



*The fabulous, range-restricted, endemic Tufted Jay definitely is one of those must see birds! (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

## WESTERN MEXICO

**5/9 – 23 MARCH 2018**

**LEADER:** MARK VAN BEIRS and DANI LOPEZ-VELASCO

Our well-established Western Mexico tour, which has been so very well fine-tuned over the years by Pete, is a delightful celebration of the many fantastic and often colourful and gorgeous specialities and endemics of this much underrated and little-known part of the New World. Mexico sadly struggles with a rather bad reputation, but on our visit we stay far away from troubled areas and enjoy good food, great hospitality and spectacular landscapes. We visited the scenic states of Baja California, Sinaloa, Nayarit, Jalisco and Colima and had great looks at almost all of the goodies. The bird of the trip was the extremely attractive Orange-breasted Bunting, that we admired at several sites, but the superbly attractive Tufted Jays of the Durango Highway also scored very well. The posing male Red-breasted Chat that enlivened our last morning was another highlight and the rarest observation of the tour was without a doubt the scarce, very infrequently encountered Eared Quetzal! The truly extraordinary Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo allowed intimate scope

views and a skulking Rosy Thrush-Tanager gave us a great time. Nobody will forget our smashing encounter with the singing Eared Poorwill that sat in the open for tremendous looks. In fact, we did very well for nightbirds as next to more widespread nocturnal species we had eye-ball to eye-ball views of the recently described Cinereous Owl, of a cracking Stygian Owl, of an adorable Balsas Screech Owl, of an angry-looking Cape Pygmy Owl, of a minute Elf Owl and of a fabulous Buff-coloured Nightjar. Other memorable species included Black Storm Petrel, Banded Quail, Bare-throated Tiger Heron, Ridgway's and Spotted Rails, Rufous-necked Wood Rail, Greater and Lesser Roadrunners, Northern Potoo, Calliope Hummingbird, Russet-crowned Motmot, Lilac-crowned Amazon, Grey-collared Becard, Black-capped and Slaty Vireos, Purplish-backed Jay, Black-throated Magpie Jay, Olive Warbler, the amazing Red Warbler, Golden-browed Warbler, Five-striped and Black-chested Sparrows and Varied and Painted Buntings. The better mammals of the tour were seen at sea, as we had two great encounters with Humpback Whales and with a school of several hundred Long-beaked Common Dolphins. Both of us really enjoyed travelling and birding in this magnificent part of our planet.



*The magnificent Orange-breasted Bunting was chosen as the number one in the Bird of the Trip game (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

The tour started at midday at the airport of San José del Cabo, at the extreme southern tip of the 1,600 km long Baja California Peninsula. We got organized, enjoyed a tasty seafood lunch in the heat of the day and visited a birdy, reed-lined lagoon, located amidst some fancy hotels and condominiums next to the ocean. The highlight here was without a doubt the endemic Belding's Yellowthroat, which showed extremely well in the waterside vegetation. The yellow eyebrow of the male, its larger size and stouter bill were obvious to discern, especially as we could compare it directly with a migratory Common Yellowthroat. The lagoon held a rich variety of waterbirds, of which the less common species included some fancy Cinnamon Teal, a drake and three females Redhead and a prancing dark morph Reddish Egret. Several smart Gilded Flickers and lovely Cactus Wrens also showed. Ducks were well represented on the lagoon as we noted Gadwall, American Wigeon, Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Northern Pintail, Green-winged Teal and Ring-necked Duck. We also padded the list with more widespread species like Pied-billed and Black-necked Grebes, Wood Stork, White-faced Ibis, Black-crowned Night, Green and Great Blue Herons, Great and Snowy Egrets, Brown Pelican, Magnificent Frigatebird, Double-crested Cormorant, Turkey Vulture, Western Osprey, Common Gallinule, American Coot, Grey Plover, Short-billed Dowitcher, Greater Yellowlegs, Spotted Sandpiper, a single Bonaparte's Gull, many California Gulls (mainly immatures), White-winged



Dove, Gila Woodpecker, American Kestrel, Tropical Kingbird, Marsh Wren, Northern Mockingbird, Common Starling, Audubon's Warbler, Hooded Oriole, Red-winged Blackbird, Savannah Sparrow and Western Tanager. A mother and a calf Humpback Whale were spotted offshore and we could witness the impressive tailslapping of the female and the repeated breaching of the calf. Great stuff! In late afternoon we drove north through splendid, cactus-studded desert scrub to our cozy hotel in the seaside resort of Los Barriles. Northern Crested Caracara, Northern Raven and House Finch enlivened the journey.



*Belding's Yellowthroat is endemic to southern Baja California (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Long before dawn we were already in the cactus desert of the Sierra La Laguna, where in rather cold conditions we had a fantastic time with a well-behaved, tiny Elf Owl that performed so very well at close range. Minutes later we also obtained excellent views of a couple of cute Western Screech Owls. What a start of the day! Howling Coyotes created a special ambiance while we also admired the amazing starry sky. We continued deeper and higher into the sierra and enjoyed a scrumptious al fresco breakfast, which was interrupted by an angry-looking Cape Pygmy Owl (now definitely split from Northern Pygmy Owl). Our third owl of the day in less than two hours! We then started our walk up to the higher reaches to get within altitudinal range of the rarely seen and recently split Baird's Junco. Several lovely Xantus's Hummingbirds showed beautifully. This Baja California endemic was scoped and studied in detail. While walking up we picked up goodies like Cooper's and Red-tailed Hawks, Band-tailed Pigeon, Grey and Pacific-slope Flycatchers, Cassin's Kingbird, Ash-throated Flycatcher, Cassin's and Warbling Vireos, California Scrub Jay, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Hermit Thrush, Orange-crowned and Black-throated Grey Warblers, very smart Scott's Orioles, Chipping, Rufous-crowned and Lark Sparrows, Spotted and California Towhees and Black-headed Grosbeak. We observed lots of attractive Acorn Woodpeckers of the distinctive, very isolated, southern Baja California race *angustifrons* which differs from the more widespread forms by their dark eyes! In late morning we finally reached the right altitude and, sure enough, soon had fabulous views of several Baird's Juncos hopping about at the side of the track. We had sweated quite a bit to get to grips with this cutie, but it had definitely been worth it! We walked down while the sun was high above us and ate lunch under some giant aspen trees in a wide river valley. After a bit of a break we walked along the almost dry riverbed and were lucky enough to find a very obliging San Lucas Robin foraging in the tiny stream. We

observed this very nice bird at length and although it is still considered a race of American Robin, we all formed our own ideas about its taxonomic affinities, as this form looks much more like an Eye-browed Thrush than an American Robin... The area also gave us Black Phoebe, Ladder-backed Woodpecker and a skulking MacGillivray's Warbler, while lower down we bumped into a modestly-clad Lincoln's Sparrow. In late afternoon we returned tired, but very happy to our base.



*The Cape Pygmy Owl has recently been elevated to species status (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Just after dawn we were birding the attractive desert scrub not far from our hotel. One of the first birds to show itself was the Baja California endemic Grey Thrasher. A pair sat up for prolonged views and allowed the photographers at close range. The final Baja endemic was in the proverbial bag. While munching breakfast we also scoped a lovely male Costa's Hummingbird. A walk through the desert scrub added Peregrine, Loggerhead Shrike, an excellent Grey Vireo, a lovely Phainopepla, several Verdin, Pyrrhuloxia and Northern Cardinal to the list. Later we explored the nearby coastline, where the low scrub held the endearing California Gnatcatcher and Black-throated Sparrow. A bout of seawatching gave fair views of an unexpected Black Storm Petrel and a quiet stretch of beach held a roosting Yellow-footed Gull, yet another speciality of Baja California. A pair of Greater Roadrunners performed ever so well, allowing scope views of their intricate facial details. Upon returning to our base a Zone-tailed Hawk sailed past. After a relaxed lunch we visited a small inland oasis, where we had great looks at Black-throated Grey Warbler, Lazuli Bunting and a pair of charming, displaying White-tailed Antelope Squirrels.





*Heermann's and Yellow-footed Gulls are two specialties of Baja California (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Early in the morning we drove north to the city of La Paz, where we visited several venues on the coast. A quiet small harbour gave us terrific looks at very approachable, huge Yellow-footed Gulls and several Heermann's Gulls in different plumages. The very smart adult Heermann's disappeared all too quickly, sadly. Laughing, Bonaparte's, Ring-billed and California Gulls were also about. The extensive mudflats near the airport held a fantastic assortment of waterbirds and waders as we identified American White Ibis, Yellow-crowned Night Heron, Tricoloured and Little Blue Herons, stately American White Pelicans in breeding attire (sporting the horny growth on the upper mandible), American Oystercatcher, Semipalmated and Wilson's Plovers, Marbled Godwit, Whimbrel, Long-billed Curlew, Willet, Sanderling, Western, Semipalmated and Least Sandpipers, an immature American Herring Gull and Gull-billed, Royal, Caspian, Elegant and Forster's Terns. Dani gave a much-appreciated workshop on Dowitcher identification as both Short-billed and Long-billed were showing well. A Mangrove Warbler flitted about in the nearby mangroves. Nearby we found the smelly sewage works to be quite productive as they held new birds like Black-bellied Whistling Duck, Lesser Scaup, Ruddy Duck, Least Grebe, Black-necked Stilt, Killdeer, Lesser Yellowlegs, Buff-bellied Pipit and White-crowned Sparrow. We recovered with a delicious lunch in a seaside restaurant and afterwards explored a couple more spots along the coast, where a very tame and approachable Reddish Egret, Brandt's and Neotropic Cormorants, American Avocet (some already in smart breeding condition), several Dunlin and a flock of Black Skimmers could be observed. In late afternoon we returned the vehicles and made our way to the ferry terminal. We spent a comfortable night on the very stable overnight ferry, which took us without a hitch to the town of Mazatlan, the main seaside town of the state of Sinaloa.



