plumaged Bahama Mockingbird. We also found a cracking male Chestnut-sided Warbler. In the afternoon we birded an area of mixed open pine woodland interspersed with stretches of evergreen growth where Bahama Oriole,

Cuban Emerald and a well-behaved Ovenbird performed. Of the hoped-for Bahama Woodstar not a sniff, sadly.



The Bahama Oriole only lives on Andros and is critically endangered; the male Bahama Woodstar is a real gem (Mark Van Beirs)

On the final day of the Bahamas extension we returned to the island of New Providence, where a quick visit of a small nature reserve produced mega views of the final Bahama endemic, the alluring Bahama Woodstar. Two gorgeous, but feisty males and a modestly-clad female showed very well at close range, ending our very successful Caribbean birding trip with a bang!

A



The stunning Red-legged Thrush is pure eye candy (Mark Van Beirs)

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED DURING THE TOUR

The species names and taxonomy used in the report mostly follows Gill, F & D Donsker (Eds). **IOC World Bird Names**. This list is updated several times annually and is available at <http://www.worldbirdnames.org>.

Species which were heard but not seen are indicated by the symbol (H).

Species which were only recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (LO).

Species which were not personally recorded by the leader are indicated by the symbol (NL).

Species marked with the diamond symbol (◊) are either endemic to the country or local region or considered 'special' birds for some other reason (e.g. it is only seen on one or two Birdquest tours; it is difficult to see across all or most of its range; the local form is endemic or restricted-range and may in future be treated as a full species).

West Indian Whistling Duck *Dendrocygna arborea* Fantastic views in Santo Domingo (DR).

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* Regular observations.

White-cheeked Pintail (Bahama Pintail) *Anas bahamensis* Good looks in the DR and PR.

Masked Duck *Nomonyx dominicus* Scope views in J; also seen in PR.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* A few showed well in PR.

Northern Bobwhite (introduced) *Colinus virginianus* A few on the B.

Black-capped Petrel *Pterodroma hasitata* A few distant birds at Cabo Rojo (DR).



Least Grebe; American Flamingo (Mark Van Beirs)

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus* Only seen in J, where regular.

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps* Scattered records in J, DR & PR.

American Flamingo *Phoenicopterus ruber* Good looks at several at the Cabo Rojo lagoon (DR).

White-tailed Tropicbird *Phaethon lepturus* A few showed at Cabo Rojo (DR).

American White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* Scattered records in the DR, PR and the B.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* Small numbers were noted in J, DR and PR.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis* Seen in J, DR and PR.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* A few in the DR, PR and the B.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* Good looks at a few in J and in the DR.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens* Regular in J, DR and PR.

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis* Quite common in J, DR and PR.

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias* A single at Laguna de Rincon (DR).

Great Egret *Ardea alba* Seen in small numbers on all four islands.

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens* Singles were noted in J and the DR. Both dark and white morphs.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor* A few in J, DR and PR.

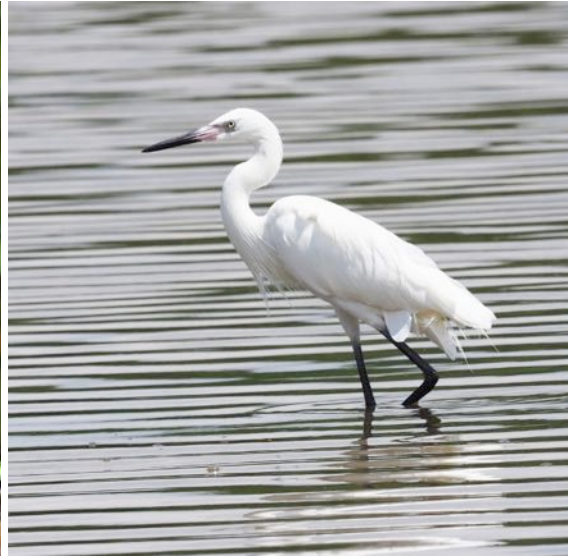
Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea* Small numbers were seen in J, DR and PR.

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula* Small numbers were observed in J, DR and PR.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* Regular along the coasts of all four islands.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* Regular along the coasts of J, DR and PR.

Brown Booby *Sula leucogaster* Singles were noted in the DR, PR and the B.



Yellow-crowned Night Heron (tour participant André D'Penha); Reddish Egret (Mark Van Beirs)



Green Heron (Mark Van Beirs)

Double-crested Cormorant *Phalacrocorax auritus* Two observations on Abaco (B).

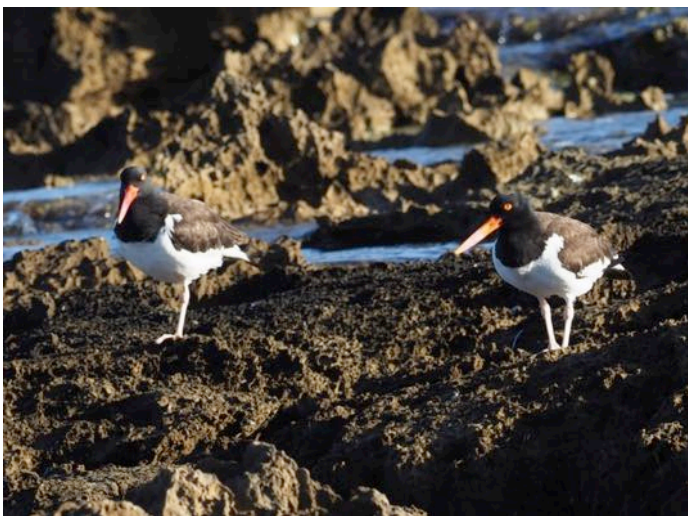
Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura* Common on all four islands, but largely absent from southwestern DR.

