



*Broad-billed Tody (Eustace Barnes)*

# **HISPANIOLA & PUERTO RICO with JAMAICA & THE BAHAMAS**

**29 MARCH/5 APRIL – 17/22 APRIL 2015**

**LEADER: EUSTACE BARNES**



*The Gang (most of) at Cabo Rojo on Puerto Rico (Eustace Barnes)*

A glorious mix of blue skies, verdant rainforests, thorny woodlands, lush marshes, red sandstone cliffs, mangroves and azure seas greeted us on each and every day as we toured through the Greater Antilles and Bahamas seeing all but one endemic on our way. Jamaica is truly a gem and staying at Marshall's Pen a real pleasure with Jamaican Owls in the grounds and Red-billed Streamertails buzzing about. High above Kingston, Crested Quail Doves before breakfast followed by Blue Mountain Coffee takes some beating as does watching Black-billed Streamertails at a lek. The Dominican Republic was more demanding but gave us some great moments including La Selle Thrush, Hispaniolan Trogon and a singing White-fronted Quail Dove within the space of a few minutes of one another. Our forest camp gave us another White-fronted Quail Dove and Key West Quail Dove running about in front of us just before we found a Least Poorwill! An Ashy-faced Owl gave unbeatable views and our search for Ridgway's Hawk was dramatically shortened when a female landed in an open tree in front of us. Puerto Rico is a truly American Experience providing car park birding at its best. The Elfin Woods Warbler and Puerto Rican Screech Owl car park experience was the best. The Bahamas provided a fine end to the tour, far exceeding our expectations. The Bahaman Amazons screeching all around us and Bahaman Orioles in the hotel grounds along with more Key West Quail Doves and the gigantic Great Lizard Cuckoo made for a spectacular finale.



*Ridgway's Hawk (Eustace Barnes).*





*Black-billed Streamertail, one of our Jamaican highlights (Eustace Barnes).*

Arriving at Kingston Jamaica it was great to enjoy some warmth and be away from the frantic bustle of London or indeed Miami. We met up with Alan, our cheery driver and headed to the splendid Marshall's Pen for some unbeatable island birding. Actually we arrived in time for the fabled 'initial exploration' of the area before it got dark! That was largely thanks to the new highway seared into the landscape by the Chinese, probably in exchange for control of the Bauxite mines; a new colonialism fired by cash not bullets.



*Jamaican Woodpecker (Eustace Barnes)*

On arrival, we were immediately treated to great views of the immaculate Red-billed Streamertail, known in Jamaica as the Doctorbird. We were then able to watch this dazzling species at our leisure more or less throughout our stay on this crazy little emerald isle. We also saw a very obliging Caribbean Dove marching about on the lawn, noisy groups of Jamaican Parakeets, a pair of Jamaican Woodpeckers, numerous Jamaican Orioles, Jamaican Spindalis, 'Jamaican' Loggerhead Kingbird, Yellow-faced and Black-faced Grassquits along with a White-chinned Thrush. It got dark all too quickly and we were forced to retreat to the Great House for the first of many great meals provide by our host Ann. After a much needed rest we began our explorations of this superb area walking the grounds and nearby trails in search of the endemics. A quick pre-breakfast session produced a pair of Jamaican Owls with a recently fledged youngster making for a flying start, so to speak. Exploring the grounds we again enjoyed great views of the male Red-billed Streamertails fiercely defending their flowering shrubs along with a stunning male Jamaican Mango and a few diminutive Vervain Hummingbirds. The next moment we were treated to point blank views of our first Tody! The Jamaican Tody and a stunning, diminutive forest jewel.



*Jamaican Tody (Eustace Barnes)*

Slowly walking the wide trails we again had good views of Caribbean Dove along with the richly coloured Zenaida Dove and several superb White-crowned Pigeons. A number of people had great views of a pair of Crested Quail Doves wandering through the grounds but the rest of us had to wait a couple of days. Thrushes were much in evidence early on with both White-eyed and White-chinned Thrushes feeding on forest trails and lawn edges bouncing around quite fearlessly, safe in the knowledge there are no Accipiters around. In no time we had picked up the oddly misnamed Sad Flycatcher with its delightful cheery song along with the more sombre Jamaican Pewee, Jamaican Becard and Jamaican Vireo. A loud croaking call alerted us to the presence of the huge Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo which sat in a leafless tree nearby. We then enjoyed great views of the Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo and Mangrove Cuckoo giving us all of the cuckoos in quick succession. It took a little more time to connect with the Yellow-shouldered Grassquit and Greater Antillean Bullfinch but by lunch time we succeeded. Walking the trails it seemed we were accompanied by pairs of Jamaican Todies along the trail edges. Seemingly, where ever we went there they were, sitting unobtrusively keeping an eye on us.





*Red-billed Streamertail (Eustace Barnes)*

Ensuing sessions around the Pen racked up a great selection of endemics including Arrowhead Warbler. We also enjoyed seeing numerous Near-arctic migrants that included Black-throated Blue Warbler, American Redstart, Prairie Warbler, Northern Parula and a Worm-eating Warbler. We easily found Jamaican Vireo, Black-whiskered Vireo and several pairs of Jamaican Becards along the pasture edges together with the rather dapper Jamaican Euphonia and Orangequit. A somewhat brief post-parandial session gave us a pair of Northern Potoos perched in a tree just above our heads. This is the form *jamaicensis* found in the Greater Antilles and most easily seen on Jamaica.



*Jamaican Oriole (Eustace Barnes)*

It was high time we took off to explore some other habitats and so it was we found ourselves heading to the evocatively named Black River Morass. Although sounding like something Dante might have conjured up for us to contemplate our mortality this site is, paradoxically, a wetland paradise. We found our first Greater Antillean Grackles, Antillean Palm Swifts and a number of wetland species. The open waters held Northern Jacana, American Coot and Common Gallinule as well as Spotted Rail. Of the latter we watched in amazement as one slowly waded across open waters to a small island in front of us to join another! There were also a bunch of padders including Common Yellowthroat, Great and Snowy Egrets, Black-crowned Night Heron, Great Blue Heron and Limpkin but no West Indian Whistling Duck. As dusk approached we began our return finding another Northern Potoo sat right next to a beautiful Barn Owl, here of the endemic sub-species *furcata*. Then back to base for drinks, a hearty meal and a quick perusal of *The Daily Gleaner* to check out the state of decay elsewhere on the planet. What a great name for a paper!



*Ring-tailed Pigeon (Eustace Barnes)*

The following morning we headed north to Cockpit country, following a narrow and somewhat sinuous route through the densely settled Cheshire Hills passing the enchantingly named 'Wait o bit' and 'Dump' before reaching the metropolitan district of Burnt Hill. On arrival at our appointed breakfast stop thankfully the hills were no longer burning and we found a pair of Ring-tailed Pigeons. We also heard numerous Amazons calling above us. Walking the road we quickly found both Yellow-billed and Black-billed Amazons as well as more Ring-tailed Pigeons. We had to wait a little longer to see the Jamaican Crow but in the end we saw about a dozen or so. We worked the road a little longer and, incredibly, found a splendid Plain Pigeon. This species, of the endemic form *exigua*, is rare on Jamaica and so we were pretty pleased with ourselves. It sat watching us giving the proverbial walk away views. Then it was back to base for lunch, packing up and making our way to Kingston down the Chinese highway.





*Black-billed Amazon (Eustace Barnes)*

Our return journey was punctuated with a brief stop on the Portland Peninsula to explore the arid scrub and acacia woodlands of a rather more stark landscape; the dry rain shadow hills of the south coast. Our targets fell in quick succession; the Bahama Mockingbird and Stolid Flycatcher of the nominate form. This form is endemic to Jamaica and somewhat distinct from that found on Hispaniola and so it was good to see. A brief stop at the mangroves produced a pair of very noisy Clapper Rails and again the form concerned, *caribbeus*, may be considered a distinct species at some point. That was that and time to head off to our Hotel on Oxford Road passing the Hellshire Hills en route. They seemed pretty innocuous to me but presumably have some ghastly history associated with them.



*Bahama Mockingbird (Eustace Barnes).*

Kingston was quiet and it was good to enjoy the luxuries of a good hotel for a couple of nights. The following morning we climbed up into the Blue Mountains to explore the forest fragments at the Hardwar Gap passing through the neighbourhood of 'We tink it ruff' and, bizarrely, the military parade ground at Newcastle. A quick pre-breakfast session produced a couple of pairs of Crested Quail Doves which gave outstanding views for most of us. The trail also produced a pair of Jamaican Todies, several Jamaican Becards, Rufous-tailed Flycatcher, Jamaican Vireo, Jamaican Orioles, Jamaican Spindalis, Orangequit and loads of White-chinned and White-eyed Thrushes. A brief wait then gave us the Greater Antillean Elaenia of the nominate form. Another split? Anyway, we then returned for a hearty field breakfast before heading over the pass where after a rather brief exploration of a gulley we connected with our remaining targets; the demure and rather retiring Blue Mountain Vireo and a noisy Jamaican Blackbird. Through the fog the ethereal whistles of the Rufous-throated Solitaire drew us to this smartest of thrushes. It was 10.05am and job done. We headed directly to the Gap café to try the magnificent Blue Mountain Coffee. We were then on the wrong side of the pass and enjoyed even better views of Rufous-throated Solitaire, Blue Mountain Vireo and a pair of Jamaican Blackbirds before we returned to Kingston for a relaxing afternoon.



*White-chinned Thrush (Eustace Barnes)*

Departing at a civilised hour the following morning we crossed the mountainous interior and made for Frenchman's Cove on the north coast. This delightfully located hotel, definitely passed its best with a somewhat faded fabric and lousy service was to be our home for a mercifully brief stay. A stay made more fleeting by our heading directly off to do some birding along the very birdy Ecclesdown road. What a place! We found a good many of Jamaica's endemics in short order including Black-billed Amazon, dozens of Ring-tailed Pigeons and with some effort several lovely male Black-billed Streamertails. It must have been a lek as there were a dozen or so males feeding and buzzing about giving their distinctive wing rattle. That was that. Total clean up with time on our hands.