*Reddish Egret and Elegant Tern showed well at La Paz (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

At dawn we were still at sea and picked up a couple of leisurely feeding Black Storm Petrels. Careful scanning also produced a speedy Least Storm Petrel and one lucky soul managed to lay his eyes on a Wedge-rumped (or Galapagos) Storm Petrel. As we were getting closer to the coast Brown and Blue-footed Boobies appeared and the former especially often stayed with the ship for extended periods. A large pod of Long-beaked Common Dolphins made the ocean boil and a single California Sea Lion briefly showed. After

docking, we picked up our new vehicles, transferred to our seaside hotel where new participant Hildburg joined us. Our first outing took us along the coast where we had a great time studying gulls on a beach filled with fishing boats. Next to the many very attractive Heermann's Gulls, we noted Yellow-footed, Ring-billed, California, Bonaparte's, a single immature American Herring, an adult Glaucous-winged and a rare adult Common Gull of the distinctive race *brachyrhynchus*. Gull overdose! At a viewpoint we checked the famous Booby Rocks where hundreds of Brown and Blue-footed Boobies together with dozens of Magnificent Frigatebirds were roosting. Careful scanning yielded fair looks at several patrolling Red-billed Tropicbirds. In the afternoon we birded an area of scrubby thickets at the edge of a lagoon and got to grips with several specialities. Dozens of Sinaloa Crows were about and a covey of Elegant Quail showed all too briefly, although a single, orange-crested male allowed decent looks as he scurried through the dense vegetation. A trio of incredibly gorgeous Purplish-backed Jays could be observed in excellent conditions. Magnificent creatures! A single striking Black-throated Magpie-Jay decided to stay in the scope for quite a while. Other interesting species included Grey Hawk, Stilt Sandpiper, Ferruginous Pygmy Owl, Golden-cheeked Woodpecker, Orange-fronted Parakeet, Thick-billed Kingbird, Sinaloa Wren, Rufous-backed Thrush, Wilson's Warbler, Bullock's and Streak-backed Orioles, Blue-black Grassquit, White-collared Seedeater, Blue Grosbeak and several eye-catching Varied Buntings. Upon returning to our base a couple of foraging Rufous-bellied Chachalacas were found feeding just next to the track and at the edge of town we stood in awe of a very large roost of Sinaloa Crows.



*We admired magnificent Purplish-backed Jays in the dry woodland near Mazatlan (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Our full morning in the scrubby woodland near Mazatlan produced some very nice observations. Best of all was probably our superb sighting of a singing Lesser Roadrunner in the top of a small tree. We were able to admire it for a lengthy period while it was emitting its very mournful song. A couple of family groups of striking Purplish-backed Jays performed really well as did several parties of tremendous Black-throated Magpie-Jays. A pair of Nutting's Flycatchers sat up for detailed views and a Happy Wren sang away only meters from us. We identified a single Black-capped Gnatcatcher in non-breeding plumage by voice and scoped a very pretty Yellow-breasted Chat. Several fantastic males Varied Bunting allowed close scrutiny.





*The glorious Stygian Owl was seen on a day roost (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



Other new birds for the tour included Common Black Hawk, a splendidly showy Zone-tailed Hawk, Northern Beardless Tyrannulet, Bell's and Plumbeous Vireos, Mangrove Swallow, Lesser Goldfinch, MacGillivray's Warbler, Green-tailed Towhee, Mexican Cacique, Pyrrhuloxia and Greyish Saltator. Around midday we packed up and drove into the mountains along the famous Durango Highway. After checking in into our rustic, but cozy accommodation at c2,000m altitude, we explored a very nice stretch of pine-oak woodland where a roosting Stygian Owl was the highlight! The scope views of this superb nightbird were out of this world! Our first Red Warbler attracted much attention and a very well-behaved White-eared Hummingbird sat up for ages. We also found Mountain Trogon, Northern Tufted Flycatcher, American Dusky Flycatcher, Slate-throated Whitestart and Hepatic Tanager.



*Red Warbler and Mountain Trogon adorned the pine-oak forests of the Durango Highway (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

The following morning started with a bang! While having breakfast, Dani found us a party of much-wanted, harlequinesque Tufted Jays in the garden of our guesthouse. We left the table in a flurry and obtained fantastic views of eight birds sitting and flitting about and really showing off. Much-cherished moments! We admired these rare, localized and comical-looking jays for more than 30 minutes. After finishing our breakfast, we drove into the nearby pine-oak forest, where yet another very rarely seen denizen of northwestern Mexico was found. We heard the distinctive, very untrogon-like vocalisations of a couple of Eared Quetzals rather far off, but some judicious use of the tape brought one closer in. We obtained fair looks at this shy endemic as it perched in the mid canopy. The bird was rather timid and moved perches regularly, but we all got satisfactory views of this unique bird. The Eared Quetzal (or Trogon) is the only member of the trogon family which is placed in its own genus: *Euptilotis*. This exciting species was a new bird for everyone present! Yippee! Our walk through the open pine-oak forest also produced a singing Blue Mockingbird, a lovely Olive Warbler (an important bird as it is placed in its own family) and a pair of gaudy Red-headed Tanagers. A splash of colour was provided by the regularly encountered and ever so attractive Red Warblers and the even more appealingly patterned Red-faced Warblers and Painted Whitestarts. The densely-vegetated, shrubby little valleys held specialities like Russet Nightingale-Thrush, Crescent-chested Warbler, the gorgeous Golden-browed Warbler and skulking Green-striped and Rufous-capped Brushfinches. Other goodies included Squirrel Cuckoo, Arizona Woodpecker, White-striped Woodcreeper, Greater Pewee, the uncommon Pine Flycatcher, Hutton's Vireo, Steller's Jay, Mexican Chickadee, Violet-green Swallow, Ruby-crowned Kinglet, Brown Creeper, Grace's, Townsend's and Hermit Warblers, Elegant Euphonia, Yellow-eyed Junco and Spotted Towhee. On the return walk, while scoping a male Mountain Trogon, a party of c25 Tufted Jays came through and offered more fantastic views. After a short pause we visited several sites at lower altitude and although it was rather quiet, we picked up species like Sharp-shinned Hawk, Berylline Hummingbird, the lovely Grey Silky-flycatcher, Bridled Titmouse, Rock Wren and Flame-coloured Tanager. A Grey-crowned Woodpecker played hide and seek, but eventually showed well and a sneaky Rusty-crowned Ground Sparrow allowed perfect scope looks.





*The endemic Rusty-crowned Ground Sparrow performed very well (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Dawn found us at the famous Sinaloa Martin cliffs along the Durango Highway, but our constant scanning didn't produce any of these rare hirundines, sadly. We did score on White-throated Swift, a female Bumblebee Hummingbird, endemic Spotted Wrens and Black-headed Siskin while patrolling. A stretch of scrubby oak woodland at lower altitude was our next venue. We had a marvellous time here as the bushes and trees along our short walk were alive with birds. The highlight of the morning was without a doubt the splendid male Black-capped Vireo that performed so very, very well for us. Although not a Mexican speciality (it also breeds in Texas), this rare species only winters in western Mexico. We were indeed very pleased with the views offered. A female Elegant Trogon sat up, an endemic Russet-crowned Motmot was scoped in a dense tree crown, several Golden Vireos raised a racket and a Fan-tailed Warbler responded well to its voice, but the surprise of the morning was a sneaky Five-striped Sparrow that everyone eventually saw quite well in a bushy gully. This endemic is only rarely encountered on this tour, so we were very happy to see this cracker! Other species seen included American Dusky Flycatcher, Scrub Euphonia, Nashville Warbler, Rufous-capped Warbler, Yellow Grosbeak and a nice male Blue Bunting. In the afternoon we explored a splendid area of flowerbanks amidst beautiful open pine-oak forest, where we obtained excellent views of Berylline, White-eared, Rufous, Broad-tailed and a female Bumblebee Hummingbird. A bushy gully held an amazing variety of resident and migratory species including Hammond's and Buff-breasted Flycatchers and beauties like Golden-browed, Red-faced, Hermit, Grace's and Crescent-chested Warblers. We stayed out till dark, but only Pauraque and Whiskered Screech Owl were heard in the distance.



*The gorgeous Black-capped Vireo breeds in Texas and northern Mexico and winters in western Mexico (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Just before dawn we were admiring a couple of very vocal Mexican Whip-poor-wills in the garden of our guesthouse. Another bout at the Martin cliffs yielded some amazing looks at a party of c20 White-naped Swifts. We all managed to follow them in the scope and clinch the obvious white nape of these large swifts. We also noted several Band-tailed Pigeons and lots of Violet-green Swallows. A track through scrubby dry woodland at lower elevations produced several great specialities. An angry-looking Colima Pygmy Owl performed particularly well. A male Citreoline Trogon gave good views and the scope views of a Brown-backed Solitaire were much appreciated. A female Red-breasted Chat really wanted to be seen and allowed unusual eye-ball to eye-ball views. Other fine birds included Cinnamon Hummingbird, Lineated Woodpecker, Ivory-billed Woodcreeper, Masked Tityra, a male and female Black-capped Vireo and several Mexican Caciques, while the raucous calls of Rufous-bellied Chacalacas could be heard all the time. The hard screeches of Military Macaws emanated from far away. In late morning we waved goodbye to the Durango Highway and drove south along a fast toll road to the little town of San Blas. We checked in into our 'home away from home' hotel and during the final hours of the day explored the famous crocodile ponds and the nearby beach. Lots of waders, ducks and other waterbirds inhabited the lagoons, but the only new birds were Roseate Spoonbill, Anhinga, a smashing Purple Gallinule and Ringed Kingfisher. Beautiful American Avocets in breeding attire received extra attention and amazing numbers of Stilt Sandpipers adorned the shallows. A dozen or so American Crocodiles were dozing about, including a very close, rather impressive individual! The day ended on a remote stretch of delightful beach where a couple of Mexican Fox Squirrels and a curious White-nosed Coati were foraging.





*The extraordinary Cinereous Owl was only recently described as a full species (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Next morning we birded the pine-oak forests of Cerro San Juan, situated in the nearby mountains. While we enjoyed a really scrumptious breakfast, several endemic Mexican Woodnymphs provided excellent entertainment. An Elegant Trogon showed, as did a male Summer Tanager. We explored the surroundings of a large, scrubby clearing and found Rusty and Stripe-headed Sparrows foraging and hiding in bramble bushes. We also located Bronzed Cowbird and Chipping Sparrow. The climax of the morning though was a fabulous Cinereous Owl that Dani found on its day roost. We studied and admired this recently recognized



sister species of Barred Owl in detail for a long time. The impressive bird sat quietly dozing about high on its roost in a large pine and was totally unconcerned by our presence. A truly brilliant and outstanding observation! The afternoon walk along a track leading through bushy meadows, dense thickets and tiny marshes in the neighbourhood of San Blas produced scope views of endemic Mexican Parrotlets and a couple of modestly-attired White-throated Flycatchers. The nice walk also gave us Short-tailed Hawk (both dark and pale morphs), Groove-billed Ani, Citreoline Trogon, Lineated and Pale-billed Woodpeckers, Laughing Falcon, many Mexican Caciques and a Black-vented Oriole. As we returned to our vehicles we heard the raucous calls of a distant Collared Forest Falcon.