Western Osprey (American O) *Pandion [haliaetus] carolinensis* A few were seen in the DR and PR.



Immature Little Blue Heron and immature Brown Booby (Mark Van Beirs)

Western Osprey (Caribbean O) *Pandion [haliaetus] ridgwayi* Fair views of one on Abaco (B).
Sharp-shinned Hawk *Accipiter striatus* A displaying pair showed well in the Sierra de Bahoruco (DR).
Ridgway's Hawk *Buteo ridgwayi* Excellent scope studies of this threatened species at Los Haitises (DR). See Note.
Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* Regular in the DR, PR and the B.
Clapper Rail *Rallus crepitans* Good looks at singles in J and PR.
Sora *Porzana carolina* Heard in J and the DR and seen well in PR.
Yellow-breasted Crake *Porzana flaviventer* (H) We heard the soft calls in the Black River Morass (J).
Spotted Rail *Pardirallus maculatus* (H) We heard the raucous calls in the Black River Morass (J).
Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica* Seen well in J and PR.
Common Gallinule (Laughing G) *Gallinula galeata* Regular in J, DR and PR.
American Coot *Fulica americana* Good looks at the Caribbean form in the DR and PR. See Note.
Limpkin *Aramus guarauna* Regular and noisy in the DR and PR.



American Oystercatchers; Killdeer (Mark Van Beirs)

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* Two were scoped in northern PR.
Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* Regular in J, DR and PR.

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola* Small numbers were seen on PR.
Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* Regular on PR.
Wilson's Plover *Charadrius wilsonia* A single bird was found at Cabo Rojo (PR).
Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus* Small numbers were noted in J, DR and PR.



Snowy Plovers (tour participant Roger Holmberg); Spotted Sandpiper (tour participant André D'Penha)

Snowy Plover *Charadrius nivosus* A pair showed well at Cabo Rojo (PR).
Northern Jacana *Jacana spinosa* Ten showed at the Black River Morass (J).
Whimbrel (Hudsonian W) *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus* A migrating flock off southern PR.
Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Small numbers on PR and the B.
Stilt Sandpiper *Calidris himantopus* A few in the DR and regular on PR.
Sanderling *Calidris alba* c20 showed in northern PR.
Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla* A single in the DR and regular on PR.
Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* Many on PR.
Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius* Noted on J, DR and PR. Some were in smart breeding attire.
Solitary Sandpiper *Tringa solitaria* A single bird was seen at Laguna Cartagena (PR).
Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* Regular in the DR and on PR.



Willet (tour participant André D'Penha); Laughing Gull (Mark Van Beirs)

Willet *Tringa [semipalmata] semipalmata* Singles on J and in the B.
Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* A single in the DR, regular on PR and heard in the B.
Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* Seen in fair numbers on all four islands. Smart!
Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* Seen on all four islands.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acuflavidus* Just a handful on PR. See Note.

Least Tern *Sternula antillarum* A few in the DR and on PR.

Roseate Tern *Sterna dougallii* Five showed off Cabo Rojo (DR).

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia*



White-crowned Pigeon; Scaly-naped Pigeon (Mark Van Beirs)

White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala* Regular on all four islands.

Scaly-naped Pigeon (Red-necked P) *Patagioenas squamosa* Perfect views in the DR and on PR.

Ring-tailed Pigeon *Patagioenas caribaea* This Jamaican endemic showed very well at different venues.



Plain Pigeon; Common Ground Dove (Mark Van Beirs)

Plain Pigeon *Patagioenas inornata* Good looks at several spots in the DR. See Note.

Eurasian Collared Dove (introduced) *Streptopelia decaocto* Common in the DR, PR and the B. See Note.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerine* Regular observations on all four islands. See Note.

Crested Quail-Dove *Geotrygon versicolor* Fantastic looks at this Jamaican endemic in the Blue Mtns.

Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana* A few observations on J, DR and PR.

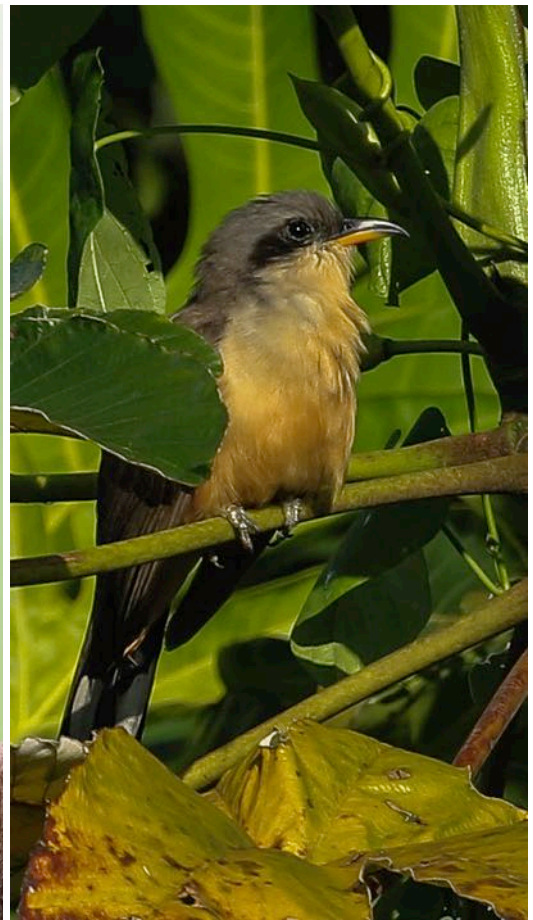
White-fronted Quail-Dove *Geotrygon leucometopia* Scope views of this Hispaniolan endemic.