*Sad Flycatcher (left) and Rufous-tailed Flycatcher (right) (Eustace Barnes)*

The following day we decided to have another look at as many endemics as we could find. Our first stop was a small shop in a banana plantation for supplies. It was here we were greeted with the immortal reply 'Yes we have no bananas, we have no bananas today' I could not quite believe what I was hearing but there it was with the added touch that I could see dozens of bananas hanging from the trees all around us. They did have a plantain, two mouldy oranges and a packet of biscuits that may have been nibbled on by resident rodents or children. So once we had found some snacks we headed to the hills to enjoy our last Jamaican birding. We found numerous Ring-tailed Pigeons. A Crested Quail Dove shot across the road but did not stick around. We also found Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo and Jamaican Mango. We stopped to admire the Black-billed Streamertails at their 'lek' again. Then the Jamaican Tody, Jamaican Woodpecker, Black-billed Amazon, Jamaican Pewee, Loggerhead Kingbird, Sad and Rufous-tailed Flycatchers, Jamaican Crows, Jamaican Euphonia, Arrowhead Warbler, Jamaican Oriole, Jamaican Blackbird, Jamaican Oriole and Jamaican Spindalis all put in an appearance. A good haul but we gave up finding more and headed to Hector's river at Happy Grove for the final target of the trip. We were in for a treat and enjoyed watching nine White-tailed Tropicbirds as they gracefully flew over the turquoise sea below us; a magnificent end to the first chapter in our Greater Antillean odyssey.



*Jamaican Spindalis (left) and Jamaican Vireo (right) Eustace Barnes.*



*Hispaniolan Woodpecker at the Botanical Gardens (Eustace Barnes)*

Next up the Dominican Republic and, as if I needed reminding of what that means, the departure lounge was full of Latinas babbling incessantly, glued to their infernal telecommunications devices. After a night in Santo Domingo we headed to the Botanical Gardens through the hideous traffic. In spite of the traffic we arrived in good time for some introductory birding on yet another charming Caribbean island. Bathed in golden sunlight the Botanical Gardens produced large numbers of the endemic Palmchat nesting in the palms at the entrance. As we moved on several Hispaniolan Woodpeckers put in an appearance and although it is common throughout the Dominican Republic it was a species we never tired of watching. The gardens also played host to several Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoos, dozens of Antillean Palm Swifts, Black-crowned Palm Tanagers and a superb male Cape May Warbler in his spring finery.

However, these gardens are home to a more important prize; the now rare and rapidly declining West Indian Whistling Duck. Walking the stream edge trails in the Botanical Gardens we ended up finding a small number and enjoyed watching them at length. The birds here are quite accustomed to people and since they have never been shot at allow close approach. This does not quite fit with what a lot of birders think wild birds should do, since they should be terrified of us and hide as soon they detect the approach of hominids. A perfectly reasonable response most of the time but if there is no hail of bullets or arrows accompanying our arrival why would they flee? Indeed if food is provided they may be waiting about for people to arrive as the wild Antpittas do in Ecuador. We did not see this species at quite a number of its traditional sites on Jamaica, Puerto Rico or the Bahamas where they may still persist in small numbers. Hunting and not habitat conversion is their biggest problem. We found cartridges at many sites we visited throughout the islands and this species is very vulnerable to such pressure. On Jamaica the presence of large numbers of the introduced Small Indian Mongoose probably makes things even worse. We saw this mammal every day and sometimes several of them. This can only mean it is abundant and must be wiping out amphibians and small birds as well as taking ducklings.





*West Indian Whistling Duck. Heading for extinction? (Eustace Barnes)*

The southern shores of Lago Enriqueillo presented us with open palm groves and acacia woodlands lining the shore of an immense saline lake. The lake itself is rather birdless and our search for Caribbean Coot drew a blank, but the areas around it were quite productive. We found the Hispaniolan Palm Crow, of which we saw very few and a White-necked Crow of which we saw good numbers. The latter is strange looking bird with a peculiar call, perhaps recalling Ravens rather than crows. The woodlands also held the Hispaniolan Oriole and Stolid Flycatcher along with a pair of stunning Broad-billed Todies which sat gleaming in the afternoon sun for us all to admire. Well satisfied with the days haul we headed to our hotel.



*Hispaniolan Oriole (Left) and Hispaniolan Stolid flycatcher (left) Eustace Barnes.*

In the far south a broad road runs up onto the southern slopes of the Sierra de Baboruco into the pine forests to what was a prospective bauxite mine. Having found nothing, naturally enough, the area was declared a

national park in the hopes of making something on the tourist dollar. This has also failed because the unfolding crisis in nearby Haiti has resulted in a tide of desperate humanity sweeping over the border bringing their horror with them and destroying much of said park. There isn't a waterfall either and so nothing for the 'selfie' species to photograph itself against. Thankfully the birds are still there and we enjoyed a great day. Our full day in the fragments of evergreen semi-humid forest and the open pine forest higher up was both successful and quite memorable. We kicked off lower down with our first Green-tailed Warblers and Greater Antillean Bullfinches before we climbed a little higher up. In no time we found our first Hispaniolan Pewees, Antillean Piculets, Hispaniolan Emeralds and a good number of Scaly-naped Pigeons. We did see Hispaniolan Amazons but none were perched. The introduced Jamaican Parakeets were common but not the Hispaniolan Parakeet. The latter seems to be declining throughout the island, We also wrestled with the somewhat furtive Flat-billed Vireo which, rather unusually for the genus, crept about in dense foliage and thickets. It was here we found a very cooperative Western Chat Tanager which gave great scope views. As it happens totally unexpected views of a typically more skulking species!



*Western Chat Tanager (Eustace Barnes)*

It was this species and the much less common Eastern Chat Tanagers that were major targets for this tour and of considerable interest to the group as a whole. The distributions of the two species are difficult to understand; the Nieba valley, a putative barrier to gene flow and therefore fuelling speciation is in-fact crossed by the Eastern Chat Tanager, such that they probably occur together along the southern slopes of the Sierra de Baboruco.

We headed up to the pine forests where we found Hispaniolan Crossbills at a couple of sites and watched Golden Swallows at one of their study sites. This species is almost certainly now extinct on Jamaica and



therefore an Hispaniolan endemic. We watched the birds swooping all around us giving great views. The birds are nesting in boxes and cavities in the old open cast bauxite quarries.



*Hispaniolan Crossbill (Eustace Barnes).*

We were finished by 10am, and after a photographic session with the crossbills and better looks at the Emerald we headed to the coast for lunch and a rest.



*Hispaniolan Emerald (Eustace Barnes).*

It was then time to head back to our hotel near Barahona and the Dominican Faulty Towers run by a garrulous Italian. It was well placed for our birding sites but operated on the 1970's over-manned chaos model of hotel management. As is usual in such situations the employees all imagine that it is everyone

else's responsibility to do the necessary. That is from finding room keys and taking visitors to their rooms to providing meals. On return we enjoyed a rest before heading into the hills for a brief night birding session. Very brief as it turned out since after fifteen minutes or so we had seen our target; the lovely Ashy-faced Owl.



*Ashy-faced Owl keeping an eye on us (Eustace Barnes)*

Hand held on a 20<sup>th</sup> of a second in torch light! Not a bad picture for all that. Obviously I was not suffering from the delirium tremors at the time. Still, having found our bird we headed back to Fawltly Towers for a celebratory drink and a meal. The following morning we headed up to the Cachote Reserve for a productive session. The undoubtedly rare and indeed threatened Eastern Chat-Tanager was common at this site and we enjoyed repeated good views of this rather skittish species. We also saw Narrow-billed Tody, Hispaniolan Spindalis, Greater Antillean Eleania, Hispaniolan Pewee and another Flat-billed Vireo. It was time to go and we descended rather slowly down the atrocious road to the highway and made our way to Barahona for lunch.

After a superb lunch looking out over the sea we packed up the necessary items for our stay at Kate's Camp near Puerto Escondido on the Haitian border. As the roads are good we arrived in good time to do more of that introductory birding in the vicinity. The area consists of tall deciduous woodlands and farmland and is an outstanding area for many of the Hispaniolan endemics, located as it is beneath the Sierra de Bahoruco. Walking the area during our time here we enjoyed our first views of the White-fronted Quail Dove and later on we saw both this species and Key West Quail Doves feeding on the forest floor around us making for a very memorable experience with birds that can be very difficult to see well. The area was also good for Broad-billed Tody, Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo, Stolid Flycatcher and Hispaniolan Oriole. On the day of our departure we visited nearby agricultural areas which attracted good numbers of Hispaniolan Amazons and Hispaniolan Parakeets, which was the first time we had been able to watch these birds at length. We also found Antillean Siskin and Antillean Piculet in the area making for another excellent session.





*Narrow-billed Tody (Eustace Barnes)*

Above Puerto Escondido is extensive area of semi-humid evergreen forest and one of the best birding areas on Hispaniola. It is suffering badly from the incursion of large numbers of refugees from the failed state of Haiti. The absence of any effective governance and decades of chronic under-development and repression has led to catastrophic environmental degradation that cannot allow for any agricultural development. In the aftermath of the latest earthquake near social collapse has accelerated emigration of peasants into the Dominican Republic for land and work. Unfortunately this has been encouraged by unscrupulous land owners taking advantage of cheap labour to clear land resulting in dramatic environmental destruction in the Dominican Republic as well. As it is there are still reasonable forest areas left but for how much longer?



*Black-headed Palm Tanager (left) and Hispaniolan Loggerhead Kingbird (Eustace Barnes)*

We climbed up into the hills along what must be the worst road I have ever driven. Jagged bare rock ledges blasted into the hillside and narrow river gullies choked with gravel provided challenging surfaces, even for the most hardened off roader but we were haring up this gap in the vegetation in darkness in time for dawn. Exploring the pine forests and evergreen forests during the day produced some of the finest birding of the entire tour. We kicked off with point blank views of a singing White-fronted Quail Dove.



*White-fronted Quail Dove (Eustace Barnes)*

In no time we heard the La Selle Thrush and ended up seeing four or five of what is a somewhat secretive and shy species. Although we did see it well I did not manage a decent shot once all had seen it. At the same time we enjoyed great views of the rather handsome Hispaniolan Trogon. The numerous mixed flocks held Black-crowned Palm Tanagers, Hispaniolan Spindalis, Green-tailed and White-winged 'Warblers', Antillean Piculet, Hispaniolan Emerald, more Narrow-billed Todies.

The scenery was outstanding and the forests quite beautiful but a short distance away in Haiti the stark rocky slopes indicative of just what might happen where we were. Not yet the extinction crisis we are about to visit upon the Phillipines but possibly not far off. The Haitians are desperate and pour over the border on a daily basis for water and work. Seeing the consequences of poor governance and a failed state was quite dramatic. It served to underline the importance of getting birders to the area to raise awareness of the problems here.





*Hispaniolan Trogon (Eustace Barnes).*

The Trogon and its magnificent forested ridge overlooking the xeric woodlands and saline Lago Enriquillo far below us.