*The smashing Rosy Thrush-Tanager played quite hard to get, but Elegant Trogons were easy to see (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

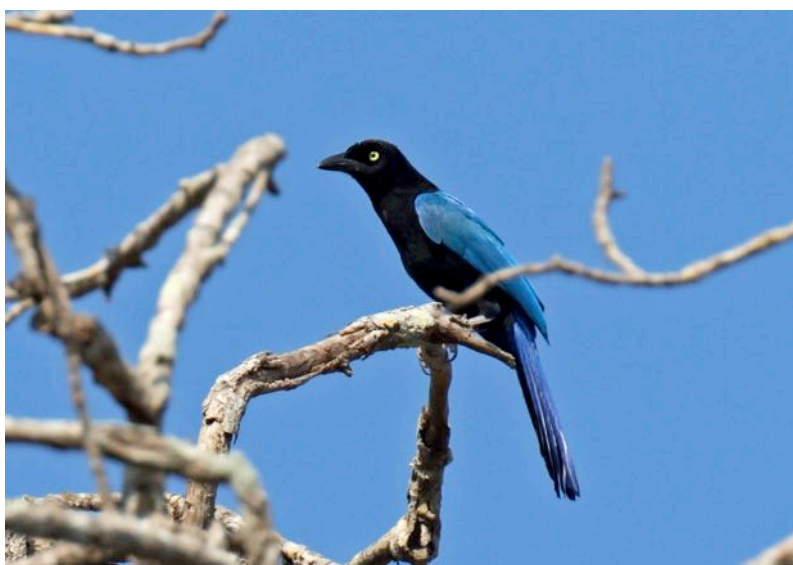
As the sun was getting up, we found ourselves on a cobblestone track leading through coffee and mango plantations surrounded by semi-humid woodland in the foothills near San Blas. We heard the loud, raucous, moaning call of a Collared Forest Falcon and soon saw it fly over us. We obtained good looks as this pale morph individual perched nicely in an open tree. Sadly, it was quickly chased away by an angry Grey Hawk. The most impressive experience of the morning was our encounter with a male and a female Rosy Thrush-Tanager. The exceptional rose-pink colour of the male's chest has to be seen to be believed. Although the birds were quite skulky, we all had fantastic views of these beauties. A Mottled Owl reacted well to his own voice and was scoped in a dense thicket. A very nice, obliging male Calliope Hummingbird sat up for great looks and we had regular observations of Elegant Trogons, sometimes even perching on tops of emergent trees. A couple of appealing Fan-tailed Warblers circled us for close up views and we also found Red-billed Pigeon, Inca and White-tipped Doves, Boat-billed Flycatcher, Tropical Parula and many Mexican Caciques. A family of White-nosed Coatis was inspecting some fruiting trees on a nearby ridge. The afternoon boat trip through the mangroves was a real delight. We observed several Rufous-necked Wood Rails on a muddy edge, found a cooperative, beautifully-patterned Bare-throated Tiger Heron and several prehistoric-looking Boat-billed Herons. A fabulous Spotted Rail allowed fantastic views at the edge of a grassy marsh and near dusk our boatman showed us a very well camouflaged Northern Potoo on its nest. We retraced our steps while the sun was setting and found two more Northern Potoos and lots and lots of emerging, rather annoying termites. Other nice birds seen on the boat trip included Anhinga, Snail Kite, Sora, Collared Plover, Mangrove Cuckoo, Green, Ringed and Belted Kingfishers and Northern Waterthrush.





*Mexican Hermit is endemic to western Mexico, while Northern Potoo is widespread in central America (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

On our last full day in the San Blas area we tried to fill some obvious gaps in our list. An exploratory visit to some shady mango copses and nearby forest didn't really produce anything at first, but eventually we located some flowering bananas close to the forest edge. We stood guard for quite a while, until a splendid, endemic Mexican Hermit came in for a superb performance. A migrant Broad-winged Hawk sailed past and at our Rosy Thrush Tanager site we again had great looks at this skulking beauty. A Black Hawk-Eagle was soaring over the nearby hill and a pair of Rose-throated Becards was attending their untidy nest. Two nice male Rose-breasted Grosbeaks played in the treetops. As we had some time on hand, we visited an area of mangroves near town, where in the heat of the day a retiring Ridgway's Rail slowly walked amidst some mangrove roots, offering pretty good views. Our late afternoon visit to a freshwater marsh produced a heard



*The endemic San Blas Jay proved to be quite shy, while the uncommon Grey-collared Becard performed beautifully (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

only Aztec Rail, several Mexican Duck, a male Bullock's Oriole, several alluring Orchard Orioles and some Brown-headed Cowbirds.

Sadly, the time had come to say goodbye to our gracious and very efficient hosts at San Blas. Our first stop in some dry woodland in the foothills gave us a party of rather furtive San Blas Jays, but luckily everyone got good looks. Another stop produced a very well-behaved, good-looking male Grey-collared Becard. We then drove south along smooth highways, via the busy metropolis of Guadalajara, to the town of Ciudad Guzman. An extended stop at a large, mostly dry lagoon gave us an excellent selection of waterbirds. Amongst the hundreds of Shoveler and Green-winged Teal we observed quite a few already seen ducks, but four Mexican Ducks were particularly appreciated. There was also a nice variety of waders about including two Wilson's Snipe and a Wilson's Phalarope. A small island in the lagoon held over a hundred Black-crowned Night Herons. Amongst the many Barn Swallows we identified Sand Martin and American Cliff Swallow and a White-tailed Hawk soared in the distance. Closer to Ciudad Guzman, a large brackish roadside lake was swarming with thousands of American Avocets.



*Eared Poorwill is a localized endemic of western Mexico (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

Our first visit to the forested slopes of the 3,839m high, active Volcan de Fuego (40 eruptions since 1576) started just before dawn with cracking views of a very well-behaved Eared Poorwill. We all managed to study the amazing "ears" as it perched in the open at close range! A ... Skunk was crossing the track as we made our way up into the oak zone. While munching our breakfast a fabulous Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo sat up for prolonged scope views. Michael especially was extremely happy as this constituted number 7,000 on his lifelist. We celebrated this event in the evening with some excellent wine, donated by the laureate. Other first-rate species in this habitat included Weste Mexican Chachalaca, Long-tailed Wood Partridge (for the lucky ones), Cordilleran Flycatcher, Transvolcanic Jay, American Bushtit, Audubon's (Dickey's) Oriole and Collared and Canyon Towhees. Still higher up in the oak-pine zone we obtained tremendous views of a fierce-looking Mountain Pygmy Owl. In late afternoon we birded the marshes near town, where we heard an Aztec Rail, which refused to leave its cattail marsh. The fantastic spectacle of more than 10,000 Yellow-



headed Blackbirds swarming about and adorning the marsh like flowers was very much appreciated. We watched a Spotted Sandpiper in breeding plumage, admired a swift Peregrine Falcon, looked at several Tree Swallows, identified a few Brewer's Blackbirds and noted small numbers of Bicoloured Blackbirds (a distinctive race of Red-winged Blackbird).



*The amazing spectacle provided by more than 10,000 Yellow-headed Blackbirds was out of this world (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

We returned long before dawn to the slopes of Volcan Fuego and looked for nightbirds in a stretch of dry woodland. A lovely Whiskered Screech Owl responded quickly and well to the tape and showed beautifully. Not much later we were listening to the characteristic calls of a Buff-collared Nightjar. It took a while to get close, but eventually we had splendid looks as it sat at ease on a rock only meters away. After this success, we drove higher into the oak-pine zone and walked for most of the morning through beautiful forest surrounded by lichen-draped trees and dense flowerbanks. Spruces and firs started to appear and the views of the volcano were really nice, as smoke was escaping from the crater. Although the hoped for Aztec Thrushes didn't materialize, we had some excellent encounters with Mountain Pygmy Owl, Rivoli's Hummingbird, Hairy Woodpecker, the exceedingly-attractive Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, Mexican Chickadee, Golden-crowned Kinglet, Grey-barred Wren (several family parties), Olive Warbler and Red Warbler (of the nominate race with its white auricular patch. We only obtained brief looks at a Crested Guan and a Green Violetear. After a break in the heat of the day we made several stops on the lower slopes and located a boisterous party of Transvolcanic Jays and a very smart Red-faced Warbler.



*Mountain Pygmy Owl and Red-faced Warbler enlivened the higher slopes of Volcan de Fuego (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



The following morning found us on the lower slopes of Volcan de Fuego where we explored the thickets of dry scrub and the edges of the avocado plantations. After a golden tip from a local farmer we managed to observe two large coveys of endemic Banded Quail. The scope views of these comical-looking gamebirds were simply excellent. We drove a bit higher and unexpectedly soon got to grips with a couple of very attractive Slaty Vireos, that really showed well. This usually rather skulking endemic sure looks much more attractive than its illustration! We heard some Long-tailed Wood Partridges nearby, but only a few participants managed views. A Black-capped Vireo also allowed superb looks. Several family parties of Spotted Wrens, a Curve-billed Thrasher, Rusty Sparrow, Rusty-crowned Ground Sparrow and Indigo Bunting completed our visit. We returned to Ciudad Guzman, packed up and drove to nearby town of Colima. In late afternoon we made our way to the thorn forest of nearby La Cumbre, where we obtained fantastic looks at the very localized, endemic Black-chested Sparrow and the out of this world Orange-breasted Bunting. The male of the latter surely is one of the most beautiful birds in the world! A White-throated Magpie-Jay flew over and a party of Sclater's Wrens came in for good looks. We enjoyed a picnic dinner while waiting for the sun to disappear behind the horizon and after a bit of searching found a terrific Balsas Screech Owl perched only metres away! What a fabulous bird! The dark eyes of this large, localized and well-marked endemic showed very well. A fitting end to another excellent day.



*The attractive Slaty Vireo and the localized Black-chested Sparrow gave sterling performances (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*





*Black-capped Gnatcatcher and Lilac-crowned Amazon were noted on the lower slopes of Volcan de Fuego (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

As we had seen almost all of the targets of the area, we decided to explore a different flank of the Volcan de Fuego. The weedy fields surrounded by dense thickets along the beginning of a cobblestone track proved to be exceedingly birdy. Parties of Lilac-crowned Amazons regularly flew overhead offering pretty decent views. Thick-billed Kingbird, Golden Vireo, a nice male Black-capped Gnatcatcher, an uncommon Virginia Warbler and lots of Nashville Warblers were noticeable amongst the many other more common species. Higher up, in the oak zone, a Smoky-brown Woodpecker showed well and a vagrant Yellow-throated Warbler performed. Around midday we said goodbye to the volcanoes and drove towards the harbour town of Manzanillo, where we watched the bird activity at the ocean outflow of a power station. A Cabot's Tern was a good find and a fine Elegant Tern tried to hide amongst dozens of Royal Terns. Several striking Heermann's Gulls were resting on the beach and three Humpback Whales were swimming quite close to the shore. It is always a delight to see these leviathans! A nearby estuary was packed with waterbirds and here we noted Fulvous Whistling Ducks and a good variety of migratory waders. Several quite impressive American Crocodiles were loafing on the mud. A Crane Hawk was noted on the last drive of the day and in late afternoon we rolled into our lovely hotel in the seaside town of Barra de Navidad.