Key West Quail-Dove *Geotrygon chrysia* Brief looks at a few in the DR and PR.

Caribbean Dove *Leptotila jamaicensis* Excellent encounters on J and in the B.

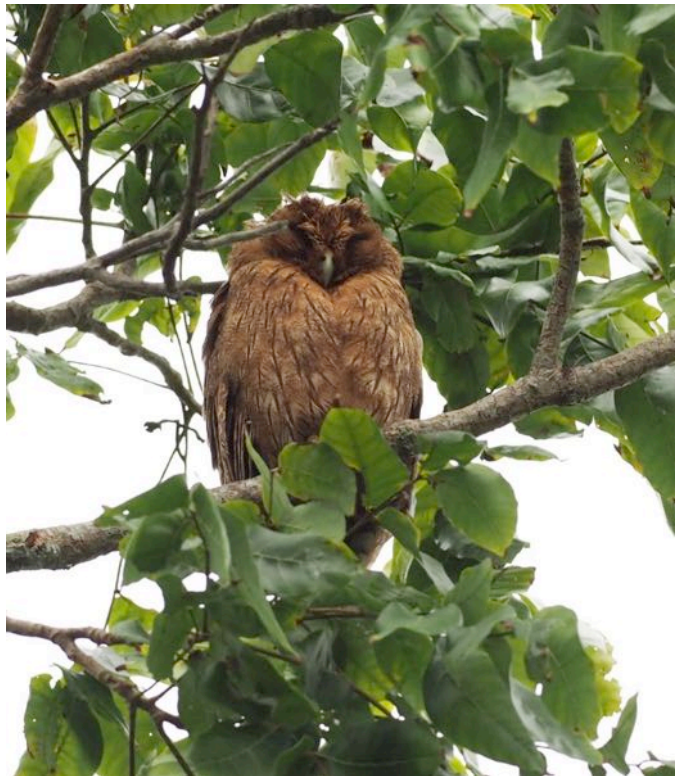
Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* Regular in the DR and a few on PR and the B.

Zenaida Dove *Zenaida aurita* Common on all four islands. See Note.



White-winged Dove (Mark Van Beirs); Mangrove Cuckoo (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* Common and very vocal on J, DR and PR.



Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo; Jamaican Owl (Mark Van Beirs)

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* Regular on all four islands.

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* Very nice encounters on J, DR and the B

Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo *Coccyzus pluvialis* Excellent looks at this Jamaican endemic at Ann's place.

Bay-breasted Cuckoo *Coccyzus ruficularis* Very good looks at this rare Hispaniolan endemic. See Note.

Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo *Coccyzus vetula* Regular encounters with this Jamaican endemic. **See Note.**

Great Lizard Cuckoo (Bahama G L C) *Coccyzus [merlini] bahamensis* Perfect looks on Andros.

Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo *Coccyzus vieilloti* Regular sightings of this Puerto Rican endemic.

Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo *Coccyzus longirostris* Many good looks at this Hispaniolan endemic.

Ashy-faced Owl *Tyto glaucops* This Hispaniolan endemic showed well on several occasions!

Puerto Rican Screech Owl *Megascops nudipes* A couple of excellent observations of this PR endemic.

Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* A few observations in the DR.

Jamaican Owl *Pseudoscops grammicus* This Jamaican endemic showed very well at Marshall's Pen.

Northern Potoo *Nyctibius jamaicensis* Good looks at Marshall's Pen (J) and heard in the DR.

Antillean Nighthawk *Chordeiles gundlachii* A displaying bird showed beautifully on PR.



Least Poorwill; Green-throated Carib (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

Least Poorwill (L Pauraque) *Siphonorhis brewsteri* Perfect looks at this Hispaniolan endemic.

Hispaniolan Nightjar *Antrostomus ekmani* A male flew around us in the Sierra de Bahoruco.

Puerto Rican Nightjar *Antrostomus noctitherus* Good looks at a perched bird in the Guanica forest. See Note.

White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris* A swirling flock was seen in NE Jamaica.

Antillean Palm Swift *Tachornis phoenicobia* Regular in J and the DR.

Antillean Mango (Hispaniolan M) *Anthracothorax [dominicus] dominicus* Regular sightings in the DR.

Antillean Mango (Puerto Rican M) *Anthracothorax [dominicus] aurulentus* Just two records on PR.

Green Mango *Anthracothorax viridis* Good looks at this PR endemic.

Jamaican Mango (J) *Anthracothorax mango* Three sightings of this Jamaican endemic.

Green-throated Carib *Eulampis holosericeus* Excellent looks in NE PR. A Lesser Antillean species.

Antillean Crested Hummingbird *Orthorhyncus cristatus* Magnificent views in NE PR. Bird of the Trip.

Red-billed Streamertail *Trochilus polytmus* Many fantastic encounters with this Jamaican endemic.

Black-billed Streamertail *Trochilus scitulus* Excellent looks at this eastern Jamaican endemic.