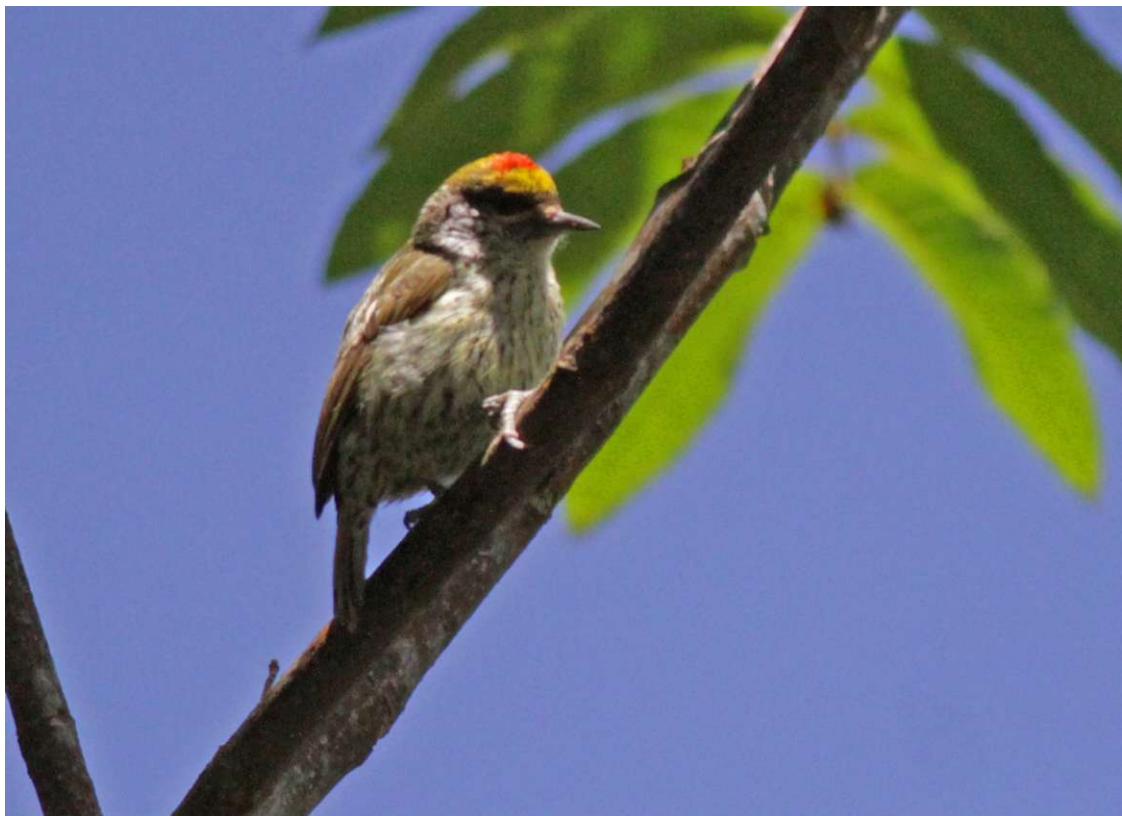
*The verdant forests of the Sierra de Bahoruco (Eustace Barnes)*





*Haiti on the left, Dominican Republic on the right and a Haitian on a mule heading into the green (Eustace Barnes).*

Working our way down through the pine forests we again found Hispaniolan Crossbill and Antillean Siskin along with a pair of Hispaniolan Loggerhead Kingbirds; clearly a separate species and one with strong morphological affinities to *Myiarchus* flycatchers, even sporting rufous edgings to the primaries and retrices. We had more good looks at Golden Swallow and a number of Rufous-throated Solitaires and a couple of Red-legged Thrushes. We carried on down to the dry forests near Puerto Escondido and after some time found the now rare Bay-breasted Cuckoo. No pictures but certainly very memorable sightings of this increasingly hard to find species.



*Antillean Piculet (Eustace Barnes)*





*A Haitian surveying the damage done to once forested slopes inside the Dominican Republic! (Eustace Barnes)*

We had enjoyed an extraordinary few days in this magnificent area but it was time to move on. After suffering another session driving the road to and from hell we packed and headed off to the Los Haitises National Park in the far east of the republic. The drive was quite uneventful, passing through ever more North American style towns along ever better highways until we reached our delightful lunch stop. Yes Burger King! The worst food I have eaten in the Americas I think. In fact was it food? Were we supposed to do something else with it? An insulation material maybe, or some kind of bio-fuel. But we were not alone and others were eating the stuff as well. We carried on through the hills and down to our spectacular Hotel at Cano Honda where we enjoyed some great food and a relaxing drink looking out over the mangroves and coastal forests; a dramatic contrast with life in the west of the country.

The Los Haitises National Park is now the last stronghold for the Ridgway's Hawk. This species is now the subject of a programme to reintroduce it to other protected areas in the east.



*Los Haitises National Park, as seen from our hotel veranda (Eustace Barnes).*

Our full day exploring the Los Haitises National Park was a joy. We saw Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo and Mangrove Cuckoo along with dozens of Palmchats. Flowering shrubs held Hispaniolan Mango, Hispaniolan

Emerald and Vervain Hummingbirds while the palm groves hosted numerous pairs of White-necked Crows and Plain Pigeons. The woodlands here also play host to wintering Northern Parula, Cape May Warbler and American Redstart which we had been seeing throughout. Broad-billed Tody was not common but we did see a couple of pairs along with a Hispaniolan Oriole. Walking to an area where our target nests we were almost immediately treated to great views of a female Ridgway's Hawk that landed in front of us to give spectacular views. We subsequently saw the male standing guard in a cercropia near the nest.



*Ridgway's Hawk (Eustace Barnes)*

We spent quite a bit of time watching these birds and enjoyed seeing many of the other endemics we had become familiar with over the last few days, including Antillean Piculet, numerous pairs of White-necked Crows and yet more Cave Swallows and Caribbean Martins. After chatting to the farmer who keeps guard over the nest we headed back to the hotel for a relaxing lunch. In the afternoon we headed to the coast where, watching the sea from the beach in town, we saw Cabot's and Royal Terns, Laughing Gull, Brown Pelicans and Magnificent Frigatebirds but little else. The nearby mangroves gave us another very vocal pair of Clapper Rails and several Mangrove Warblers. The open agricultural areas near our hotel were not particularly productive. There were a few Village Weavers and Helmeted Guineafowl but not much else. It was time to go and so we headed back to Santo Domingo for our flight on to San Juan and the Puerto Rican episode in our Antillean adventure.





*The unique Palmchat (Eustace Barnes)*

The Palmchat builds large colonial nests, much like social weavers. These huge structures are often used by Ridgway's Hawks on which they build their nests.



*Vervain Hummingbird (left) and Hispaniolan Mango (right) Eustace Barnes*



*White-tailed Tropicbird at Cabo Rojo (Eustace Barnes)*

Puerto Rico and all out car park birding for three days. In fact we did see more or less everything actually in a car park somewhere on the island. Once we had our huge van packed we took ourselves to Fajardo and the very first car park in which we found Antillean Crested Hummingbird, Green-throated Carib, Pearly-eyed Thrasher and Puerto Rican Oriole. Off to a flying start working through the endemics. It was great, as was the downstairs diner where we enjoyed a Mexican. We drove around the eastern headlands and found our first Adelaide's Warbler in some tall deciduous woodlands. This is not a common species at this end of the island and it was a surprise to find it, but there again no one looks for it here.

The following morning we drove up into the El Yunque State Forest for some great birding. It was overcast and raining a little. At our first stop we found quite a number of our targeted species starting with Green Mango, a rather wet Puerto Rican Woodpecker, the Puerto Rican Loggerhead Kingbird, Puerto Rican Flycatcher, Puerto Rican Spindalis, Red-legged Thrush and our first Puerto Rican Bullfinch with its loud ringing song. After a short shower we emerged to find Puerto Rican Tanager and Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo which gave good views. The tanager is interesting because although it is unique it does superficially resemble the Chat Tanagers of Hispaniola. However, it is a canopy species that hangs out in extended family groups and not a skulking bird of thickets. Anyway, we walked down the narrow forested road a short way until a distinctive call led us to our first Puerto Rican Tody; the fourth and last of the tour. Our business done it was time to go; just as the grockles were arriving for ice cream and a shot of the waterfall. They were mercifully later than usual but they were beginning to block the road. Definitely time to go! Crossing the island via Comerio to La Parguera was a tortuous drive along many sinuous roads crossing numerous low ridges until we reached the lowlands at Ponce. Comerio is a site for Plain Pigeon but as we had seen Plain Pigeon on both Jamaica and Hispaniola we were not looking too hard. We did see dozens of Scaly-naped Pigeons and maybe a couple of Plain Pigeons but they are clearly in a decided minority here. In compensation we found another Puerto Rican Tody.





*Puerto Rican Tody (Eustace Barnes)*

La Parguera is a great base from which to visit a number of sites in the south-west. It is famously the best area in which to see Yellow-shouldered Blackbird which we saw in good numbers flying to the mangroves where they roost. I suppose we probably saw about fifty or so along with a few Shiny Cowbirds and Greater Antillean Grackles. At dusk some of us saw a couple of early Antillean Nighthawks. The mangroves by the hotel held another pair of aggressive Clapper Rail which ran around our feet. They are such good value when they get mad. We then headed east to the Guanica State forest; a well preserved area of dry forest. We found Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo, Woodpecker, Tody, Spindalis, Bullfinch, Adelaide's Warbler and after a brief search near the coast the local form of Caribbean Eleania. Our night birding here produced several Puerto Rican Nightjars and we did get some great views of this localised species. We also heard the Puerto Rican Screech Owl but try as we might it did not show.

After a pre-dawn session at Guanica we headed to the Mariaco State forest north of town. These beautiful cloud forests sit on a high ridge overlooking the south-western lowlands and hills. It often rains or is cloudy here but we were lucky and the weather held off. Working the tall bromeliad laden emergents we found our first Elfin Woods Warblers which gave tremendous views. Odd that such a distinctive looking bird should have been overlooked for so long. It took rather longer to find Puerto Rican Vireo but eventually we all got good views and in no time we had found several other pairs. A Sharp-shinned Hawk flew past a watch point. The form found here is very uncommon but is found here more easily than elsewhere. The pewee was holding out on us and so we began to descend stopping at a couple of sites until we found a pair in a mixed flock at KM9 on our way down to Sabana Grande.



*Elfin Woods Warbler (Eustace Barnes)*

We still had one more species to see; the Puerto Rican Screech Owl. We had found a pair at the Guanica State forest but, to see one, we needed a more responsive pair and so we decided to return to the Mariaco State forest. At dusk a pair started to call. They took their time before they really got going and eventually a bird responded and came in to give superb views. Thank goodness for that I murmured and with that we were done. We did have some time on our hands and we devoted it to visiting the Cartagena Lagoon and Cabo Rojo in the far south-west where we enjoyed just birding.