*American Crocodiles look impressive (Mark Van Beirs); Citreoline Trogon is endemic to western Mexico (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

A narrow valley clothed in dense dry woodland dotted with palms was our next morning's destination. West Mexican Chachalacas were greeting the day with their raucous, chattering calls and a stolid Bare-throated Tiger Heron was roosting over the little stream. A glorious male and a subtly-plumaged female Golden-crowned Emerald showed to all while Citreoline Trogons were playing about and both Lineated and Pale-billed Woodpeckers favoured the same big trunks. We managed to obtain scope views of a pair of perched

Lilac-crowned Amazons allowing us to determine the subtle colour of their crowns! A modestly-attired Flammulated Flycatcher gave excellent views and we found yet another Black-capped Vireo. Several parties of rather shy San Blas Jays travelled through the valley and a pair of Black-vented Orioles visited a flowering tabebuia tree. A sneaky Louisiana Waterthrush favoured the shady undergrowth over the small stream, but gave very nice views. Several Olive Sparrows scurried in the undergrowth and a male Red-crowned Ant Tanager showed its red crown! A fabulous male Orange-breasted Bunting got the cameras to work overtime. We visited an area of meadows and reedbeds after lunch, but were rather saddened by the lack of water. The only new species was Spot-breasted Oriole, a pair of which showed very well. Rather few other birds were about, although Orchard Oriole, Yellow-breasted Chat and Painted Bunting are always worth seeing. The farewell dinner was a jolly affair with excellent food and drink in a nice seaside restaurant.



*A Louisiana Waterthrush was found foraging along a stream; Spot-breasted Oriole favoured bushy open country (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*The male Red-breasted Chat is a real cracker (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

On the final morning of the tour we birded a stretch of dry, scrubby woodland near the coast. There was no dawn song and large patches of the area had been recently burnt, so we were getting a bit worried, but with



the warming sun birds started to become active. We lured a brilliant male Red-breasted Chat in for eyeball to eyeball views and admired this jewel at length and in depth. What a truly stunning bird! We heard the distinctive song of the near-endemic White-bellied Wren and after a bit of a struggle all obtained excellent looks at this retiring, tiny species as it was creeping about in a dense tangle of vines. A flushed Pauraque and another splendid male Orange-breasted Bunting rounded off this tremendous tour.



*The fabulous male Orange-breasted Bunting (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*The stunning Balsas Screech Owl won a place in our hearts (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

## **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).

Conservation threat categories and information are taken from *Threatened Birds of the World*, BirdLife International's magnificent book on the sad status of the rarest 10% of the world's avifauna, and updates on the BirdLife website: <http://www.birdlife.org/datazone/home>

**E** = Endangered, **V** = Vulnerable, **NT** = Near Threatened, **DD** = Data Deficient.

**Black-bellied Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna autumnalis* Several encounters with this widespread species.

**Fulvous Whistling Duck** *Dendrocygna bicolor* We only saw this duck at a Manzanillo creek.

**Gadwall** *Anas strepera* Regular observations in small numbers of this northern migrant.

**American Wigeon** *Anas americana* Just a few sightings.

**Mexican Duck** *Anas diazi* This modestly-plumaged endemic showed well at several lakes.

**Blue-winged Teal** *Anas discors* The most widespread migrant duck.

**Cinnamon Teal** *Anas cyanoptera* Regular encounters. The drake is a really smart-looking creature.

**Northern Shoveler** *Anas clypeata* Common and widespread.

**Northern Pintail** *Anas acuta* Regular observations of this elegant migrant.

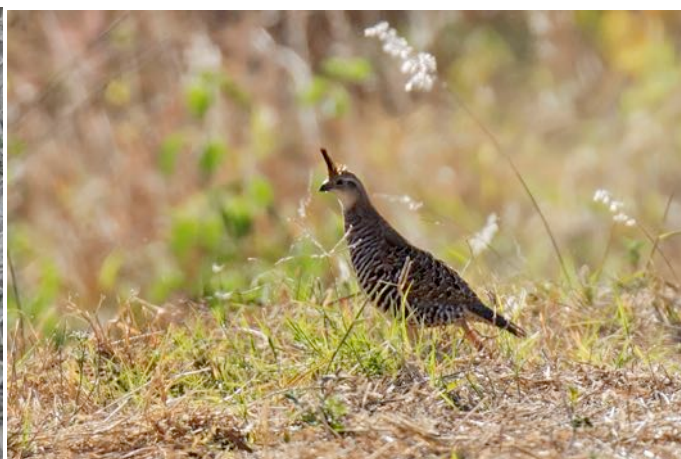
**Green-winged Teal** *Anas carolinensis* A few on Baja; c250 were seen at the Magdalena lagoon.

**Redhead** *Aythya americana* (B) Several showed very well in southern Baja California.

**Ring-necked Duck** *Aythya collaris* (B) A single bird was noted in southern Baja California.

**Lesser Scaup** *Aythya affinis* (B) We only noted this duck in southern Baja California.

**Ruddy Duck** *Oxyura jamaicensis* Just a few observations.



Rufous-bellied Chachalaca (Mark Van Beirs); Banded Quail (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Rufous-bellied Chachalaca** *Ortalis wagleri* Very nice views of this vocal species near Mazatlan and at San Blas.

**West Mexican Chachalaca** *Ortalis poliocephala* Good looks in Colima and Jalisco.

**Crested Guan** *Penelope purpurascens* Glimpses only on Volcan de Fuego.

**Long-tailed Wood Partridge** *Dendrortyx macroura* Brief looks at several on Volcan de Fuego.

**Elegant Quail** *Callipepla douglasii* Pretty good looks at this endemic in the Mazatlan area.

**Banded Quail** *Philortyx fasciatus* Excellent views of c50 on the lower slopes of Volcan de Fuego.

**Least Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma microsoma* Two showed quite well from the ferry near Mazatlan.

**Wedge-rumped Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma tethys* (NL) Roger saw one from the ferry near Mazatlan.

**Black Storm Petrel** *Oceanodroma melania* Several were seen from land (Baja) and from the ferry.

**Least Grebe** *Tachybaptus dominicus* Several nice observations.

**Pied-billed Grebe** *Podilymbus podiceps* A few sightings only.  
**Black-necked Grebe (Eared G)** *Podiceps nigricollis* Great looks at close range on Baja. A few elsewhere.  
**Red-billed Tropicbird** *Phaethon aethereus* Several were patrolling the Booby Rocks at Mazatlan.  
**Wood Stork** *Mycteria americana* Regular in small numbers.  
**American White Ibis** *Eudocimus albus* Fairly common.  
**White-faced Ibis** *Plegadis chihi* A handful of sightings. Most birds seen were in non-breeding attire.



Roseate Spoonbill (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Roseate Spoonbill** *Platalea ajaja* Small numbers were noted at several marshes and lagoons.  
**Bare-throated Tiger Heron** *Tigrisoma mexicanum* Cracking views at San Blas and near Barra de Navidad.  
**Boat-billed Heron** *Cochlearius cochlearius* Very good looks at this unusual species at San Blas.  
**Black-crowned Night Heron** *Nycticorax nycticorax* Fairly common. A large colony was seen near Magdalena.  
**Yellow-crowned Night Heron** *Nyctanassa violacea* Regular at saltwater marshes.  
**Green Heron** *Butorides virescens* Small numbers.  
**Western Cattle Egret** *Bubulcus ibis* Widespread.  
**Great Blue Heron** *Ardea herodias* Regular and stately.  
**Great Egret (American G E)** *Ardea [alba] egretta* Widespread and common.  
**Reddish Egret** *Egretta rufescens* (B) Fantastic looks at this active species at Estero San José and at La Paz.  
**Tricolored Heron** *Egretta tricolor* Common and widespread along the coasts.  
**Little Blue Heron** *Egretta caerulea* Small numbers. The immatures can be a bit confusing.  
**Snowy Egret** *Egretta thula* Regular.  
**American White Pelican** *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* Regular, excellent encounters. Always impressive.  
**Brown Pelican** *Pelecanus occidentalis* Common along the coasts.  
**Magnificent Frigatebird** *Fregata magnificens* Many of these kleptoparasites were seen along the coasts.  
**Blue-footed Booby** *Sula nebouxii* Good looks from the La Paz – Mazatlan ferry. Also noted at the Booby Rocks.  
**Brown Booby** *Sula leucogaster* Great views from the La Paz – Mazatlan ferry. Also noted at the Booby Rocks.

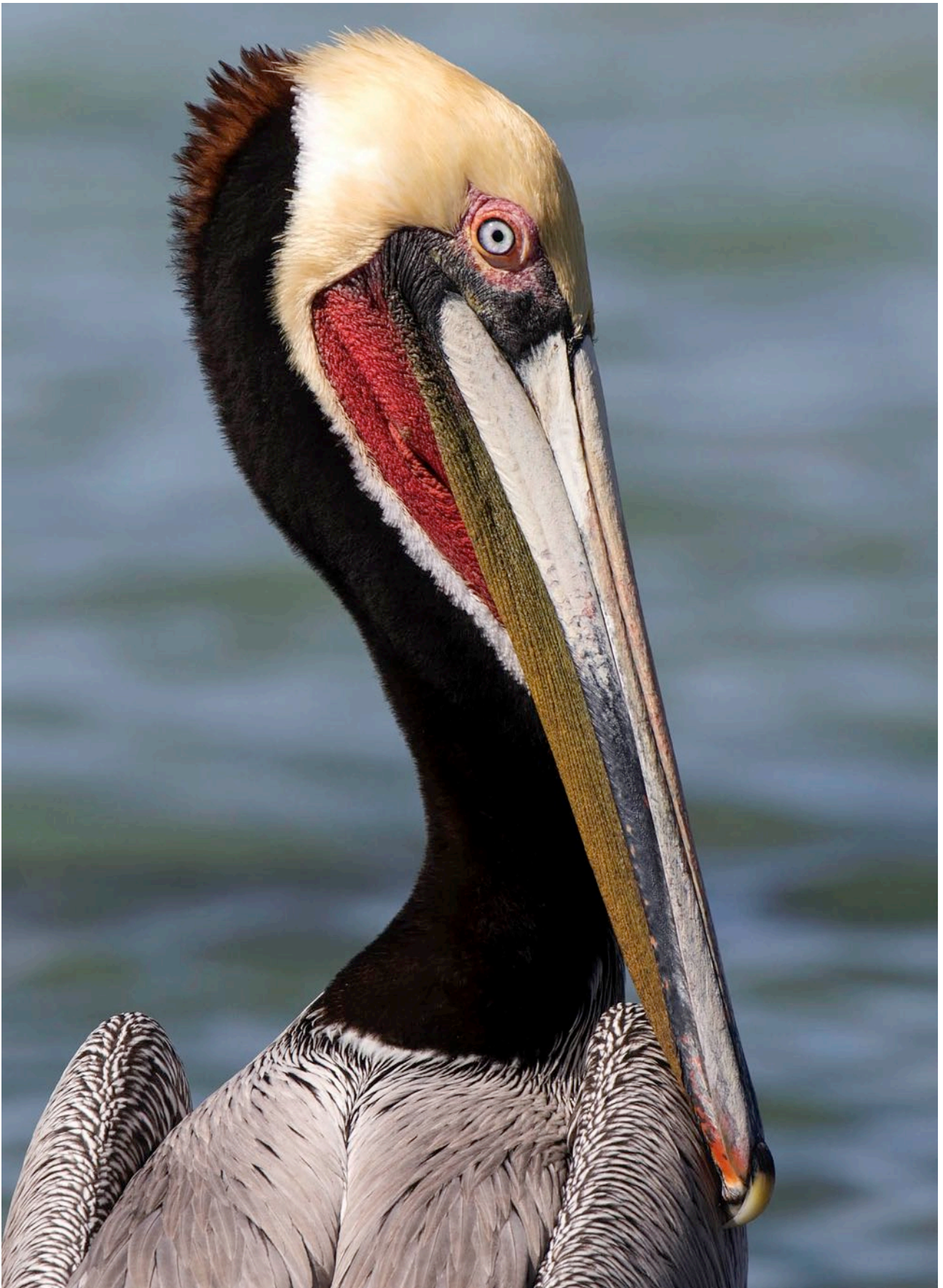




*Boat-billed Heron (Mark Van Beirs)*



*Tricolored Heron (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*Brown Pelican (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