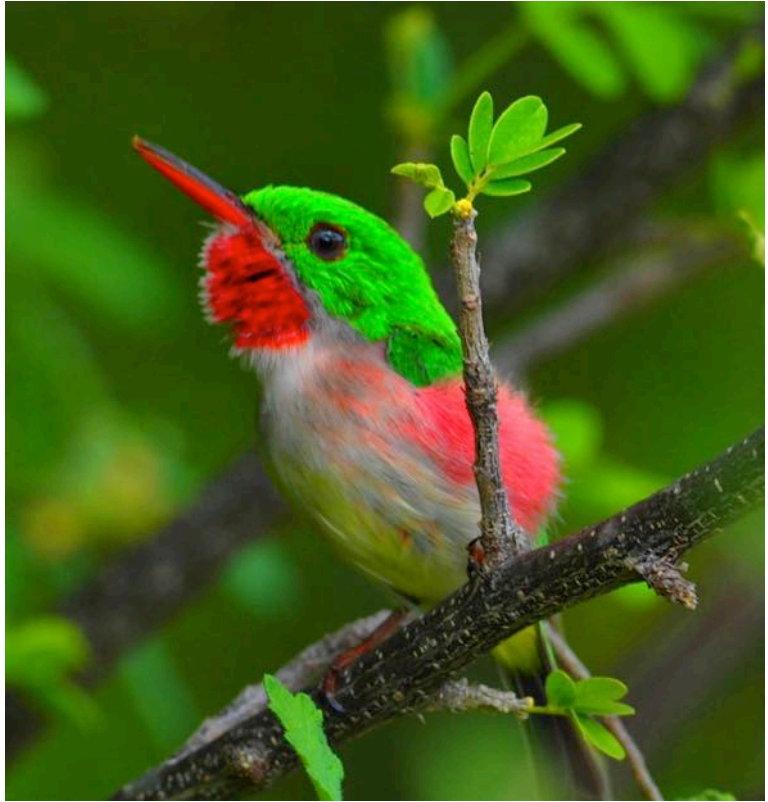
Cuban Emerald *Chlorostilbon ricordii* Regularly encountered on Abaco and Andros (B).

Hispaniolan Emerald *Chlorostilbon swainsonii* Several nice observations of this endemic in the DR.

Puerto Rican Emerald *Chlorostilbon maugaeus* Three encounters with this PR endemic.

Bahama Woodstar *Calliphlox evelynae* Terrific looks at two males and a female on Nassau.

Vervain Hummingbird *Mellisuga minima* Splendid encounters on J and in the DR.



Black-billed Streamertail; Broad-billed Tody (Mark Van Beirs)

Hispaniolan Trogon *Priotelus roseigaster* Regular, superb studies of this Hispaniolan endemic.



Vervain Hummingbird (Mark Van Beirs); Antillean Piculet (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* We saw this migrant on J, in the DR and on PR.

Broad-billed Tody *Todus subulatus* Many terrific views of this Hispaniolan endemic in the DR. See Note.

Narrow-billed Tody *Todus angustirostris* Regular mega views of this Hispaniolan endemic in the DR.

Jamaican Tody *Todus todus* This Jamaican endemic was common and so cute all over the island.

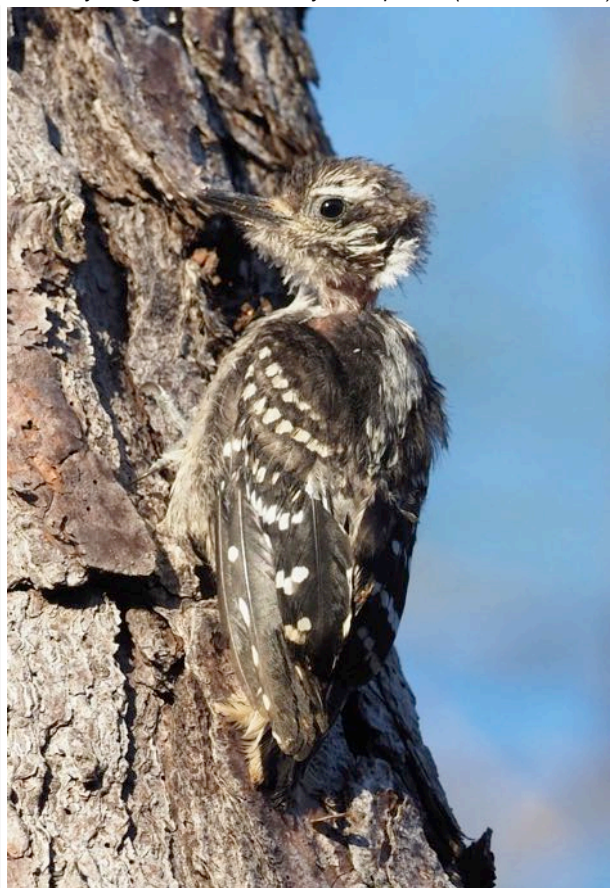
Puerto Rican Tody *Todus mexicanus* Regular encounters with this endemic beauty.

Antillean Piculet *Nesocittes micromegas* This Hispaniolan endemic showed well in the DR.

Puerto Rican Woodpecker *Melanerpes portoricensis* Several great encounters with this PR endemic.



Hispaniolan Woodpecker; West Indian Woodpecker; a young and an adult Hairy Woodpecker (Mark Van Beirs)





American Kestrel (tour participant André D'Penha); Peregrine Falcon (Mark Van Beirs)

Hairy Woodpecker *Leuconotopicus villosus* Regular on Abaco and Andros (B).

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius* Common on all four islands. See Note.

Merlin *Falco columbarius* Seen on all four islands. Nine observations of this dashing migrant.

Peregrine Falcon (Peregrine) *Falco peregrinus* A perched adult performed very well in the DR.

White-winged Parakeet (introduced) (Canary-winged P) *Brotogeris versicolurus* Common in PR.