*Cartagena Lagoon with the Mariaco State Forest in the distance (Eustace Barnes)*

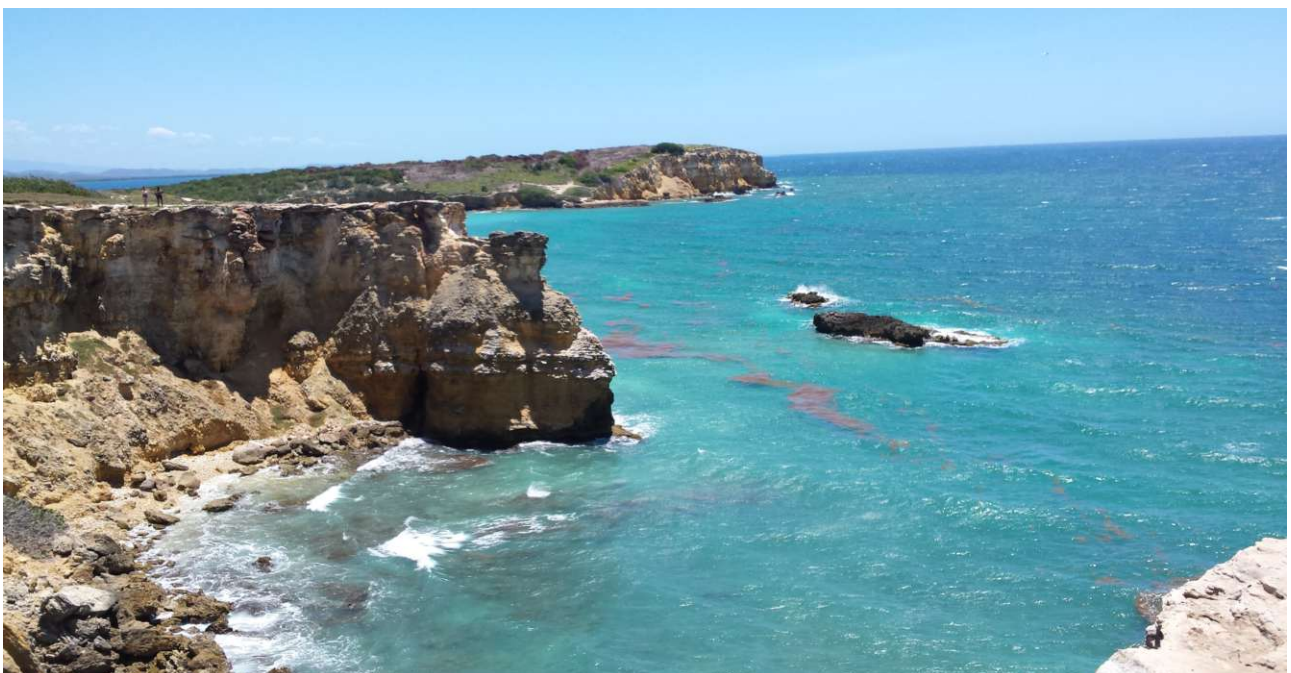


Cartagena Lagoon is a good site for West Indian Whistling Duck although we saw none. There were White-cheeked Pintail, Blue-winged Teal, American and Caribbean Coot, American Osprey, Least Sandpiper and Semi-palmated Plover along with Yellow Bishop and Bronze Munia.

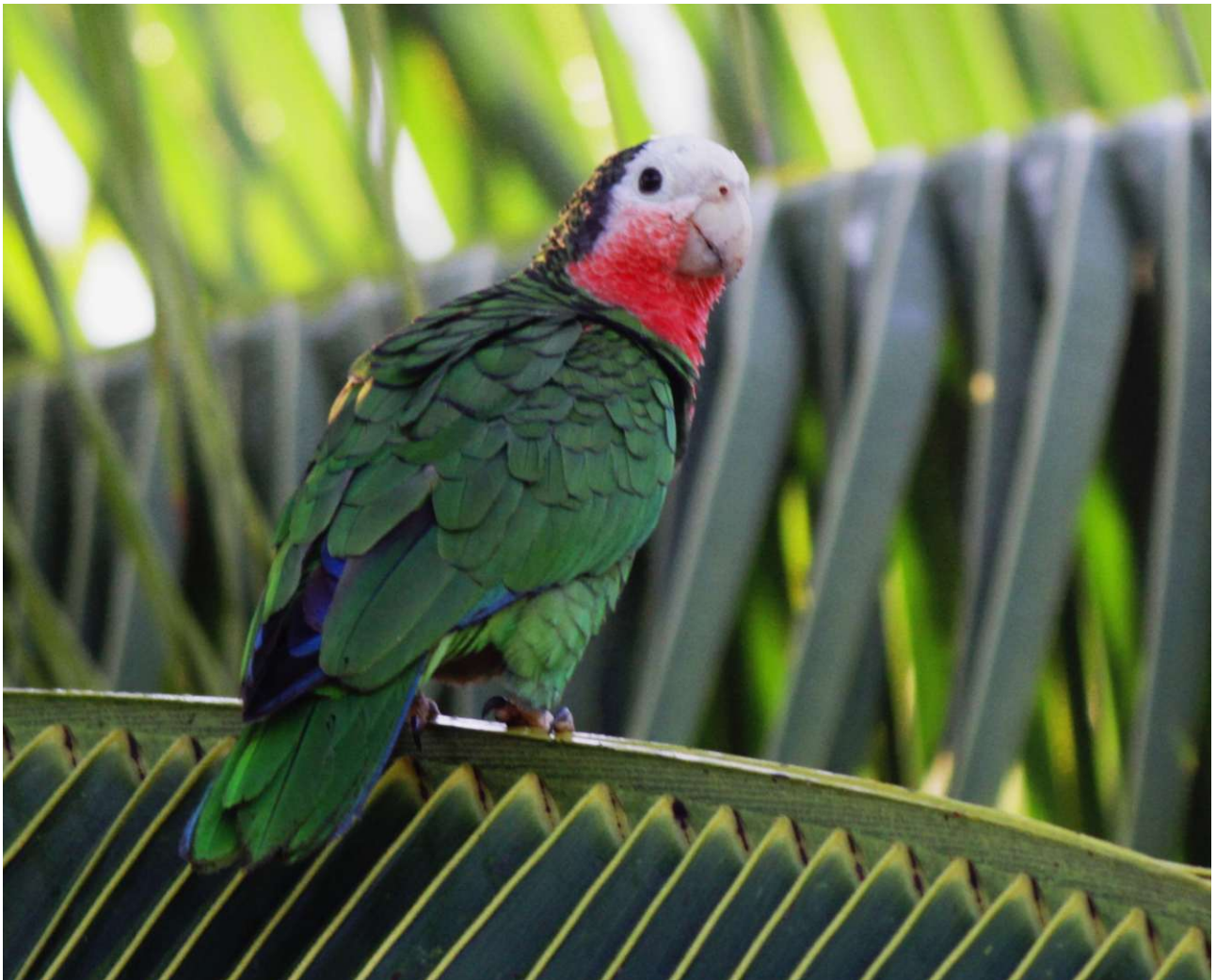


*Immature Brown Booby (Eustace Barnes)*

Moving on we found a large group of Least Terns, 25 immature Brown Boobies and a White-tailed Tropicbird on the cliffs at Cabo Rojo. We also found a single Antillean Nighthawk flushed by some tourists. It was very enjoyable but we were winding down and it was time for the next instalment of our Caribbean odyssey; the Bahamas.



*Cabo Rojo, south-west Puerto Rico (Eustace Barnes)*



*Bahaman Amazon (Eustace Barnes)*

Arriving on Abaco the following day we had to get right back to doing everything in slow motion. Nothing here is done in a rush if it is done at all. Interestingly, it has the laid back charm of Jamaica, and like that island, is a peaceful and magnificent place to go birding. Once we picked up our vehicle, found our digs and bought some snacks we drove south to the South Abaco National Park; about 20,000 Ha of pine forest and coastal mangroves set aside to protect the Bahaman Amazon. The whole afternoon was a stunning drive through magnificent forests, along an empty superb road stopping for a number of great birding sessions.



*Bahama Yellowthroat (Eustace Barnes)*



Our first brief stop gave us the huge Bahama Yellowthroat. It really is a large bird for a yellowthroat. We also found our first Western Spindalis of the black-backed form *zena*. Obviously a separate species but since few ornithologists come to the Bahamas they have been overlooked. We also found Cuban Emerald and numerous Northern Mockingbirds. A little further south in the pine forests we found the Bahama Mockingbird to be common along with the *bahamensis* form of Loggerhead Kingbird; another good species, distinct both morphologically and vocally. It gave no response what-so-ever to recordings of either the Hispaniolan or Jamaican Loggerheads. Again, an overlooked species!



*Bahama Mockingbird (Eustace Barnes)*

Driving through the park along a narrow, little used road was very enjoyable and we quickly connected with Olive-capped Warbler and Bahaman Warbler, the endemic Thick-billed Vireo and good numbers of Crescent-eyed or Cuban Pewee. There were also numerous Cuban Emeralds, Western Spindalis, and wintering warblers but no parrots.



*Bahaman Warbler (Eustace Barnes)*

Having drawn a blank with the Amazons we retraced our steps and worked through another area of more broken and diverse vegetation. We found West Indian Woodpecker, La Sagra's Flycatcher and Greater Antillean Bullfinch and in the late afternoon heard the distinctive screeching of parrots. However, try as we might the fast failing light did not allow us time to search. As it was we had had a great afternoon's birding and returned to town for one of the best meals of the tour!



*Cuban Pewee (left) and Thick-billed Vireo (right) Eustace Barnes*

The following morning we returned to continue our search for the parrots and within minutes of arrival we were watching dozens of noisy active pairs of Bahaman Amazons feeding in fruiting trees. We spent some time watching these pretty psittacids while a Red-legged Thrush picked about on the ground in front of us. Cuban Emeralds, Western Spindalis and Greater Antillean Bullfinches flitted about and a small covey of Bobwhites were scraping about on the verges. It was 7.15 and we were done and so we headed to the northern end of the island where we saw a couple of West Indian Woodpeckers and White-tailed Tropicbirds.



*Red-legged Thrush (Eustace Barnes)*



Our next port of call was Nassau on New Providence. What a contrast with Abaco. Not a sleepy little back water but a bustling holiday resort. Not our sort of place really but once we got to 'The Retreat' we were transported from the concrete horror of the island to an island of tranquillity; a relictual scrap of tall woodland in a biological desert. It turned out to be a very productive scrap of woodland for us with up to 6 Bahama Woodstars, including a couple of males giving us another target species. We also saw White-crowned Pigeons, Caribbean Dove, Mangrove Cuckoo, Red-legged Thrush and a great selection of migrants including Northern Parula, Cape May, Blackpoll, Magnolia and Prairie Warblers.