**Brandt's Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax penicillatus* (B) A few were identified in the La Paz area.  
**Neotropic Cormorant (Olivaceous C)** *Phalacrocorax brasilianus* Common and widespread.  
**Double-crested Cormorant** *Phalacrocorax auratus* (B) Small numbers were seen on Baja California.  
**Anhinga** *Anhinga anhinga* Best views were had on the San Blas boat trip.  
**Turkey Vulture** *Cathartes aura* A common sight all along our route.  
**Black Vulture** *Coragyps atratus* Another very regularly seen species, but absent on Baja California.



Western Osprey (Mark Van Beirs)

**Western Osprey** *Pandion haliaetus* Nine observations of this smart piscivore.  
**Black Hawk-Eagle** *Spizaetus tyrannus* A calling bird was circling over the hills behind San Blas.  
**Sharp-shinned Hawk** *Accipiter striatus* A handful of encounters.  
**Cooper's Hawk** *Accipiter cooperii* Several nice sightings. Also seen perched.  
**Snail Kite** *Rostrhamus sociabilis* A few were noted near Barra de Navidad.  
**Crane Hawk** *Geranospiza caerulescens* A single bird was seen in flight near Manzanillo.  
**Common Black Hawk** *Buteogallus anthracinus* Singles were seen near Mazatlan and near Barra de Navidad.  
**Roadside Hawk** *Rupornis magnirostris* A single bird showed near Barra de Navidad.  
**White-tailed Hawk** *Geranoaetus albicaudatus* One was circling in the distance at Magdalena.  
**Grey Hawk** *Buteo plagiatus* Five observations.  
**Broad-winged Hawk** *Buteo platypterus* This migrant was seen near San Blas.  
**Short-tailed Hawk** *Buteo brachyurus* Regular observations. Both pale and dark morphs were seen.  
**Zone-tailed Hawk** *Buteo albonotatus* Two very nice observations of this Turkey Vulture imitator.  
**Red-tailed Hawk** *Buteo jamaicensis* Regular observations.  
**Ridgway's Rail** *Rallus obsoletus* This Clapper Rail split showed well at San Blas.  
**Aztec Rail** *Rallus tenuirostris* (H) We heard its distinctive voice near San Blas and near Ciudad Guzman.  
**Rufous-necked Wood Rail** *Aramides axillaris* Great looks at this speciality on the San Blas boat trip.  
**Sora** *Porzana carolina* A couple of lovely sightings.  
**Spotted Rail** *Pardirallus maculatus* Smashing views on the San Blas boat trip. Really attractive.  
**Purple Gallinule (American P G)** *Porphyrio martinicus* A single bird showed exceedingly well at San Blas.  
**Common Gallinule (Laughing G)** *Gallinula galeata* Common and widespread.  
**American Coot** *Fulica americana* Regular.  
**American Oystercatcher** *Haematopus palliatus* (B) Several were seen at La Paz.



*Zone-tailed Hawk (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Black-necked Stilt** *Himantopus mexicanus* Common and noisy.

**American Avocet** *Recurvirostra americana* Many observations. Thousands on a salt lake near Ciudad Guzman.

**Grey Plover (Black-bellied P)** *Pluvialis squatarola* (B) A few were noted on the Baja California mudflats.

**Semipalmated Plover** *Charadrius semipalmatus* Fairly common on the mudflats at La Paz..

**Wilson's Plover** *Charadrius wilsonia* (B) Great looks at several crab-hunting birds near La Paz.

**Killdeer** *Charadrius vociferus* Regular and noisy.





*Rufous-necked Wood Rail (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*Spotted Rail (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*





Purple Gallinule (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Collared Plover** *Charadrius collaris* Two birds were resting on a sandbank at San Blas.  
**Northern Jacana** *Jacana spinosa* Small numbers were observed at several freshwater marshes.  
**Wilson's Snipe** *Gallinago delicata* Scope views of two of these migrants at the Magdalena lake.  
**Short-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus griseus* (B) A few were identified amongst Long-billed at La Paz.  
**Long-billed Dowitcher** *Limnodromus scolopaceus* Regular encounters.  
**Marbled Godwit** *Limosa fedoa* (B) Scope views of this nice wader at La Paz.  
**Whimbrel (Hudsonian W)** *Numenius [phaeopus] hudsonicus* Regular. A lovely sound.  
**Long-billed Curlew** *Numenius americanus* Small numbers were seen at a couple of sites. Impressive.  
**Greater Yellowlegs** *Tringa melanoleuca* Small numbers at several sites.  
**Lesser Yellowlegs** *Tringa flavipes* Just a few sightings.  
**Willet (Western W)** *Tringa [semipalmata] inornata* Regular. A splendid bird in flight.  
**Spotted Sandpiper** *Actitis macularius* Fairly common. Several birds were seen in breeding plumage.



Wilson's Plover (Mark Van Beirs); Bonaparte's Gull (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



**Sanderling** *Calidris alba* (B) Small numbers were seen on a beach in Baja California.

**Semipalmated Sandpiper** *Calidris pusilla* Three birds were identified on the mudflats at La Paz.

**Western Sandpiper** *Calidris mauri* Quite common on mudflats.

**Least Sandpiper** *Calidris minutilla* Regular encounters.

**Dunlin** *Calidris alpina* (B) Several were identified on the La Paz mudflats.

**Stilt Sandpiper** *Calidris himantopus* Best views were had at San Blas, where good numbers were noted.

**Wilson's Phalarope** *Phalaropus tricolor* A single bird in transitional plumage was seen at Magdalena Lake.

**Black Skimmer** *Rynchops niger* (B) A nice flock was resting on the La Paz mudflats.

**Bonaparte's Gull** *Chroicocephalus philadelphia* Regular observations of this dainty gull. Lots at sea near Mazatlan.

**Laughing Gull** *Leucophaeus atricilla* Fairly common.

**Heermann's Gull** *Larus heermanni* This very attractive speciality showed well at several sites.



Mew and Glaucous-winged Gulls (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Mew Gull** *Larus canus* A single adult of the race *brachyrhynchus* showed extremely well at Mazatlan.

**Ring-billed Gull** *Larus delawarensis* Small numbers were found along the coasts.

**California Gull** *Larus californicus* Small numbers were seen, often together with the previous species.

**Glaucous-winged Gull** *Larus glaucescens* A nice adult was found on the beach at Mazatlan.

**Yellow-footed Gull** *Larus livens* This Sea of Cortez endemic showed very well at a couple of sites.

**American Herring Gull** *Larus smithsonianus* Good looks at two immatures at La Paz and at Mazatlan.

**Gull-billed Tern** *Gelocheledon nilotica* (B) A single bird was identified amongst Royal Terns at La Paz.

**Caspian Tern** *Hydroprogne caspia* A handful were seen. Always spectacular.



Royal and Forster's Terns (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Royal Tern** *Thalasseus maximus* The most common tern of the trip.

**Elegant Tern** *Thalasseus elegans* Great looks at this beauty at La Paz and at Manzanillo.

**Cabot's Tern** *Thalasseus acutiflavus* A single bird showed well at Manzanillo.

Forster's Tern *Sterna forsteri* Good looks at these migrants at La Paz.  
Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia*



Western Screech Owl (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



**Band-tailed Pigeon** *Patagioenas fasciata* Small numbers were found in the mountains.

**Red-billed Pigeon** *Patagioenas flavirostris* Fairly regular.

**Eurasian Collared Dove (introduced)** *Streptopelia decaocto* Common and widespread. A recent arrival.

**Inca Dove** *Columbina inca* Small numbers were seen along our route.

**Common Ground Dove** *Columbina passerina* These tiny doves were regularly seen.

**Ruddy Ground Dove** *Columbina talpacoti* Much less common than the previous. Usually in more humid areas.

**White-tipped Dove** *Leptotila verreauxi* Often heard and regularly flushed.

**Mourning Dove** *Zenaida macroura* A few observations only.

**White-winged Dove** *Zenaida asiatica* Very common and obvious. An often heard sound.

**Groove-billed Ani** *Crotophaga sulcirostris* Small numbers.

**Greater Roadrunner** *Geococcyx californianus* (B) Good looks at a pair near Los Barriles. A bird with character.

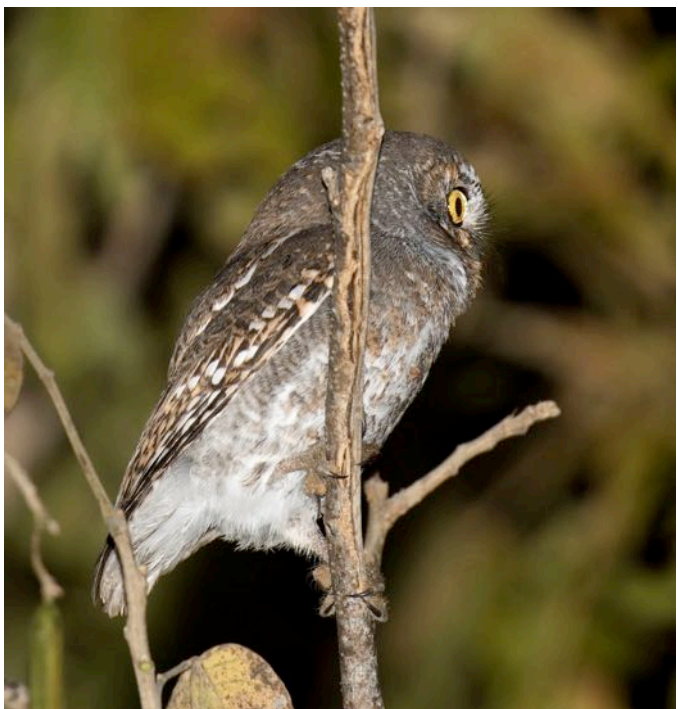
**Lesser Roadrunner** *Geococcyx velox* Fantastic views of a singing bird in the Mazatlan scrub.