Black-billed Amazon *Amazona agilis* Good looks at this Jamaican endemic in the Cockpit country.

Yellow-billed Amazon *Amazona collaria* This Jamaican endemic showed well at two locations.

Cuban Amazon (Bahama A) *Amazona [leucocephala] bahamensis* Fantastic views on Abaco (B).



Hispaniolan and Puerto Rican Amazons (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

Hispaniolan Amazon *Amazona ventralis* Regular in the southwestern DR. A Hispaniolan endemic.
Puerto Rican Amazon *Amazona vittata* Scope views of a perched bird at El Yunque (PR).
Olive-throated Parakeet (Jamaican P) *Eupsittula nana* Good looks on Jamaica. Also in the DR.
Orange-fronted Parakeet (introduced) *Eupsittula canicularis* A few were noted on PR.
Hispaniolan Parakeet *Psittacara chloropterus* Several nice observations of this Hispaniolan endemic.



Jamaican Elaenia; Cuban Pewee (Mark Van Beirs)

Jamaican Elaenia (J Myiopagis) *Myiopagis cotta* Several of these Jamaican endemics showed well.
Greater Antillean Elaenia (Jamaican G A E) *Elaenia [fallax] fallax* A single was seen at Marshall's Pen.
Greater Antillean Elaenia (Hispaniolan G A E) *Elaenia [fallax] cherriei* A few in the DR highlands.
Cuban Pewee (Crescent-eyed P) *Contopus [caribaeus] bahamensis* Regularly seen in the B.
Hispaniolan Pewee *Contopus hispaniolensis* Several showed well in the highlands of the DR.
Jamaican Pewee *Contopus pallidus* A regularly encountered Jamaican endemic.
Lesser Antillean Pewee (Puerto Rican P) *Contopus [latirostris] blancoi* A single was at Maricao (PR).
Grey Kingbird *Tyrannus dominicensis* Regular in the DR, PR and the Bahamas.
Loggerhead Kingbird (Bahama L K) *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] bahamensis* Several sightings.
Loggerhead Kingbird (Jamaican L K) *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] jamaicensis* Common.
Loggerhead Kingbird (Puerto Rican L K) *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] taylori* Small numbers.
Loggerhead Kingbird (Hispaniolan L K) *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] gabbii* Just two were seen.
Sad Flycatcher *Myiarchus barbirostris* This Jamaican endemic showed regularly.
Rufous-tailed Flycatcher *Myiarchus validus* A fairly common Jamaican endemic.
La Sagra's Flycatcher (Bahama F) *Myiarchus [sagrae] lucaysiensis* Regular sightings on the B.
Stolid Flycatcher (Hispaniolan S F) *Myiarchus [stolidus] dominicensis* Regular encounters.
Stolid Flycatcher (Jamaican S F) *Myiarchus [stolidus] stolidus* A single observation in the south.
Puerto Rican Flycatcher *Myiarchus antillarum* Quite common and widespread on PR.
Jamaican Becard *Pachyramphus niger* A regular Jamaican endemic. We also noted the large nest.
Thick-billed Vireo *Vireo crassirostris* Fairly common on Abaco and Andros (B).
Jamaican Vireo *Vireo modestus* A fairly common Jamaican endemic.
Puerto Rican Vireo *Vireo latimeri* Three excellent sightings in the west of PR.



Loggerhead Kingbird (Puerto Rico); La Sagra's Flycatcher (Mark Van Beirs)

Flat-billed Vireo *Vireo nanus* This Hispaniolan endemic showed well in the Sierra de Bahoruco (DR).

Blue Mountain Vireo *Vireo osburni* This Jamaican endemic was seen well in the Blue Mountains.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons* This uncommon migrant was found at Marshall's Pen.

Black-whiskered Vireo *Vireo altiloquus* The most frequently heard sound of the tour. All islands!



Hispaniolan Palm Crow; Rufous-throated Solitaire (Mark Van Beirs)

Hispaniolan Palm Crow *Corvus palmarum* Great looks in the Sierra de Bahoruco (DR). Endemic.

Jamaican Crow *Corvus jamaicensis* A handful of sightings of this Jamaican endemic.

White-necked Crow *Corvus leucognaphalus* Just a few sightings of this vocal Hispaniolan endemic. See Note.

Palmchat *Dulus dominicus* A common and obvious Hispaniolan endemic. See Note.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* Several were found on Andros (B).

Golden Swallow *Tachycineta euchrysea* Great looks at this lovely Hispaniolan endemic. See Note.

Bahama Swallow *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis* This Bahamian endemic was regularly noted.
Caribbean Martin *Progne dominicensis* Small numbers were found in the DR and on PR.
Northern Rough-winged Swallow *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* A couple on J and a single on PR.
Barn Swallow *Hirundo rustica* A few were noted on all four islands.
Cave Swallow *Petrochelidon fulva* Seen on J, DR and PR. Great looks at a colony at Marshall's Pen.