*Bahama Woodstar; adult male on the right and immature male on the left (Eustace Barnes).*

We then headed back to the airport for our onward flight to Andros; one of the more sleepy and neglected islands in the Bahaman archipelago.



*Caribbean Dove (Eustace Barnes)*

Indeed, Andros is a backwater in need of a make over. On arrival we not met with our vehicle! Executive Cars had forgotten we were coming! Not to worry, off to the yard to pick up another vehicle. I thought they were joking when we pulled up at a scrap yard, but no our vehicle lay amongst a number of machines missing wheels, tyres, engines, doors and other important components of motorised forms of transportation. Our vehicle appeared to be whole with doors, windows, wheels and an engine. However, it lacked something else; the somewhat less tangible maintenance. This also applied to the roads on the island of which about four fifths were pot holes. It came as no surprise therefore that our vehicle had no suspension and suffered a surprising number of creaks and groans. Anyway, we headed off in our rattle trap to Fresh Creek for a couple of nights bumping and clattering along the highway. We did not arrive in time for any initial exploration and had to search the nearby settlement for a restaurant.



*Bahama Oriole (Eustace Barnes).*

The following morning we could hear the Bahama Oriole singing before dawn. As it got light we enjoyed great views of this critically endangered species in the gardens of our delightfully run down hotel perched on the side of a beautiful creek. The gardens also held Painted Bunting, Cape May, Black-throated Blue and Blackpoll Warblers. We returned to the dining room for breakfast which took a frustratingly long time. Anyway, our primary target was in the garden and on our list but there quite number of other species we still needed to find.

After a surprisingly good breakfast we headed north along the holey highway and through the pine woods where our dear machine expired or rather exploded in a cloud of steam. The rocky surface had shaken free the radiator cap and we were forced to fill the radiator with salt water! We clattered on to Bill's Blue Hole to search the trails through a nearby hummock. We could hear doves calling and after quietly walking through the woods we found a very cooperative Key West Quail Dove. This was one of Max's top targets and he was very pleased. On the Bahamas the Key West Quail Dove has a particular liking for hummocks; wooded island mounds surrounded by otherwise unsuitable habitat.





*Key West Quail Dove (Eustace Barnes).*

As we were heading back to the highway Tom spotted a pair of Ospreys which had us spilling out of the van. They turned out to be Caribbean Ospreys which are certainly quite different from the migratory American Ospreys with almost entirely white heads and paler upperparts.



*Great Lizard Cuckoo (Eustace Barnes).*

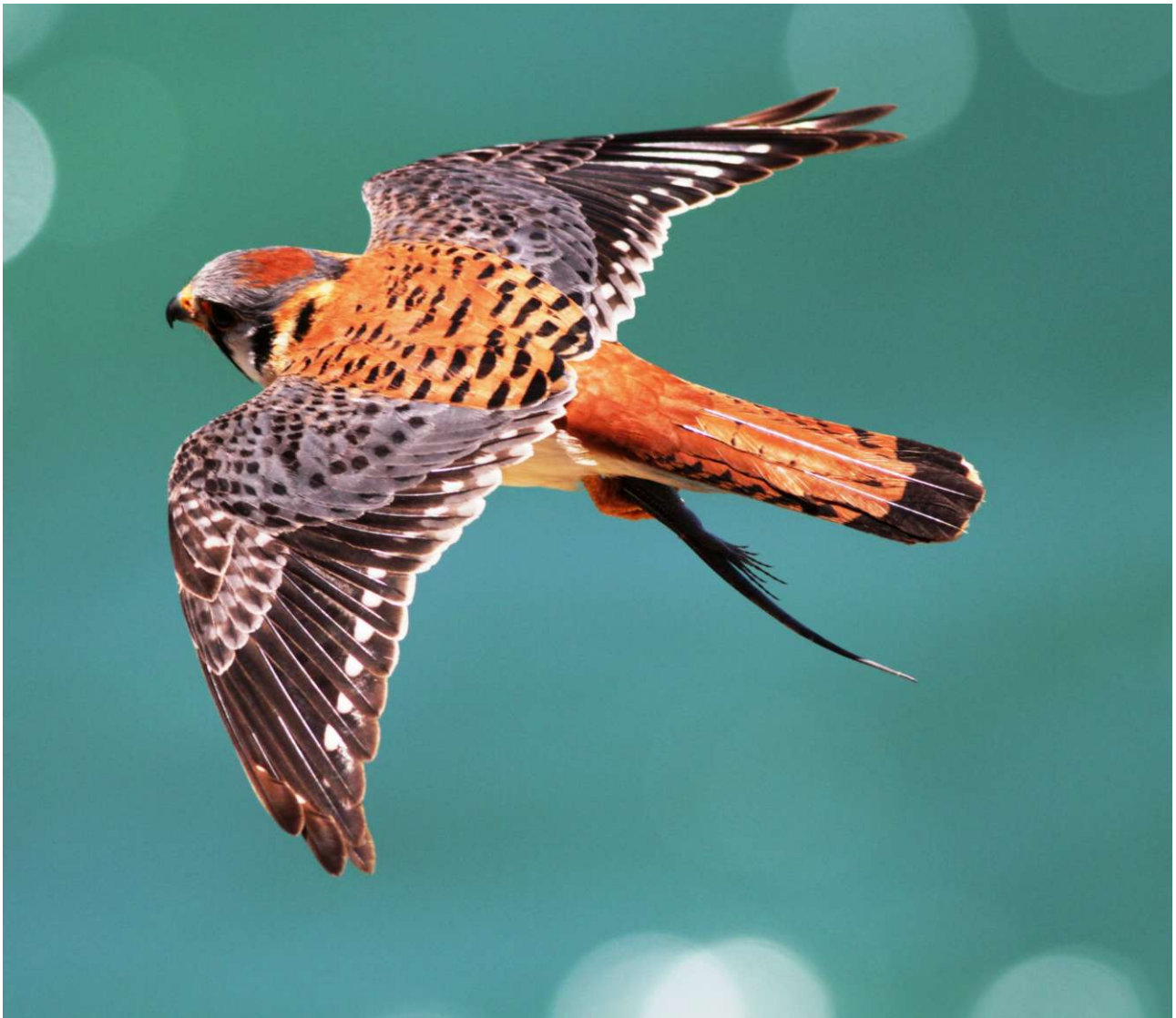
It was but a short ride to find a suitable area of tall evergreen woodlands. Rumbling north we took the first track we could to search for our remaining targets. We found another covey of Bobwhites and while looking for a woodpecker digging out a nest hole, heard to the grating tones of the Great Lizard Cuckoo which was lured into view in no time. We then taped out a Hairy Woodpecker, which would have killed us if we had been a bit smaller.



*Downy Woodpecker (Eustace Barnes).*

We had found all of our targets and it was time to wrap things up with a fine meal on the quayside. The Bahamas had exceeded our expectations. We had found all the species we could possibly expect to see and had great views of all of them. We headed to the airport for our flight which was delayed owing to a thunderstorm. The storm brought with it a large number of Swallows, a Sand Martin, a Solitary Sandpiper and a female Cuban Martin. A great way to end the tour!





*A stunning American Kestrel from the cliffs at Cabo Rojo. (Eustace Barnes)*

## 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).

All species given following acronyms to indicate which islands they were recorded on.

J = Jamaica. DR = Dominican Republic. PR = Puerto Rico. B = Bahamas.

**West Indian Whistling Duck** ◊ *Dendrocygna arborea* DR. Severn seen in the Santo Domingo Botanical gardens.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* J, DR, PR, B.. Recorded on all islands.

**White-cheeked Pintail (Bahama P)** *Anas bahamensis* PR, B. Seen at Laguna Cartagena.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis* PR. Up to 25 at Laguna Cartagena.

**Helmeted Guineafowl** *Numida meleagris* DR. One possible wild bird seen near Lago Enriquillo.

**Northern Bobwhite** *Colinus virginianus* B. Small covey on Abaco and another on Andros.

**Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus* J, DR, PR, B. Several found at Marshal's Pen.  
**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps* J, DR, PR, B. A couple on Jamaica with one at the Black river Morass.  
**White-tailed Tropicbird** *Phaethon lepturus* J, PR, B. Seen Happy Grove, Cabo Rojo and on Abaco.  
**American White Ibis** B. Seen wandering around the hotel grounds on Andros.  
**Glossy Ibis** *Plegadis falcinellus* J, DR, PR, B. Several found on Jamaica.  
**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja* DR. Seen near Cabo Rojo.  
**Least Bittern** *Ixobrychus exilis* J, DR, PR. Nine at the Black river Morass was unexpected.  
**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* J, DR, PR. Three at the Black river Morass  
**Yellow-crowned Night Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea* J, DR, B. Two near Frenchman's Cove.  
**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens* J, DR, PR, B. A few at the Black river Morass  
**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* J, DR, PR, B. Common throughout.  
**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea Herodias* J, DR, PR, B. A couple at the Black river Morass.  
**Great Egret** *Ardea alba* J, DR, PR, B  
**Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens* J, B  
**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor* J, DR, PR, B  
**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea* J, DR, PR, B  
**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* J, DR, PR, B  
**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis* J, DR, PR, B  
**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens* J, DR, PR, B  
**Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* PR. Seen at Cabo Rojo.  
**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auritus* B. Seen on Abaco and New Providence.  
**Neotropic Comorant** *Phalacrocorax olivaceus* B. Seen on Abaco.  
**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura* J, DR, PR, B.  
**American Osprey** *Pandion carolinensis* J, DR, PR, B.  
**Caribbean Osprey** ♦ *Pandion carolinensis ridgwayi* B. A pair seen on Andros. Very distinctive indeed.  
**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus* PR, B. Form *venustus* seen on PR. A migrant seen on Abaco.  
**Ridgway's Hawk** ♦ *Buteo ridgwayi* DR. A pair seen well at a nest site near Cano Hondo.  
**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis* J, DR, PR, B.  
**Clapper (Caribbean R) Rail** *Rallus longirostris caribaeus* J, DR, PR. Seen well on three islands.  
**Sora** *Porzana carolina* J. Seen at the black River Morass.  
**Spotted Rail** *Pardirallus maculatus* J. Absolutely superb views of a pair at the Black River morass.  
**Purple Gallinule** *Porphyrio martinicus* J, DR, PR.  
**Laughing (Common G) Gallinule** *Gallinula galeata* J, DR, PR, B.  
**American Coot** *Fulica americana* J, DR, PR, B  
**Caribbean Coot** ♦ *Fulica caribaea* DR, PR. Literally thousands on the Haitian border. A few at Laguna Cartagena.  
**Limpkin** *Aramus guarauna* J, B.  
**American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus* B.  
**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus* J, DR, PR, B  
**Grey Plover** *Pluvialis squatarola* J.  
**Semi-palmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* PR, B.  
**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferous* DR, PR, B  
**Snowy Plover** *Charadrius nivosus* PR. A few at Cabo Rojo.  
**Northern Jacana** *Jacana spinosa* J, DR.  
**Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* DR, B  
**Hudsonian Whimbrel** *Numenius hudsonicus* B.  
**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca* PR, B.  
**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* J, DR, PR, B  
**Solitary Sandpiper** *Tringa solitaria* PR.  
**Willet** *Tringa semipalmata* J, DR, B.  
**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* J, DR, PR, B  
**Ruddy Turnstone** *Arenaria interpres* J, DR, PR, B  
**Semi-palmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla* PR.  
**Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri* PR  
**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla* PR.  
**Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus* PR.



Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla* J, DR, PR, B  
 Gull-billed Tern *Geochelidon nilotica* B  
 Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus* J, DR, PR, B  
 Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acuflavidus* DR.  
 Least Tern *Sternula antillarum* PR. About 25 seen at Cabo Rojo.  
 Rock Dove *Columba livia* J, DR, PR, B  
 White-crowned Pigeon *Patagioenas leucocephala* J, DR, PR, B  
 Scaly-naped Pigeon ◇ *Patagioenas squamosa* J, DR, PR. Very few on Jamaica but otherwise common.  
 Ring-tailed Pigeon ◇ *Patagioenas caribaea* J. Good numbers Cockpit country and Eccelsdown road.  
 Plain Pigeon ◇ *Patagioenas inornata* J, DR, PR. One seen in Cockpit Country was a surprise.  
 Eurasian Collared Dove *Streptopelia decaocto* DR, PR, B.  
 Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura* J, DR, PR, B  
 Zenaida Dove *Zenaida aurita* J, DR, PR. A fine looking dove.  
 White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* J, DR, PR.  
 Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina* J, DR, PR, B  
 Caribbean Dove ◇ (White-bellied D) *Leptotila jamaicensis* J, B. Introduced to New Providence where common.  
 White-fronted (Hispaniolan Q-D) Quail Dove ◇ *Geotrygon leucometopia* DR. Seen in the Sierra de Bahoruco.  
 Crested Quail Dove ◇ *Geotrygon versicolor* J. Seen Marshall's Pen, Blue Mountains and Eccelsdown road.  
 Key West Quail Dove ◇ *Geotrygon chrysie* DR, B. Seen Kate's Camp and on Andros.  
 Ruddy Quail Dove *Geotrygon montana* J, DR, PR. Rather numerous on Jamaica.  
 Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani* J, DR, PR, B  
 Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* J, DR, PR, B. A common cuckoo.  
 Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo ◇ *Coccyzus Pluvialis* J. A stunning endemic seen well at Marshall's Pen.  
 Bay-breasted Cuckoo ◇ *Coccyzus ruficularis* DR. A single bird found near Kate's Camp.  
 Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo ◇ *Coccyzus vetula* J. A few seen Marshall's Pen and Eccelsdown road.  
 Great (Bahaman G LC) Lizard Cuckoo ◇ *Coccyzus merlini bahamensis* B. Seen on Andros.  
 Puerto Rican Lizard Cuckoo ◇ *Coccyzus vieilloti* PR. Common.  
 Hispaniolan Lizard Cuckoo ◇ *Coccyzus longirostris* DR. Another common cuckoo.  
 Western Barn Owl *Tyto alba* J. Of the form *furcata*. Seen near the Black River Morass.  
 Ashy-faced Owl ◇ *Tyto glaucops* DR. A beautiful owl.  
 Puerto Rican Screech Owl ◇ *Megascops nudipes* PR. It took time but we got it! Needed to get to the right car park!  
 Burrowing Owl *Athene cunicularia* DR.  
 Jamaican Owl ◇ *Pseudoscops grammicus* J. A pre-dawn wait located a pair of roosting birds for us to watch all day.  
 Northern Potoo *Nyctibius jamaicensis* J. Several at Marshall's Pen.  
 Antillean Nighthawk ◇ *Chordeiles gundlachii* PR. A few noted of this late migrant at Cabo Rojo.  
 Least Poorwill ◇ *Siphonorhis brewsteri* DR. A second go in a better position gave us superb views.  
 Hispaniolan Nightjar ◇ *Antrostomus ekmani* (H) DR. Seen by some. It was unfortunate we did not all see it.  
 Puerto Rican Nightjar ◇ *Antrostomus noctitherus* PR. Very active in the Guanica State forest. Good views.  
 American Black Swift *Cypseloides niger* J. Seen at Happy Grove.  
 White-collared Swift *Streptoprocne zonaris* J, Seen with preceding species.  
 Antillean Palm Swift ◇ *Tachornis phoenicobia* J, DR. Common only on Hispaniola.  
 Antillean (Puerto Rican M) Mango ◇ *Anthracothonax dominicus aurulentus* PR. Seen at several localities.  
 Antillean (Hispaniolan M) Mango ◇ *Anthracothonax dominicus dominicus* DR. Seen throughout.  
 Green Mango ◇ *Anthracothona viridis* PR. Good old car park birding gave us several sightings of this hummer.  
 Jamaican Mango ◇ *Anthracothona mango* J. Not easy this year. One male at Marshall's Pen.  
 Green-throated Carib ◇ *Eulampis holosericeus* PR. Another car park another target species.  
 Antillean Crested Hummingbird ◇ *Orthorhyncus cristatus* PR. Same car park as preceding species.  
 Red-billed Streamertail ◇ *Trochilus Polytmus* J. A stunner, commonly seen.  
 Black-billed Streamertail ◇ *Trochilus scitulus* J. We found a display area. Another stunner.  
 Cuban Emerald ◇ *Chlorostilbon ricordii* B. Very common on Abaco.  
 Hispaniolan Emerald ◇ *Chlorostilbon swainsonii* DR. Not uncommon in the west.  
 Puerto Rican Emerald ◇ *Chlorostilbon maugaeus* PR. We had to hit a couple of car parks for this one.  
 Bahama Woodstar ◇ *Calliphlox evelynae* B. A lovely little hummer, seen at the Retreat.  
 Vervain Hummingbird ◇ *Mellisuga minima* J, DR  
 Hispaniolan Trogon ◇ *Priotelus roseigaster* DR. A rather beautiful Trogon.

**Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon* PR, B  
**Broad-billed Tody** ♦ *Todus subulatus* DR. A glistening emerald in the dry woodlands!  
**Narrow-billed Tody** ♦ *Todus angustirostris* DR. Another cracker!  
**Jamaican Tody** ♦ *Todus todus* J. Our first morning gave us this characterful little chap.  
**Puerto Rican Tody** ♦ *Todus mexicanus* PR. We had to walk a little from the car park for this one, but not far.  
**Antillean Piculet** ♦ *Nesocittes micromegas* DR. No challenge here.  
**Puerto Rican Woodpecker** ♦ *Melanerpes portoricensis* PR. Found in a few car parks.  
**Hispaniolan Woodpecker** ♦ *Melanerpes striatus* DR. Very numerous throughout.  
**Jamaican Woodpecker** ♦ *Melanerpes radiolatus* J. Abundant.  
**West Indian Woodpecker** ♦ *Melanerpes superciliaris* B. Common on Abaco.  
**Hairy Woodpecker** *Picoides villosus* B. Seen on Andros.  
**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius* J, DR, PR, B  
**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* J, PR, B  
**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* J, B.  
**Olive-throated (Jamaican P) Parakeet** ♦ *Eupsittula nana* J, DR. Introduced to Hispaniola.  
**Hispaniolan Parakeet** ♦ *Psittacara chloropterus* DR. Seen at few locations.  
**White-winged Parakeet** *Brotogeris versicolurus* PR. A few at Sabana Grande.  
**Bahaman Amazon** ♦ *Amazona bahamensis* B. Up to 50 on Abaco.  
**Yellow-billed Amazon** ♦ *Amazona collaria* J. Rather numerous in the cockpit Country.  
**Hispaniolan Amazon** ♦ *Amazona ventralis* DR. Small numbers near Puerto Escondido.  
**Black-billed Amazon** ♦ *Amazona agilis* J. Very common in Cockpit country and along the Ecclesdown road.  
**Jamaican (J Myiopagis) Elaenia** ♦ *Myiopagis cotta* J. A few noted at Marshall's Pen.  
**Caribbean Elaenia** ♦ *Elaenia martinica riisii* PR. A couple found in the Guanica State forest.  
**Greater Antillean Elaenia** ♦ *Elaenia fallax fallax* J. A few in the Blue mountains. Not common.  
**Greater Antillean Elaenia** ♦ *Elaenia fallax cherriei* DR. Fairly common in the Sierra de Baboruco.  
**Cuban (Crescent-eyed P) Pewee** ♦ *Contopus caribaeus bahamensis* B. Common on Abaco and Andros .  
**Hispaniolan Pewee** ♦ *Contopus hispaniolensis* DR. A few noted in the highlands.  
**Puerto Rican Pewee** ♦ *Contopus portoricensis* PR. Not at all common. Only seen in the Mariaco State Forest.  
**Jamaican Pewee** ♦ *Contopus pallidus* J. Small numbers at Marshall's Pen.  
**Grey Kingbird** *Tyrannus dominicensis* J, DR, PR, B . Common.  
**Loggerhead (Jamaican K) Kingbird** ♦ *Tyrannus caudifasciatus jamaicensis* J. Abundant.  
**Loggerhead (Puerto Rican K) Kingbird** ♦ *Tyrannus caudifasciatus taylori* PR. Fairly common in tall forest.  
**Loggerhead (Hispaniolan K) Kingbird** ♦ *Tyrannus caudifasciatus gabbii* DR. Local in pine forests.  
**Loggerhead (Bahaman K) Kingbird** ♦ *Tyrannus caudifasciatus bahamensis* B. Fairly common in pine forests.  
**Sad Flycatcher** ♦ *Myiarchus barbirostris* J. Common.  
**Rufous-tailed Flycatcher** ♦ *Myiarchus validus* J. Small numbers noted.  
**La Sagra's (Bahaman F) Flycatcher** ♦ *Myiarchus sagrae lucaysiensis* B. Common.  
**Stolid (Hispaniolan S F) Flycatcher** ♦ *Myiarchus stolidus dominicensis* DR. Common in dry forest.  
**Stolid (Jamaican S F) Flycatcher** ♦ *Myiarchus stolidus stolidus* J. Only seen in dry forest.  
**Puerto Rican Flycatcher** ♦ *Myiarchus antillarum* PR. Found throughout the island.  
**Jamaican Becard** ♦ *Pachyrhamphus niger* J. Easily found at Marshall's Pen.  
**Thick-billed Vireo** ♦ *Vireo crassirostris* B. Common on Abaco and Andros.  
**Jamaican Vireo** ♦ *Vireo modestus* J. Fairly common.  
**Puerto Rican Vireo** ♦ *Vireo latimeri* PR. Not uncommon in the eastern highlands.  
**Flat-billed Vireo** ♦ *Vireo nanus* DR. A few found in the western highlands.  
**Blue Mountain Vireo** ♦ *Vireo osburni* J. Not uncommon in the Blue mountains.  
**Black-whiskered Vireo** *Vireo altiloquus* J, DR, PR, B.  
**Hispaniolan Palm Crow** *Corvus palmarum* DR. A few in the west.  
**Jamaican Crow** ♦ *Corvus jamaicensis* J. Local in humid hill forest.  
**White-necked Crow** ♦ *Corvus leucognaphalus* DR. A few in the west. Common in Los Haitises NP.  
**Palmchat** ♦ *Dulus dominicus* DR. Common to abundant throughout.  
**Golden Swallow** ♦ *Tachycineta euchrysea* DR. Small numbers above Zapoten.  
**Bahama Swallow** ♦ *Tachycineta cyaneoviridis* B. Somewhat numerous.  
**Caribbean Martin** ♦ *Progne dominicensis* J, DR, PR. Small numbers throughout.  
**Cuban Martin** *Progne cryptoleuca* A single female at San Andros airport after a big storm.