**Squirrel Cuckoo** *Piaya cayana* Only a few were seen.

**Mangrove Cuckoo** *Coccyzus minor* Good looks at one in the San Blas mangroves.

**Western Screech Owl** *Megascops kennicottii* (B) Perfect looks at this cutie in the Sierra La Laguna on Baja.

**Balsas Screech Owl** *Megascops seductus* Mega looks at this endemic beauty near Colima. Wow.



Whiskered Screech and Elf Owls (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Whiskered Screech Owl** *Megascops trichopsis* An obliging bird was seen on Volcan de Fuego.

**Cinereous Owl (Mexican Barred O)** *Strix sartorii* Day roost scope views of this rarity above San Blas. Marvellous!

**Mottled Owl** *Strix virgata* One showed quite well during our morning walk in the hills behind San Blas.

**Mountain Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium gnoma* A couple of daytime encounters on Volcan de Fuego.

**Baja Pygmy Owl (B) (Cape P O)** *Glaucidium hoskinsii* (B) Two well-behaved birds showed in the Sierra La Laguna.

**Colima Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium palmarum* Good looks at this endemic along the lower Durango Highway.

**Ferruginous Pygmy Owl** *Glaucidium brasilianum* Regular and delightful.

**Elf Owl** *Micrathene whitneyi* (B) Superb views of this tiny nightbird in the Sierra La Laguna.

**Stygian Owl** *Asio stygius* Scope views of a roosting bird near our base along the Durango Highway.

**Northern Potoo** *Nyctibius jamaicensis* Great looks at several on the San Blas boat trip.

**Pauraque** *Nyctidromus albicollis* A few were heard and one was flushed near Barra de Navidad.

**Eared Poorwill** *Nyctiphrynus mcleodii* Fantastic views of this mysterious species on Volcan de Fuego.

**Buff-collared Nightjar** *Antrostomus ridgwayi* Splendid looks of a sitting bird on Volcan de Fuego.

**Mexican Whip-poor-will** *Antrostomus arizonae* Great flight views along the Durango Highway.

**White-naped Swift** *Streptoprocne semicollaris* Scope views of foraging birds along the Durango Highway.



Colima Pygmy and Ferruginous Pygmy Owls (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Vaux's Swift** *Chaetura vauxi* Just a few observations.

**White-throated Swift** *Aeronautes saxatalis* Nice looks at several along the Durango Highway.

**Mexican Hermit** *Phaethornis mexicanus* Cracking looks at one feeding at a banana flower near San Blas.

**Green Violetear** *Colibri thalassinus* Glimpses only at Volcan de Fuego.



Buff-collared Nightjar and Golden-crowned Emerald (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Golden-crowned Emerald** *Chlorostilbon auriceps* Very nice looks at both sexes near Barra de Navidad.

**Broad-billed Hummingbird** *Cynanthus latirostris* Regular encounters in the lowlands.

**Mexican Woodnymph** *Thalurania ridgwayi* Several showed well in the hills above San Blas.

**Cinnamon Hummingbird** *Amazilia rutila* Regular and easy to see.

**Berylline Hummingbird** *Amazilia beryllina* One of the more common hummers in the hills.

**Blue-throated Mountaingem (B-t Hummingbird)** *Lampornis clemenciae* Great looks along the Durango Highway.

**Xantus's Hummingbird** *Basilinna xantusii* (B) This Baja California speciality was seen very well at several sites.

**White-eared Hummingbird** *Basilinna leucotis* Regular in the mountain forests. Smart looking in good light.

**Rivoli's Hummingbird** *Eugenes fulgens* A couple of encounters with this recent Magnificent Hummingbird split.

**Costa's Hummingbird** *Calypte costae* (B) Cracking scope studies in the Baja California desert.





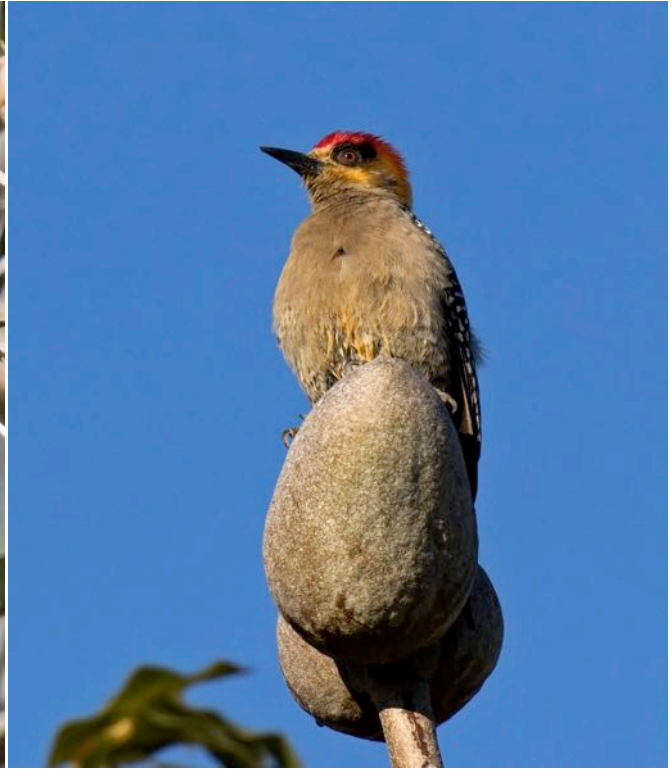
*Xantus's and White-eared Hummingbirds (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Bumblebee Hummingbird** *Atthis heloisa* Good looks at a couple of females in the mountains. No males, sniff.



*Costa's and Bumblebee Hummingbirds (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

- Broad-tailed Hummingbird** *Selasphorus platycercus* A few sightings in the highlands.
- Rufous Hummingbird** *Selasphorus rufus* Good looks at several at the Durango Highway flowerbanks.
- Calliope Hummingbird** *Selasphorus calliope* Scope views of a male in the hills above San Blas.
- Eared Quetzal (E Trogon)** *Euptilotis neoxenus* The rarest bird of the tour! Brief, but good looks! A real cracker!
- Citreoline Trogon** *Trogon citreolus* Many excellent views of this dry woodland Mexican endemic.
- Elegant Trogon** *Trogon elegans* Regular sightings of this very smart species.
- Mountain Trogon** *Trogon mexicanus* Several great encounters with this speciality.
- Green Kingfisher** *Chloroceryle americana* A handful of observations.
- Ringed Kingfisher** *Megaceryle torquata* Good looks at a few on the San Blas boat trip.
- Belted Kingfisher** *Megaceryle alcyon* Three encounters with this northern migrant.
- Russet-crowned Motmot** *Momotus mexicanus* A single scope observation along the lower Durango Highway.
- Acorn Woodpecker** *Melanerpes formicivorus* Regular and obvious in the highland forests.
- Acorn Woodpecker (Baja W)** *Melanerpes [formicivorus] angustifrons* (B) Good looks at this Baja speciality.
- Golden-cheeked Woodpecker** *Melanerpes chrysogenys* Common and very vocal.
- Gila Woodpecker** *Melanerpes uropygialis* Regular encounters in drier habitat.
- Ladder-backed Woodpecker** *Picoides scalaris* A nice series of observations.
- Hairy Woodpecker** *Picoides villosus* A single sighting on Volcan de Fuego.
- Arizona Woodpecker** *Picoides arizonae* Great looks in the Durango Highway pines.
- Smoky-brown Woodpecker** *Picoides fumigatus* Nice views on the lower slopes of Volcan de Fuego.
- Grey-crowned Woodpecker** *Colaptes auricularis* Regularly observed. Endemic to western Mexico.
- Gilded Flicker** *Colaptes chrysoides* (B) Several very nice observations in the Baja desert.



*Eared Quetzal and Golden-cheeked Woodpecker (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Lineated Woodpecker** *Dryocopus lineatus* Fairly common.

**Pale-billed Woodpecker** *Campephilus guatemalensis* Several excellent encounters. The double “knock”.



*The dark-eyed Baja race (angustifrons) and the pale-eyed mainland race of Acorn Woodpecker (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



**Northern Crested Caracara** *Caracara cheriway* Regular. Dawn patrol along the roads!

**Laughing Falcon** *Herpetotheres cachinnans* Brief looks at one near San Blas.

**Collared Forest Falcon** *Micrastur semitorquatus* Great looks at a pale morph near San Blas.

**American Kestrel** *Falco sparverius* Regular. A pretty bird of prey.

**Merlin** *Falco columbarius* (B) A brief look at a swift bird while driving along a Baja road.

**Bat Falcon** *Falco rufigularis* Several encounters.

**Peregrine Falcon** *Falco peregrinus* Five observations. One showed well at the Ciudad Guzman marsh.

**Lilac-crowned Amazon** *Amazona finschi* Fairly common near Colima. Scope views of a pair near Barra de Navidad.

**Mexican Parrotlet** *Forpus cyanopygius* Nice looks in the San Blas area. Endemic to western Mexico.

**Orange-fronted Parakeet** *Eupsittula canicularis* Regular.

**Military Macaw** *Ara militaris* Heard by everyone along the lower Durango Highway. A leader only sighting.

**Ivory-billed Woodcreeper** *Xiphorhynchus flavigaster* Regular in the lowlands.

**White-striped Woodcreeper** *Lepidocolaptes leucogaster* Several were seen in the highland forests.

**Greenish Elaenia** *Myiopagis viridicata* Regular, but a typical 'low profile' species.

**Northern Beardless Tyrannulet** *Camptostoma imberbe* Fairly common.

**Black Phoebe** *Sayornis nigricans* Just a few encounters.

**Northern Tufted Flycatcher** *Mitrephanes phaeocercus* Fairly common and attractive in the highland forests.

**Greater Pewee** *Contopus pertinax* Not uncommon in the highland forests. A distinctive call.

**White-throated Flycatcher** *Empidonax albigularis* Good looks at two in marshy habitat at San Blas.

**Hammond's Flycatcher** *Empidonax hammondi* Small numbers were identified in the oak-pine zone.



American Dusky and American Grey Flycatchers (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**American Dusky Flycatcher (Dusky F)** *Empidonax oberholseri* A handful of sightings in montane scrub.