Blue-grey Gnatcatcher; White-eyed Thrush (Mark Van Beirs)

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher *Poliophtila caerulea* Seen very well on Andros (B).
Grey Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis* We only saw this species on Andros (B).
Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* Common on all four islands.
Bahama Mockingbird *Mimus gundlachii* Perfect looks on J and also noted on the B.
Pearly-eyed Thrasher *Margarops fuscatus* Common on PR. Also seen in northeastern DR.
Common Starling (introduced) *Sturnus vulgaris* Seen on J and in the B.
Rufous-throated Solitaire *Myadestes genibarbis* Great looks in the highlands of J and the DR.
Bicknell's Thrush *Catharus bicknelli* One was glimpsed by some in the Sierra de Batoruco (DR).
White-eyed Thrush *Turdus jamaicensis* Good looks at this Jamaican endemic at Marshall's Pen.
La Selle Thrush *Turdus swalesi* This Hispaniolan endemic obliged quite well in the SE of the DR. See Note.
White-chinned Thrush *Turdus aurantius* Many excellent sightings of this Jamaican endemic.
Red-legged Thrush (Bahama R-I T) *Turdus [plumbeus] plumbeus* Great looks in the B.
Red-legged Thrush (Hispaniolan R-I T) *Turdus [plumbeus] ardosiaecus* Common in the DR.
House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Just a few in J, but common in the DR, PR and the B.
Village Weaver (introduced) *Ploceus cucullatus* A few showed in the DR.
Scaly-breasted Munia (introduced) *Lonchura punctulata* A few flocks in ricefields in the DR.
Hispaniolan Crossbill *Loxia megaplaga* Mega looks at four birds in the Sierra de Batoruco (DR).
Antillean Siskin *Spinus dominicensis* Another Hispaniolan endemic that showed brilliantly.
Jamaican Euphonia *Euphonia jamaica* Many good looks at this subtly-plumaged, Jamaican endemic.
Antillean Euphonia *Euphonia musica* Regularly noted in the DR.
Western Chat-Tanager *Calyptophilus tertius* Exquisite views of this Hispaniolan endemic in the DR.
Eastern Chat-Tanager *Calyptophilus frugivorus* Good looks at this skulking Hispaniolan endemic.
Black-crowned (Palm) Tanager *Phaenicophilus palmarum* This Hispaniolan endemic showed regularly. See Note.
Green-tailed Warbler *Microligea palustris* A handful of observations in the DR. Endemic to Hispaniola.
White-winged Warbler *Xenoligea montana* Great looks at this Hispaniolan endemic beauty.



Bahama Mockingbird (Mark Van Beirs)

Puerto Rican Tanager *Nesospingus speculiferus* In its own family! Many looks at this PR endemic. See Note.

Western Spindalis (Black-backed S) *Spindalis [zena] townsendi* Fantastic sightings in the B.

Hispaniolan Spindalis *Spindalis dominicensis* An attractive Hispaniolan endemic. Regular in the DR.

Puerto Rican Spindalis *Spindalis portoricensis* A gorgeous and easy to see PR endemic.

Jamaican Spindalis *Spindalis nigricephala* A common, striking Jamaican endemic.

Jamaican Oriole *Icterus leucopteryx* Regular sightings. Not a truly endemic.

Venezuelan Troupial (introduced) *Icterus icterus* Regular sightings on PR.

Bahama Oriole *Icterus northropi* The rarest Bahamian endemic. Great looks on Andros.

Puerto Rican Oriole *Icterus portoricensis* Two of these PR endemics showed well at El Yunque.

Hispaniolan Oriole *Icterus dominicensis* A regularly seen Hispaniolan endemic.

Jamaican Blackbird *Nesopsar nigerrimus* Scope views of a bathing bird in the Blue Mts (J).

Yellow-shouldered Blackbird *Agelaius xanthomus* Perfect views of this threatened PR endemic. See Note.

Red-winged Blackbird *Agelaius phoeniceus* A few were noted in the Bahamas.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* Seen on all four islands.

Greater Antillean Grackle *Quiscalus niger* Common on J, the DR and the B.



Hispaniolan Crossbill (Mark Van Beirs)

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla* This lovely migrant was noted on J, the DR and the B.
Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla* Excellent looks at Los Haitises (DR).
Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* A single bird was recorded on PR.
Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* A regularly encountered northern migrant.
Bahama Yellowthroat *Geothlypis rostrata* Several excellent observations of this B endemic.
Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* A few observations on J and in the DR.
Elfin Woods Warbler *Setophaga angelae* Great looks at this PR endemic at Maricao. See Note.
Arrowhead Warbler *Setophaga pharetra* This Jamaican endemic gave lovely views.
American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla* Regular.
Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina* Three observations in the DR.
Northern Parula *Setophaga americana* A fairly common migrant on all four islands.
Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia* Two sightings on Jamaica.
Mangrove Warbler (Golden W) *Setophaga petechia* Seen well on J, in the DR and on PR.
Chestnut-sided Warbler *Setophaga pensylvanica* A cracking male was found on Andros (B).
Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens* Fairly common on J, in the DR and on the B.
Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum* Seen on J, in the DR and on PR.
Olive-capped Warbler *Setophaga pityophila* Fantastic looks in the Bahamian pinewoods.
Pine Warbler *Setophaga pinus* Seen well in the pinewoods of the DR and the B.
Myrtle Warbler *Setophaga coronata* Singles were noted in the DR and on the B.
Bahama Warbler *Setophaga flavescens* Eye-ball to eye-ball looks at this smashing Bahama endemic.



White-winged Warbler (tour participant Roger Holmberg)

- Prairie Warbler** *Setophaga discolor* Common on Jamaica and also noted in the Bahamas.
- Adelaide's Warbler** *Setophaga adelaidae* This much appreciated PR endemic showed exceedingly well.
- Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus* Singles were seen on J and in the DR.
- Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* A male was observed in the Sierra de Batoruco (DR).
- Bananaquit** *Coereba flaveola* Common on all four islands. See Note.
- Yellow-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris olivaceus* Common on J and in the DR.
- Black-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris bicolor* Regular on all four islands.
- Yellow-shouldered Grassquit** *Loxipasser anoxanthus* This Jamaican endemic performed very well.
- Puerto Rican Bullfinch** *Loxigilla portoricensis* A regular, but rather shy PR endemic.
- Greater Antillean Bullfinch** *Loxigilla violacea* Fairly common, but retiring on J, the DR and in the B.
- Orangequit** *Euneornis campestris* A common and unique Jamaican endemic.