**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* J. A few noted.  
**Bank Swallow** *Riparia riparia* A single bird at San Andros airport.  
**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* J, DR, PR, B. Small numbers throughout.  
**Cave (Caribbean S) Swallow** *Petrochelidon fulva fulva* J, DR, PR. Not uncommon.  
**Blue-grey Gnatcatcher** *Polioptila caerulea* B. Common.  
**Grey Catbird** *Dumetella carolinensis* B. Very common on Abaco.  
**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos* J, DR, PR, B. Abundant.  
**Bahama Mockingbird** ♦ *Mimus gundlachii* J,B. Small numbers on the Portland Peninsula. Common Bahamas.  
**Pearly-eyed Thrasher** ♦ *Margarops fuscatus* PR. Another car park bird but common throughout the island.  
**Common Starling** *Sturnus vulgaris* J, B. A few noted.  
**Rufous-throated Solitaire** ♦ *Myadestes genibarbis* J, DR. A very smart bird.  
**White-eyed Thrush** ♦ *Turdus jamaicensis* J. Common.  
**La Selle Thrush** ♦ *Turdus swalesi* DR. up to 7 seen above Zapoten.  
**White-chinned Thrush** ♦ *Turdus aurantius* J. Common in tall forest.  
**Red-legged (Bahaman R L T) Thrush** ♦ *Turdus plumbeus plumbeus* B. A common bird.  
**Red-legged Thrush** ♦ *Turdus plumbeus ardosiaceus* DR, PR. Less common than the above form but easily found  
**House Sparrow** *Passer domesticus* J, DR, PR, B. Common.  
**Village Weaver** *Ploceus cucullatus* DR. Small numbers throughout lowlands.  
**Yellow-crowned Bishop** *Euplectes afer* PR. A few at Laguna Cartagena.  
**Indian Silverbill** *Euodice malabarica* PR. Seen at La Parguera.  
**Bronze Mannikin** *Lonchura cucullata* PR. Found at Laguna Cartagena.  
**Scaly-breasted Munia** *Lonchura punctulata* J. Found in Cockpit country.  
**Tricoloured Mannikin** *Lonchura Malacca* (LO) DR. A small flock noted in Los Haitises NP.  
**Hispaniolan Crossbill** ♦ *Loxia megaplaga* DR. Small numbers noted above Las Mercedes and Zapoten.  
**Antillean Siskin** ♦ *Spinus dominicensis* DR. Found below Aguacate and at Puerto Escondido.  
**Jamaican Euphonia** ♦ *Euphonia Jamaica* J. Not uncommon.  
**Antillean Euphonia** ♦ *Euphonia musica* PR. Small numbers in the Guanica Sate forest.  
**Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapilla* DR, PR, B  
**Worm-eating Warbler** *Helmitheros vermivorum* J. A couple noted at Marshall's Pen and Eccelsdown road.  
**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis* J, DR, PR.  
**Black and white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia* J, DR, PR, B  
**Bahama Yellowthroat** ♦ *Geothlypis rostrata* B. A giant Yellowthroat!  
**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas* J, PR. Common in the black River morass.  
**Elfin Woods Warbler** ♦ *Setophaga angelae* PR. Easily found in the Mariaco State forest car parks.  
**Arrowhead Warbler** ♦ *Setophaga pharetra* J. Not uncommon.  
**American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla* J, DR, PR, B  
**Cape May Warbler** *Setophaga tigrina* DR B. One of the prettiest warblers.  
**Northern Parula** *Setophaga americana* J, DR, PR, B  
**Magnolia Warbler** *Setophaga magnolia* B. A stunning male at the Retreat.  
**Mangrove Warbler** *Setophaga petechia* J, DR.  
**Blackpoll Warbler** *Setophaga striata* B. Seen in Nassau, New Providence..  
**Black-throated Blue Warbler** *Setophaga caerulescens* J, DR, PR, B  
**Palm Warbler** *Setophaga palmarum* PR, B.  
**Olive-capped Warbler** ♦ *Setophaga pityophila* B. Common in pine forests on Abaco  
**Pine Warbler** *Setophaga pinus* DR, B. Common in the Bahamas.  
**Bahama Warbler** ♦ *Setophaga flavescens* B. A few on Abaco.  
**Prairie Warbler** *Setophaga discolor* J, DR, PR, B  
**Adelaide's Warbler** ♦ *Setophaga adelaidae* PR.  
**Jamaican Oriole** ♦ *Icterus leucopteryx* J. Abundant.  
**Venezuelan Troupial** *Icterus icterus* PR. Seen in a few places.  
**Bahama Oriole** ♦ *Icterus northropi* B. Seen on Andros. Finished once the cowbirds get there.  
**Puerto Rican Oriole** ♦ *Icterus portoricensis* PR. In trouble, courtesy of the parasitic cowbirds.  
**Hispaniolan Oriole** ♦ *Icterus dominicensis* DR. Small numbers noted.  
**Jamaican Blackbird** ♦ *Nesopsar nigerrimus* J. Found only in the Blue mountains and along the Eccelsdown road.  
**Yellow-shouldered Blackbird** ♦ *Agelaius xanthomus* PR. Surprising numbers found at la Parguera.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus* B. Good numbers.  
**Shiny Cowbird** *Molothrus bonariensis* J, DR, PR, B. Common throughout, except Bahamas.  
**Greater Antillean Grackle** ♦ *Quiscalus niger* J, DR, PR. Common.  
**Bananaquit** *Coereba flaveola* J, DR, PR, B. Common. White throated form on Bahamas less numerous.  
**Yellow-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris olivaceus* J, DR, PR.  
**Black-faced Grassquit** *Tiaris bicolor* J, DR, PR, B  
**Yellow-shouldered Grassquit** ♦ *Loxipasser anoanthus* J. Small numbers in forested areas.  
**Puerto Rican Bullfinch** ♦ *Loxigilla portoricensis* PR. A great song.  
**Greater Antillean Bullfinch** ♦ *Loxigilla violacea* J, DR, B.  
**Orangequit** ♦ *Euneornis campestris* J.  
**Puerto Rican Tanager** ♦ *Nesospingus speculiferus* PR. Fairly common in humid forest.  
**Black-crowned Tanager** ♦ *Phaenicophilus palmarum* DR. Common throughout.  
**Green-tailed Highland Tanager** ♦ *Microligea palustris* DR. Small numbers throughout western highlands.  
**White-winged Highland Tanager** ♦ *Xenoligea montana* DR. Small numbers above Aguacate.  
**Western Chat Tanager** ♦ *Calyptophilus tertius* DR. Seen above las Mercedes.  
**Eastern Chat Tanager** ♦ *Calyptophilus frugivorous* DR. Found at Cachote, where common.  
**Western (Bahaman S) Spindalis** *Spindalis zena townsendi* B. The most distinctive form within *Spindalis*.  
**Hispaniolan Spindalis** ♦ *Spindalis dominicensis* DR.  
**Puerto Rican Spindalis** ♦ *Spindalis portoricensis* PR.  
**Jamaican Spindalis** ♦ *Spindalis nigricephala* J.  
**Painted Bunting** *Passerina versicolor* B. A female found on Andros.

#### Top ten Jamaica.

Black-billed Streamertail - Crested Quail Dove - Jamaican Tody – Red-billed Streamertail – Rufous-throated Solitaire  
 Spotted Rail – Jamaican Woodpecker - Northern Potoo - Jamaican Owl – Jamaican Lizard Cuckoo.

#### Top ten Dominican Republic and Puerto Rico.

White-fronted Quail Dove - La Selle Thrush – Bay-breasted cuckoo - Puerto Rican Screech Owl - Broad-billed Tody  
 Western Chat Tanager – Hispaniolan Trogon – Elfin Woods warbler – Ashy-faced Owl - Palmchat.

#### Top five Bahamas

Bahaman Amazon - Key West Quail Dove - Bahama Woodstar - Bahama Oriole -  
 Great Lizard Cuckoo .





Green Heron (Eustace Barnes)

## NOTES TO THE SYSTEMATIC LIST

### **Caribbean Osprey** *Pandion [carolinensis] ridgwayi*

Recent genetic studies support treating the Osprey as four or even five different species, although this treatment has not yet been followed by the IOC. The uncommon and threatened form breeding in the Bahamas, the Caribbean islands and Belize, *ridgwayi*, is paler above, with a almost wholly white head and breast. The form *carolinensis* which occurs in this region on migration and during the northern winter is noticeably darker and easily distinguishable in the field. .

### **Bahaman Amazon** ♦ *Amazona bahamensis*

Although not recognized by the IOC, the form concerned likely represents a separate species from Cuban Amazon *A. leucocephala* based on plumage, voice, habitat use, and genetics. (There is less evidence that support species status for the forms *caymanensis* and *hesterna* in the Cayman Islands.)

### **Cuban (Crescent-eyed P) Pewee** *Contopus caribaeus bahamensis*

Hispaniolan Pewee *C. portoricensis* and Jamaican Pewee *C. pallidus* were formerly lumped in this species with the name Greater Antillean Pewee being used for the enlarged species. The form *bahamensis* is also distinctive and may in due course be considered a separate species

### **Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus caudifasciatus*

This species is now being split into a number of insular endemics; the **Bahaman Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] bahamensis*, **Jamaican Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] jamaicensis*, **Puerto Rican Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] taylorii* and **Hispaniolan Loggerhead Kingbird** *Tyrannus [caudifasciatus] gabbii*. They all vary morphologically and vocally. The habitat preferences in this complex are also of interest with Jamaican and Puerto Rican Loggerheads found widely in more humid habitats while the Hispaniolan and Bahaman Loggerheads prefer pine woodlands.