**American Grey Flycatcher (Grey F)** *Empidonax wrightii* (B) Good looks at several in the Sierra La Laguna.

**Pine Flycatcher** *Empidonax affinis* A couple performed well in the oak-pine forests along the Durango Highway.

**Pacific-slope Flycatcher** *Empidonax difficilis* Regular observations. Fairly common on Baja California.

**Cordilleran Flycatcher** *Empidonax occidentalis* We identified a few in the hills. Subtle differences with previous.

**Buff-breasted Flycatcher** *Empidonax fulvifrons* One or two in the pine forest of the Durango Highway. Lovely.

**Vermilion Flycatcher** *Pyrocephalus rubinus* Common and so very pretty.

**Social Flycatcher** *Myiozetetes similis* Regular in the more humid lowlands.

**Great Kiskadee** *Pitangus sulphuratus* Small numbers were noted along our mainland route. A distinctive voice!

**Boat-billed Flycatcher** *Megarynchus pitangua* Several showed well near San Blas.

**Tropical Kingbird** *Tyrannus melancholicus* The famous TK...Common.

**Cassin's Kingbird** *Tyrannus vociferans* Regularly seen in open habitat in the highlands.

**Thick-billed Kingbird** *Tyrannus crassirostris* Not uncommon along our mainland route.

**Dusky-capped Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tuberculifer* Small numbers. A characteristic voice.

**Ash-throated Flycatcher** *Myiarchus cinerascens* Not uncommon in dry woodland.

**Nutting's Flycatcher** *Myiarchus nuttingi* Small numbers. Subtle differences with previous species. Voice!

**Brown-crested Flycatcher** *Myiarchus tyrannulus* Just a few of these large *Myiarchus*. A distinctive voice!

**Flammulated Flycatcher** *Deltarhynchus flammulatus* Excellent views in a gully near Barra de Navidad. Endemic!

**Bright-rumped Attila (Flammulated A)** *Attila [spadiceus] flammulatus* A few nice sightings. An often heard song.



*Pacific Flycatcher and Bright-rumped Attila (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Masked Tityra** *Tityra semifasciata* Regular in fruiting trees.

**Grey-collared Becard** *Pachyramphus major* Cracking looks at a male above San Blas. A speciality!

**Rose-throated Becard** *Pachyramphus aglaiae* We saw small numbers of this attractive species along our route.

**Loggerhead Shrike** *Lanius ludovicianus* Just three observations.

**Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo** *Vireolanius melitophrys* Fantastic views of this exquisite bird. Michael's nr 7000!

**Slaty Vireo** *Vireo brevipennis* This striking species showed very well on Volcan de Fuego.



*Grey and Golden Vireos (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Bell's Vireo** *Vireo bellii* A few observations in the lowlands.

**Black-capped Vireo** *Vireo atricapilla* Six encounters with this near endemic. A gorgeous bird.



**Grey Vireo** *Vireo vicinior* (B) Great looks at one in the Baja California desert.

**Plumbeous Vireo** *Vireo plumbeus* A single bird was seen near Mazatlan.

**Cassin's Vireo** *Vireo cassinii* Regular observations.

**Hutton's Vireo** *Vireo huttoni* Fairly common in the oak zone.

**Golden Vireo** *Vireo hypochryseus* This Mexican endemic was regularly encountered. A striking species.

**Warbling Vireo** *Vireo gilvus* A fairly common migrant.

**San Blas Jay** *Cyanocorax sanblasianus* We saw this rather shy species near San Blas and near Barra de Navidad.

**Purplish-backed Jay** *Cyanocorax beecheii* Splendid looks at this beautiful endemic in the Mazatlan area.

**Tufted Jay** *Cyanocorax dickeyi* One of the most attractive birds of the tour. Several superb observations.

**Green Jay** *Cyanocorax luxuosus* Brief looks for some in the San Blas hills.



*Black-throated Magpie-Jay (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Black-throated Magpie-Jay** *Calocitta colliei* Many excellent observations of this striking endemic near Mazatlan.

**White-throated Magpie-Jay** *Calocitta formosa* Just a few were noted near Colima and Barra de Navidad.

**Steller's Jay** *Cyanocitta stelleri* Small numbers were found in the pine forests of the Durango Highway.

**Transvolcanic Jay** *Aphelocoma ultramarina* Several noisy parties were noted on Volcan de Fuego.

**California Scrub Jay** *Aphelocoma californica* (B) A handful of sightings in the Baja semi desert.

**Sinaloa Crow** *Corvus sinaloae* A very common and boisterous endemic of the Mazatlan and San Blas areas.

**Northern Raven (Common R)** *Corvus corax* Just a few observations of this well-known species.

**Grey Silky-flycatcher (G Silky)** *Ptiliogonys cinereus* Nice sightings of this lovely species in the mountains.

**Phainopepla** *Phainopepla nitens* (B) This cracker showed well in the Baja desert.

**Bridled Titmouse** *Baeolophus wollweberi* One or two were seen in mountain scrub along the Durango Highway.

**Mexican Chickadee** *Poecile sclateri* A handful of encounters in the oak-pine forests.

**Verdin** *Auriparus flaviceps* (B) This dainty bird was fairly common in the Baja deserts.

**Sand Martin (Bank Swallow)** *Riparia riparia* A few were identified amongst other hirundines at San Blas.

**Tree Swallow** *Tachycineta bicolor* Small numbers showed well.

**Mangrove Swallow** *Tachycineta albilinea* Common at San Blas. A well-chosen name.

**Violet-green Swallow** *Tachycineta thalassina* Regular over highland forest.

**Northern Rough-winged Swallow** *Stelgidopteryx serripennis* Common all along our route.

**Barn Swallow** *Hirundo rustica* This well-known species was seen in good numbers.

**American Cliff Swallow** *Petrochelidon pyrrhonota* Just a few sightings.

**American Bushtit** *Psaltiriparus minimus* A few parties were found in the highland forests.

**Golden-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus satrapa* Good looks at one in the higher reaches of Volcan de Fuego.

**Ruby-crowned Kinglet** *Regulus calendula* Small numbers of this tiny migrant were noted.

**Grey-barred Wren** *Campylorhynchus megalopterus* Several rowdy parties were encountered on Volcan de Fuego.

**Sclater's Wren** *Campylorhynchus humilis* Nice looks at this Rufous-naped Wren split near Colima.



*Phainopepla and Sinaloa Crow (Mark Van Beirs)*



*Spotted and Happy Wrens (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*Grey Thrasher and California Gnatcatcher (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Spotted Wren** *Campylorhynchus gularis* This endemic was common in the highlands.

**Cactus Wren** *Campylorhynchus brunneicapillus* (B) Great looks at this endearing bird in the Baja deserts.

**Rock Wren** *Salpinctes obsoletus* A single bird was hopping about on the Sinaloa Martin cliffs.





*Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Canyon Wren** *Catherpes mexicanus* (B) (H) We heard its loud Willow Warbler-like song on the Baja Peninsula.

**Marsh Wren** *Cistothorus palustris* (B) One was seen at the Estero San José on Baja.

**Happy Wren** *Pheugopedius felix* Several excellent encounters. A great name!

**Sinaloa Wren (Bar-vented W)** *Thryophilus sinaloa* Regular encounters. More often heard than seen.

**House Wren (Northern H W)** *Troglodytes [aeson] aeson* A few observations only.

**House Wren (Brown-throated H W)** *Troglodytes [aeson] brunneicollis* Nice looks in the pine forests of Durango.

**White-bellied Wren** *Uropsila leucogastra* The final new bird of the tour. Great looks near Barra de Navidad.

**Blue-grey Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila caerulea* Common and showy.

**California Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila californica* (B) Excellent views in the Baja California scrub.

**Black-capped Gnatcatcher** *Poliophtila nigriceps* A couple of nice encounters. Subtle identification!



**White-breasted Nuthatch** *Sitta carolinensis* (NL) One was seen by Barbara on Volcan de Fuego.

**Brown Creeper (B Treecreeper)** *Certhia americana* Several nice sightings in the highland forests.

**Northern Mockingbird** *Mimus polyglottos* Common on Baja. Just a few observations on the mainland.

**Grey Thrasher** *Toxostoma cinereum* (B) This Baja California endemic showed very well on several occasions.

**Curve-billed Thrasher** *Toxostoma curvirostre* A few observations in the highlands.

**Blue Mockingbird** *Melanotis caerulescens* Several excellent encounters with this endemic in scrubby thickets.

**Common Starling (introduced)** *Sturnus vulgaris* (B) Regular sightings on Baja California.

**Eastern Bluebird** *Sialia sialis* Small numbers of this striking species were seen in the highlands.



*Brown-backed Solitaire and Crescent-chested Warbler (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*American (San Lucas) Robin (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



**Brown-backed Solitaire** *Myadestes occidentalis* Often heard and regularly seen in the highlands.

**Orange-billed Nightingale-Thrush** *Catharus aurantirostris* (H) We heard it in the foothills near Barra de Navidad.

**Hermit Thrush** *Catharus guttatus* A handful of sightings of this unobtrusive migrant.

**White-throated Thrush** *Turdus assimilis* Fairly common in the highland forests.

**Russet Nightingale-Thrush** *Catharus occidentalis* A couple of brief encounters along the Durango Highway.

**Swainson's Thrush** *Catharus ustulatus* Just a few observations.

**Rufous-backed Thrush** *Turdus rufopalliatu*s Regular encounters with this smart endemic.

**American Robin** *Turdus migratorius* Just a few observations.

**American Robin (San Lucas R)** *Turdus [migratorius] confinis* (B) Superb scope studies of this Baja speciality.

**House Sparrow (introduced)** *Passer domesticus* Common in towns and villages.

**Olive Warbler** *Peucedramus taeniatus* Several very nice observations of this very special species!

**Buff-bellied Pipit (American P)** *Anthus rubescens* (B) 15 or so showed well at the La Paz sewage works.

**House Finch** *Haemorhous mexicanus* Common.

**Lesser Goldfinch** *Spinus psaltria* Regular.

**Black-headed Siskin** *Spinus notatus* Small numbers were encountered in the highlands.

**Scrub Euphonia (Godman's E)** *Euphonia [affinis] godmani* Several nice sightings in the San Blas area.

**Elegant Euphonia (Blue-hooded E)** *Euphonia elegantissima* Cracking males were seen several times.

**Ovenbird** *Seiurus aurocapilla* A single migrant was found on Volcan de Fuego.

**Louisiana Waterthrush (W)** *Parkesia motacilla* Scope views of this migrant in a gully near Barra de Navidad.

**Northern Waterthrush** *Parkesia noveboracensis* Regular encounters.

**Black-and-white Warbler** *Mniotilta varia* Not uncommon.

**Crescent-chested Warbler** *Oreothlypis superciliosa* Regular observations of this smart speciality.

**Orange-crowned Warbler** *Leiothlypis celata* One of the more common migrants.

**Lucy's Warbler** *Leiothlypis luciae* (NL) One was seen by Guna near Magdalena.

**Nashville Warbler** *Leiothlypis ruficapilla* Common in the highland scrub.

**Virginia's Warbler** *Leiothlypis virginiae* A single bird showed briefly on Volcan de Fuego.

**MacGillivray's Warbler** *Geothlypis tolmiei* Regular sightings of this skulking species.

**Belding's Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis beldingi* (B) Cracking looks at this Baja endemic.

**Common Yellowthroat** *Geothlypis trichas* A regularly observed migrant.

**American Redstart** *Setophaga ruticilla* Fairly common.

**Tropical Parula** *Setophaga pitiauyumi* Regular.

**American Yellow Warbler** *Setophaga aestiva* Small numbers were seen on the mainland.

**Mangrove Warbler** *Setophaga petechia* A few were seen in mangrove habitat.

**Audubon's Warbler** *Setophaga auduboni* One of the more common migrants.

**Yellow-throated Warbler** *Setophaga dominica* A vagrant adult was found on Volcan de Fuego.

**Grace's Warbler** *Setophaga graciae* Very nice observations in the highland forests.



*Black-throated Grey and Fan-tailed Warblers (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Black-throated Grey Warbler** *Setophaga nigrescens* Regular observations of this smart migrant.