MAMMALS

Greater Bulldog Bat *Noctilio leporinus* A couple were seen in the DR.

Hispaniolan Solenodon *Solenodon paradoxus* The Mammal of the trip. Great looks at one in the DR.

Brown Rat (introduced) *Rattus norvegicus* (NL) One was seen by David on PR.

Small Indian Mongoose (introduced) *Herpestes auropunctatus* Sadly, quite common on J.

Humpback Whale *Megaptera novaeangliae* (NL) Richard saw one while seawatching off the DR.

AMPHIBIANS & REPTILES

Coqui Frog sp. *Eleutherodactylus* sp. (H) Commonly heard on Puerto Rico.

Jamaican Snoring Frog *Osteopilus crucialis* (H) Heard at Marshall's Pen (J).



Jamaican Laughing Frog; Graham's Anole (tour participant André D'Penha)

Jamaican Laughing Frog *Osteopilus brunneus* Seen well at Marshall's Pen (J).

Cane Toad *Rhinella marina* We saw this introduced species on J and in the DR.

Weinland's Robber Frog *Eleutherodactylus weinlandi* We saw this small frog at Caño Hondo (DR).

Hispaniolan Common Tree Frog *Osteopilus dominicensis* Several showed well at Caño Hondo (DR).

Graham's Anole *Anolis grahami* Seen at Marshall's Pen (J).

Bluefields Anole *Anolis opalinus* Seen at Marshall's Pen (J).

Hispaniolan Green Anole *Anolis chlorocyanus* Seen at Los Haitises (DR).

Giant Whiptail *Pholidoscelis chrysolaemus* Seen at Cabo Rojo (DR).

Orange-bellied Curlytail *Leiocephalus barahonensis* Seen at Cabo Rojo (DR).

Puerto Rican Ground Lizard *Ameiva exsul* Seen in the hotel grounds at Fajardo (PR).

Rhinoceros Iguana *Cyclura cornuta* A large individual showed well at Cabo Rojo (DR).

Green Iguana *Iguana iguana* This introduced reptile was commonly seen on Puerto Rico.

Island Pointed Snake *Uromacer frenatus* One was seen at night in the Sierra de Baboruco (DR).

Jamaican Slider Turtle *Trachemys terrapen* Seen at the Upper Black River Morass (J).



Rhinoceros Iguana (Mark Van Beirs)

NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

Ridgway's Hawk *Buteo ridgwayi*

The status of Ridgway's Hawk is considered as **Critically Endangered** by BirdLife International in 'Threatened Birds of the World' and the total population is estimated at c250 birds, easily making it the rarest Buteo in the world!! The species is now most probably confined to the Los Haitises National Park and in view of the sad state of affair of the National Park – serious encroachment by squatters, virtual lack of protection – one should be extremely pessimistic about the long term survival of this bird of prey. There is some hope as a breeding and re-introduction program is being implemented. It is named after Robert Ridgway (1850-1929), US ornithologist, Smithsonian curator of birds and author of "The Birds of North and Middle America".

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Caribbean Coot *Fulica caribea* has now been lumped into this species by both the IOC and The Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW) and is considered only as a morph now.

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acutirostris*

This is a recent split from Sandwich Tern *Thalasseus sandvicensis*.

Plain Pigeon *Columba inornata*

This Caribbean endemic occurs in very small numbers in Cuba, Jamaica, Puerto Rico and the Dominican Republic, but the healthiest populations seem to survive in Haiti.



Birding in the Sierra de Bahoruco (Mark Van Beirs)

Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto*

This is a recent introduction in the Caribbean and is still spreading. There has been some confusion about the original birds occurring in southwestern Puerto Rico, which were considered by some authors to be Ringed Turtle Dove *Streptopelia risoria* (a long domesticated form of African Collared Dove *Streptopelia roseogrisea*). These birds showed a lot of variation in their plumage.

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerine*

The scientific epithet relates to the sparrow-like size of these tiny doves (passer = sparrow).

Zenaida Dove *Zenaida aurita*

The bird is named after Zénaïde Laetitia Julie Princesse Bonaparte (1804-1854), wife of French ornithologist Prince Charles Bonaparte, a close relative of infamous Napoleon Bonaparte.

Bay-breasted Cuckoo *Coccyzus ruficularis*

This species is hunted for its supposed medicinal value. Its decline is probably associated with deforestation for agriculture and charcoal production, habitat degradation through high levels of grazing, hunting for food, and possibly the use of agrochemicals. The total population is extremely small.

Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo *Coccyzus vetula*

The four species of Lizard Cuckoos (one each on the Greater Antillean islands) show red bare skin around the eye, a long thin bill and white-tipped tail feathers. One of their local names is pajaro bobo (stupid bird), probably because they can be very confiding. They were previously placed in their own genus, *Saurothera* (= lizard hunter).



Hispaniolan Giant Tarantula; a female Eastern Pondhawk (Mark Van Beirs)

Puerto Rican Nightjar (Puerto Rican Whip-poor-will) *Antrostomus noctitherus*

The total population is in the order of 670-800 pairs. This species was first described in 1888 and was then considered extinct for over 70 years, till it was re-found in the Guanica forest in 1961. It is ironic that apparently a Civilian Conservation Corps camp located in Guanica Forest from 1935 to 1945 was so disturbed by the nocturnal calling of these birds that a request was made that they be chased away!