**Hispaniolan Stolid Flycatcher** *Myiarchus [stolidus] dominicensis* and **Jamaican Stolid Flycatcher** *Myiarchus [stolidus] stolidus*.

It is possible that these forms may be distinct species as they could be readily distinguished in the field if they occurred together. Since they differ morphologically within a genus of generally rather uniform taxa it seems likely they will be considered separate species in due course.

**Bahaman Red-legged Thrush** *Turdus [plumbeus] plumbeus* and **Hispaniolan Red-legged Thrush** *Turdus [plumbeus] ardosiaceus*

The Red-legged Thrush is a highly variable species with many distinct insular forms. The nominate form *plumbeus*, from the Bahamas, is more uniformly dark grey with a black throat. The form *ardosiaceus* (from Hispaniola and Puerto Rico) is paler grey and with a boldly streaked white throat. The species is in need of study and the taxonomy of all forms examined.

**Antillean Euphonia** *Euphonia musica*

Formerly, Golden-rumped Euphonia *E. cyanocephala* (South America) and Blue-rumped Euphonia *E. elegantissima* (Central America) were lumped in this species with the name Blue-hooded Euphonia being used for the enlarged species. Within the Antillean forms those found on Puerto Rico and the Lesser Antilles differ markedly from those found on Hispaniola.

**Bahama Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis rostrata*

This species is closely related to Common Yellowthroat, Altamira Yellowthroat and Belding's Yellowthroat, with which it forms a superspecies, and was formerly considered conspecific. The birds on the Bahamas are very large and maybe 30% larger than the Common Yellowthroats on Jamaica and Puerto Rico.

**Bahama Warbler** *Setophaga flavescens*

This resident taxon was formerly lumped in Yellow-throated Warbler *S. dominica*. Although similar it has a long thin decurved bill and co-exists with *S. dominica* for much of the year. It was not particularly common in the pine forests on Abaco.

**Adelaide's Warbler** *Dendroica adelaidae*

This species is now regarded as a Puerto Rican endemic following the splitting off of the St Lucia and Barbuda Warblers as separate species.

**Green-tailed Warbler** *Microligea palustris*

Recent genetic research has revealed that this species is not actually closely related to the Parulid warblers and is more closely related to the palm tanagers of the genus *Phaenicophilus*. In the field it is perfectly obvious it is not a warbler and the species may be better re-named Green-tailed Ground Tanager. However, it is necessary to indicate its close relationship with the next species.

**White-winged Warbler** *Xenoligea montana*

Recent genetic research has revealed that this species is not actually closely related to the Parulid warblers and is more closely related to the palm tanagers of the genus *Phaenicophilus*. Again, in the field it is plain it is not a warbler and may be better re-named the Hispaniolan Highland Tanager. This, however, does not serve to underline the close relationship with the above species.

**Bahama Oriole** *Icterus northropi*

This form, together with Black-cowled Oriole *I. prosthemela* of Central America, was formerly lumped in Greater Antillean Oriole *I. dominicensis*, with the name Black-cowled Oriole being used for the enlarged species. The Caribbean forms of *I. dominicensis* were recently split into four separate species and recognized by the IOC as four "new" island endemics: Bahama Oriole *I. northropi*, Cuban Oriole *I. melanopsis*, Hispaniolan Oriole *I. dominicensis* and Puerto Rican Oriole *I.*



*portoricensis*. The Bahaman Oriole is considered critically endangered, having disappeared from Abaco with the arrival of the parasitic Shiny Cowbird.

**Eastern Chat Tanager** *Calyptophilus frugivorus* and **Western Chat Tanager** *Calyptophilus tertius*

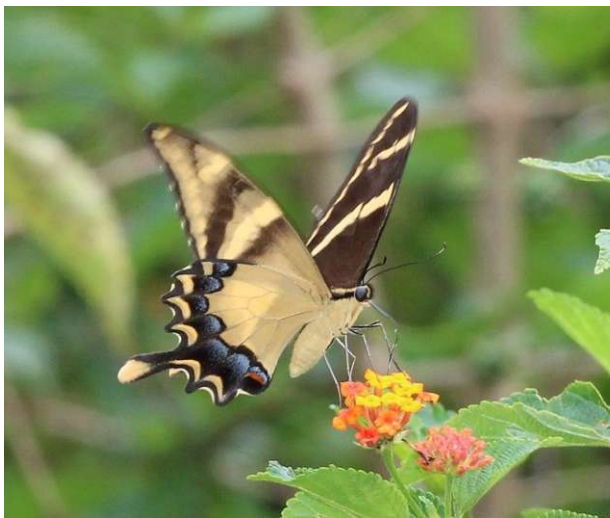
A very interesting species pair that seems to be part of a relictual group that includes the Green-tailed and White-winged Warblers and Black-crowned and Grey-crowned Palm Tanagers. Western Chat Tanager *C. tertius* was previously lumped into Eastern Chat Tanager *C. frugivorus* using the name Chat Tanager for the enlarged species. However, they are now thought to occur together on the southern slope of the Sierra de Baboruco and are known to come close without any intergradation. They are quite morphologically distinct with the Western Chat Tanager so much larger and more strikingly coloured that one would not think them the same species in the field. They also have notably different songs.

**Northern Bahamas (or Black-backed) Spindalis** *Spindalis [zena] townsendi*

*S. zena* (which was formerly known as Stripe-headed Tanager) has now been split into four species: Western Spindalis *S. zena* (Cuba, the Bahamas, Grand Cayman and Cozumel), Jamaican Spindalis *S. nigricephalus* (Jamaica), Hispaniolan Spindalis *S. dominicensis* (Hispaniola) and Puerto Rican Spindalis *S. portoricensis* (Puerto Rico). The two subspecies from the Bahamas are reliably distinguished by adult male plumage: Southern Bahamas or Green-backed Spindalis *S. [zena] zena* and Northern Bahamas or Black-backed Spindalis *S. zena townsendi*. Paradoxically, of all the forms within Spindalis these are the most distinct.

**SELECTIVE LIST OF BUTTERFLIES**

The following illustrated list of butterflies is a selection of species photographed during the tour by Nigel Peace. They are principally range restricted rather than more widely distributed taxa.



*Heraclides machaonides* (left ) and *Heraclides a. aristodemus* (right)

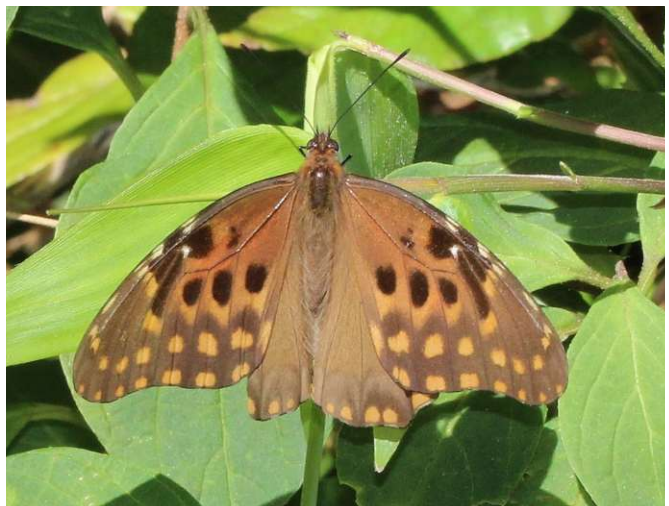
*Heraclides machaonides*, recorded in the Los Haitises NP near Cano Honda in eastern Hispaniola and *Heraclides a. aristodemus*, recorded at Barancoli camp, near Puerto Escondido on Hispaniola. Two range restricted members of Papilionidae.





*Dismorphia spia* (left) and *Phoebis argentata rorata* (right)

*Dismorphia spia* recorded in the Cordillera central and *Phoebis argentata rorata* recorded at Cano Hondo are both members of Pieridae..



*Anetia b. briarea* (left) and *Anetia jaegeri* (right)

*Anetia b. briarea* and *Anetia jaeger* above and *Anetia p. pantherata* and *Danaus cleaphile* below recorded at Zapoten in the Sierra de Bahuco are all members of Danainae.



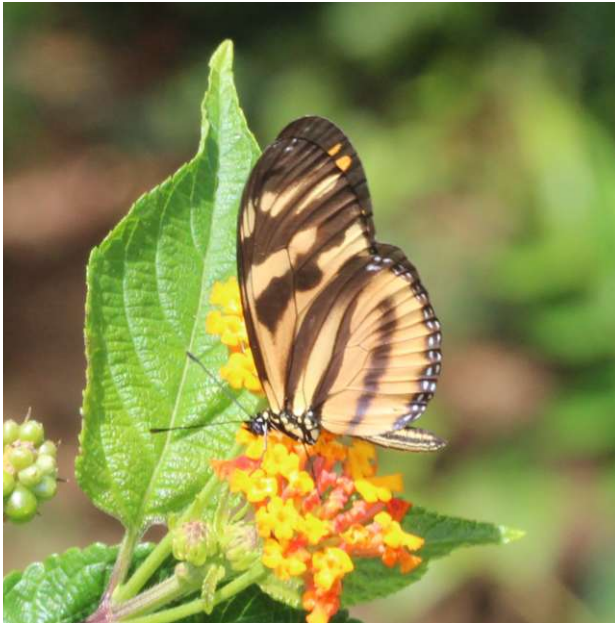
*Anetia p. pantherata* (left) and *Danaus cleaphile* (right)





*Archimestra teleboas* (left) and *Adelpha g. gelaria* (right)

*Archimestra teleboas*) and *Adelpha g. gelaria* were both recorded at Za[po]ten in the Sierra de Bahrucó.



*Euedes (isabella) melphis* (left) and *Calista nubila* (right)

*Euedes (isabella) melphis* recorded at Cano Honda on Hispaniola and *Calista nubila* recorded on Puerto Rico.



*Calista pulchella* (left), *Calista chrysaorus* (centre) and *Calista batesi* (right).





*Calista hysius* (left), *Calista confuses* (centre) and *Calista obscura* (right) are all members of Satyrinae..

*Calista hysius* was recorded at Zapoten in the Sierra de Batoruco. *Calista confuses* was recorded in the Cordillera central and *Calista obscura* was recorded in the Botanical Gardens in Santo Domingo, all on Hispaniola.



*Pyrgus crisia* (left) and *Choranthus vitellinus* (right)

*Pyrgus crisia* was recorded on Hispaniola in the Sierra de Batoruco and *Choranthus vitellinus* on Puerto Rico at Laguna Cartagena.