**Townsend's Warbler** *Setophaga townsendi* Small numbers were found in the highland pines.

**Hermit Warbler** *Setophaga occidentalis* Just a few were seen in the highlands.



Rufous-capped and Golden-browed Warblers (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Fan-tailed Warbler** *Basileuterus lachrymosus* This attractive speciality showed very well.

**Rufous-capped Warbler** *Basileuterus rufifrons* Regular encounters in highland scrub.

**Golden-browed Warbler** *Basileuterus belli* A truly gorgeous speciality, that was regularly found.

**Wilson's Warbler** *Cardellina pusilla* A common migrant.

**Red-faced Warbler** *Cardellina rubrifrons* Several excellent observations of this jewel.

**Red Warbler** *Cardellina rubra* One of the stars of the highland forests. Both subspecies were seen.



Painted Whitestart and Yellow-headed Blackbirds (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Painted Whitestart (P Redstart)** *Myioborus pictus* Another striking inhabitant of the highlands.

**Slate-throated Whitestart (S-t Redstart)** *Myioborus miniatus* Common in the highlands.

**Yellow-breasted Chat** *Icteria virens* This very attractive migrant showed well on several occasions.

**Yellow-headed Blackbird** *Xanthocephalus xanthocephalus* A truly amazing spectacle at Ciudad Guzman!

**Mexican Cacique (Yellow-winged C)** *Cassiculus melanicterus* Regular and quite noisy.

**Scott's Oriole** *Icterus parisorum* (B) Regular observations in the Baja deserts.

**Audubon's Oriole** *Icterus graduacauda* A few of the *dickeyae* form on Volcan de Fuego.

**Bullock's Oriole** *Icterus bullockii* A handful of sightings.

**Streak-backed Oriole** *Icterus pustulatus* One of the more commonly observed orioles.

**Spot-breasted Oriole** *Icterus pectoralis* Several showed well in open habitat near Barra de Navidad.

**Black-vented Oriole** *Icterus wagleri* Several very nice observations in flowering trees.

**Hooded Oriole** *Icterus cucullatus* Fairly common.

**Orchard Oriole** *Icterus spurius* This smart migrant showed well.

**Red-winged Blackbird** *Agelaius phoeniceus* Small numbers were noted at lowland marshes.

**Red-winged Blackbird (Bicoloured B)** *Agelaius [phoeniceus] gubernator* A few at the Ciudad Guzman marshes.

**Bronzed Cowbird** *Molothrus aeneus* Small numbers.

**Brown-headed Cowbird** *Molothrus ater* Small flocks were noted on several occasions.

**Brewer's Blackbird** *Euphagus cyanocephalus* We identified a few at Ciudad Guzman.

**Great-tailed Grackle** *Quiscalus mexicanus* One of the more common Mexican species. Absent from Baja.

**Lincoln's Sparrow** *Melospiza lincolni* A regularly observed migrant.





*Baird's Junco (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**White-crowned Sparrow** *Zonotrichia leucophrys* (B) Several showed well at the La Paz sewage works.

**Yellow-eyed Junco** *Junco phaeonotus* A few observations in the highland forests.

**Baird's Junco** *Junco bairdi* (B) This recent split showed very well in the Sierra La Laguna on Baja.

**Savannah Sparrow** *Passerculus sandwichensis* Just a few observations.

**Chipping Sparrow** *Spizella passerina* Small numbers were noted.

**Brewer's Sparrow** *Spizella breweri* Brief looks at a single bird on Baja.



*Lark Sparrow and Collared Towhee (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Lark Sparrow** *Chondestes grammacus* Regular sightings of this smart migrant.

**Five-striped Sparrow** *Amphispiza quinquestriata* Two nice observations along the lower Durango Highway.

**Black-throated Sparrow** *Amphispiza bilineata* (B) Two showed well in the Baja desert.

**Stripe-headed Sparrow** *Peucaea ruficauda* Regular in open areas in the highlands.

**Black-chested Sparrow** *Peucaea humeralis* This beautiful endemic showed well near Colima.

**Rufous-crowned Sparrow** *Aimophila ruficeps* (B) Two were seen in the Sierra La Laguna on Baja.

**Rusty Sparrow** *Aimophila rufescens* Several nice observations.





California and Canyon Towhees (Dani Lopez-Velasco)

**Green-tailed Towhee** *Pipilo chlorurus* Several observations along the lower Durango Highway.

**Collared Towhee** *Pipilo ocai* Great looks at this endemic on Volcan de Fuego.

**Spotted Towhee** *Pipilo maculatus* A few sightings only.

**Canyon Towhee** *Melozone fusca* Several showed well on Volcan de Fuego.

**California Towhee** *Melozone crissalis* (B) Regularly seen on Baja California.

**Rusty-crowned Ground Sparrow** *Melozone kieneri* Splendid looks at this endemic skulker.

**Olive Sparrow** *Arremonops rufivirgatus* Good looks at this modestly-clad near Barra de Navidad.

**Green-striped Brushfinch** *Arremon virenticeps* This endemic showed well along the Durango Highway.

**Rufous-capped Brushfinch** *Atlapetes pileatus* A few encounters with this endemic.

**Blue-black Grassquit** *Volatinia jacarina* Regular.

**White-collared Seedeater** (Cinnamon-rumped S) *Sporophila [torqueola] torqueola* Fairly common.

**Rosy Thrush-Tanager** *Rhodinocichla rosea* Fantastic views of male and female near San Blas. Fabulous!



Red-headed Tanager (Dani Lopez-Velasco)



**Flame-colored Tanager** *Piranga bidentata* Regular observations of this smart species.  
**Hepatic Tanager (Northern H T)** *Piranga hepatica* Fairly common.  
**Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra* A handful of records.  
**Western Tanager** *Piranga ludoviciana* Fairly common on Baja. A few elsewhere.  
**Red-headed Tanager** *Piranga erythrocephala* This gorgeous endemic performed well along the Durango Highway.  
**Red-crowned Ant Tanager** *Habia rubica* Good looks near Barra de Navidad.  
**Yellow Grosbeak (Mexican Y G)** *Pheucticus chrysopheplus* Regular observations.  
**Rose-breasted Grosbeak** *Pheucticus ludovicianus* Two nice males were seen near san Blas.  
**Black-headed Grosbeak** *Pheucticus melanocephalus* Regular encounters.



*Female Red-breasted Chat (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*

**Red-breasted Chat** *Granatellus venustus* An exquisite male showed brilliantly near Barra de Navidad.  
**Northern Cardinal** *Cardinalis cardinalis* Several observations.  
**Pyrrhuloxia** *Cardinalis sinuatus* Singles of this unusual-looking species were noted on Baja and near Mazatlan.  
**Greyish Saltator** *Saltator coerulescens* Several encounters.  
**Blue Bunting** *Cyanocompsa parellina* This near endemic proved to be fairly common.  
**Blue Grosbeak** *Passerina caerulea* Plenty of records of this northern migrant. Attractive males in breeding attire!  
**Indigo Bunting** *Passerina cyanea* A single migrant was seen on the lower slopes of Volcan de Fuego.  
**Lazuli Bunting** *Passerina amoena* Several nice observations.  
**Varied Bunting** *Passerina versicolor* Regular. Some cracking males posed for us.  
**Painted Bunting** *Passerina ciris* Fairly common. The males are simply superb.  
**Orange-breasted Bunting** *Passerina leclancherii* The Bird of the Trip! Exquisite and delightful.



*Male Varied Bunting (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*



*The lower slopes of the Volcan de Fuego; The Durango Highway (Mark Van Beirs)*



## MAMMALS

**Black-tailed Jackrabbit** *Lepus californicus* (B) A single was seen in the Baja California desert.

**White-tailed Antelope squirrel** *Ammospermophilus leucurus* (B) Nice looks at three in Baja.

**Collie's Squirrel** *Sciurus colliae* Several observations.

**Mexican Fox Squirrel** *Sciurus nayaritensis* This attractive squirrel showed well at several locations.

**Coyote** *Canis latrans* (B) (H) We heard the magical howling before dawn in the Sierra La Laguna.



*White-nosed Coati and White-tailed Antelope Squirrel (Mark Van Beirs)*

**White-nosed Coati** *Nasua narica* Several encounters in the San Blas area.

**Californian Sea Lion** *Zalophus californianus* A single animal was seen from the La Paz – Mazatlan ferry.

**Long-beaked Common Dolphin** *Delphinus capensis* A large pod could be admired from the ferry.

**Humpback Whale** *Megaptera novaeangliae* We observed two at Cabo San Lucas and three at Manzanillo.

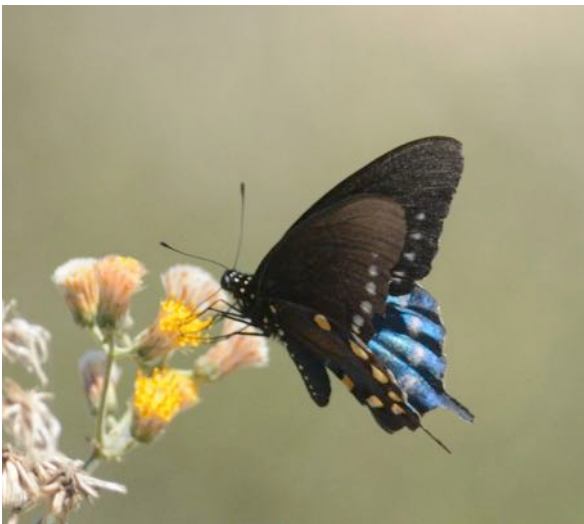
**Mule Deer** *Odocoileus hemionus* A single animal was seen on Baja.

## REPTILES

**American Crocodile** *Crocodylus acutus* Several excellent encounters with this impressive reptile.



*The group along the Durango Highway (Mark Van Beirs)*



*Pipevine Swallowtail and Tarantula sp (Mark Van Beirs)*





*The glorious Tufted Jay (Dani Lopez-Velasco)*