Jamaican Tody; Blue Mountains scenery (Jamaica) (Mark Van Beirs)



Burtonia sanguinea, an orchid endemic to the Jamaican Cockpit country; Zebra (Mark Van Beirs)

Broad-billed Tody *Todus subulatus*

The five species of very closely related todies comprise a family confined to the Greater Antilles. Their closest relatives are the Motmots (Motmotidae) and especially the Tody Motmot *Hylomanes momotula* of Central America. The closely related Puerto Rican Tody has been well studied and shows some remarkable characteristics. It has been found to go into torpor in the breeding season, when hormone stress levels and metabolic rates are significantly higher than at other times. This phenomenon is restricted to females. The Cuban Tody is locally known as Pedorrera, a rather malodorous term referring to the noise made when breaking wind. This name may relate to the wing-rattling behaviour of the bird. Note that fossil todids are known from Wyoming and France.

American Kestrel *Falco sparverius*

One of its local names in the Dominican Republic is Cernícalo, a word derived from Tsar Nicholas, a formerly 'high perched' monarch. This refers to the habit of the falcon to frequent high exposed perches from which it searches its prey.

White-necked Crow *Corvus leucognaphalus*

This species used to be common on Puerto Rico, where it became extinct around 1963, making it another Hispaniolan endemic.

Palmchat *Dulus dominicus*

The Palmchat was one of the more important birds of the trip for the 'bird family-hunters', as it is the sole member of its family and is restricted to Hispaniola. A bizarre bird, which constructs huge communal stick-nests, consisting of separate compartments which open separately to the outside. Some of the older nests are up to two metres in width!! These noisy, garrulous and very sociable birds are mainly fruit and berry eaters. They favour areas where Royal Palms (*Roystonea hispaniolana*) occur and seem to be most closely related to waxwings and silky-flycatchers. The Palmchat is the national bird of the Dominican Republic.

Golden Swallow *Tachycineta euchrysea*

This species has now totally disappeared from Jamaica (no substantiated records since 1989), making it a Hispaniolan endemic.

La Selle Thrush *Turdus swalesi*

This species is endemic to the mountains of Hispaniola. The bird is named after the Massif de La Selle in southern Haiti, from where it was first described in 1927 by Alexander Wetmore. It was discovered in the Dominican Republic only in 1971. The scientific name refers to Bradshaw Swales (1875-1928) US ornithologist and author (Birds of Haiti and the Dominican Republic, 1931).



Elfin Woods Warbler (tour participant Roger Holmberg); *Venezuelan Troupial* (Mark Van Beirs)

Black-crowned (Palm Tanager) *Phaenicophilus palmarum*:

Its local name is *cuatro ojos* (four-eyes), which refers to the white spots in front of the eyes, making them look as if they are in possession of an extra pair of eyes. The closely related Grey-crowned Palm Tanager is virtually confined to Haiti, although there seem to be several (not substantiated) records for the Sierra de Batoruco in the Dominican Republic. The HBW has now created a separate Hispaniolan endemic family, the *Phaenicophilidae*, holding these two species and the Green-tailed and White-winged Warblers.

Puerto Rican Tanager *Nesospingus speculiferus*

The Handbook of the Birds of the World (HBW) has now resurrected a separate family, the *Nesospingidae*, holding just this Puerto Rican endemic.

Yellow-shouldered Blackbird *Agelaius xanthomus*

This Puerto Rican endemic is one of the most threatened West Indian species, because of the brood-parasitic behaviour of the fairly recently arrived (1940s) and now common Shiny Cowbird. A major conservation program is now in action, mainly concentrating on getting rid of the Shiny Cowbirds. The total population of the Yellow-shouldered Blackbird now stands at only c650 individuals.

Elfin Woods Warbler *Dendroica angelae*

This Puerto Rican endemic was discovered only in 1972 in the Luquillo Mountains. The total population is probably c2,700 individuals.

Bananaquit *Coereba flaveola*

The races seen on the tour were *flaveola* (Jamaica), *bananivora* (Hispaniola), *portoricensis* (Puerto Rico) and *bahamensis* (The Bahamas).



Bananaquit (Jamaica); Jamaican Euphonia (Mark Van Beirs)

BIRDS OF THE TOUR

JAMAICA pre-trip

- | | |
|------------------------------|-----------|
| 1. Crested Quail-Dove | 15 points |
| 2. Red-billed Streamertail | 13 |
| 3. Jamaican Owl | 10 |
| 4. Rufous-throated Solitaire | 9 |
| 5. Jamaican Tody | 6 |

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC & PUERTO RICO (main tour)

- | | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| 1 Antillean Crested Hummingbird | 26 points |
| 2 Adelaide's Warbler | 15 |
| 3 Ridgway's Hawk | 11 |
| 4 White-winged Warbler | 7 |
| 5 Narrow-billed Tody | 5 |
| White-fronted Quail-Dove | 5 |
| Puerto Rican Woodpecker | 5 |
| Puerto Rican Tanager | 5 |
| Puerto Rican Flycatcher | 5 |

THE BAHAMAS post trip

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------|
| 1. Bahama Woodstar | 13 points |
| 2. Cuban Amazon | 12 |
| 3. Bahama Warbler | 8 |
| 4. Bahama Oriole | 5 |
| 5. Western Spindalis | 3 |