



CUBA TOUR REPORT 2023

24 January - 4 February 2023

BY LEO GARRIGUES

Cuba is a great destination for birdwatching, as it is the largest Caribbean Island, and contains the largest number of birds recorded of any of the Caribbean islands, plus it has 29 endemic species of which 27 can be reliably seen. During our trip we managed to see 176 species, including these 27 endemic species and the endemic subspecies of Sandhill Crane, a difficult one! Cuba has the endemic family Teretistridae, whose members are the Oriente Warbler and Yellow-headed Warbler, which we both saw very well, definitely a major highlight of the trip.

The favourite bird of the trip was the Bee Hummingbird (the smallest bird in the world), but we had many more highlights like three species of Quail-Doves; the Blue-headed, Grey-fronted and Key West Quail-Dove, great views of Cuban Tody multiple times, very good views of Cuban Nightjar at night-time, West Indian Whistling Duck that is one of the rarest ducks in the Americas, Mangrove Cuckoo, Great Lizard Cuckoo, Clapper Rail, Piping Plover (near threatened species), Least Bittern, the white form of Great Blue Heron (*Ardea herodias occidentalis*), nice views of the unpredictable endemic Gundlach's Hawk, Bare-legged Owl at night-time and at his roosting cavity, multiple sights of Cuban Trogon, all the possible species of woodpeckers including the endemic Fernandina's Flicker, and the resident subspecies of Northern Flicker (potential split), Cuban Amazon, Cuban Parakeet, the endangered Giant Kingbird, Cuban Crow and Cuban Palm Crow, Cuban Martin during our city tour in La Habana, the endangered Zapata Wren, the endemic Cuban Gnatcatcher, the near-endemic Bahama Mockingbird, the melodious Cuban Solitaire, two different subspecies of Zapata Sparrow (*inexpectata* and *varonai*), the uncommon Red-shouldered Blackbird, the regional endemic Olive-capped Warbler, Cuban Bullfinch and Cuban Grassquit, 17 species of overwintering New World warblers and a good amount of North American winter migrants, including some rare species for Cuba like the Lesser Black-backed and Bonaparte's Gull and Black Tern.

Our tour began in La Habana, where we did a mourning walk around the grounds of the hotel, where we started to get familiar with some common species like Eurasian Collared Dove, Red-legged Thrush or Cuban Blackbird, probably the most interesting sighting of that morning was to see our first Common Yellowthroat, as well the resident subspecies of American Kestrel just before we left the hotel.

After breakfast we met our last members of the group, as well our local guide Alejandro and our driver Rolando. After that, we headed up to San Diego de Los Baños, a little town located in the province of Pinar del Rio. Our first birding stop was to see the Cuban Grassquit, at Las Terrazas pig farm, where we easily saw a big group of them coming to feeders.

Like every first day of the trip, we were excited with each new endemic we were seeing, although we later realized that

some of these birds would be with us for the rest of the trip. Some of the birds included in this birding stop were the resident subspecies of Red-tailed Hawk (*solitudinis*), Antillean Palm Swift, Cuban Emerald, White-crowned Pigeon, a single Plain Pigeon that flew by (rare in the area), Cuban Pewee, Loggerhead Kingbird, Cuban Vireo, Grey Catbird, the resident subspecies of Eastern Meadowlark (a potential split), Worm-eating and Palm Warbler, Northern Parula and Red-legged Honeycreepers.

Later on, we stopped in some ponds where we saw several individuals of Snail Kites, as well some Lesser Yellowlegs, Killdeer, Spotted Sandpiper, Double-crested Cormorant and Osprey.

Once at our hotel in San Diego de Los Baños we were introduced to our local lady guide Merlin, who accompanied us during our stay in the area.

The afternoon session was spent at La Hacienda where we had an entertaining birding session that included White-crowned Pigeons, Purple Gallinule, Least Grebe, great views of our first Cuban Pygmy Owl, Cuban Trogon, Yellow-bellied Sapsucker, Cuban Green Woodpecker, Loggerhead Kingbird, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Yellow-throated Vireo, Western Spindalis, Cuban Oriole, Tawny-shouldered Blackbird, Greater Antillean Grackle, Louisiana Waterthrush, Black-and-white, Yellow-throated and Palm Warblers, and Yellow-faced Grassquit. The main highlight of the afternoon session was to see a pair of Giant Kingbirds, an endangered species for Cuba, that sometimes can be tricky to see, but wasn't the case for our tour.

The following day we had an early breakfast and went to Cueva de los Portales, a site that is a National Monument where Che Guevara had his headquarters during the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Besides the historical background of the place, it protects a good area of nature and wildlife in the Sierra de los Órganos and that was the main reason to visit this location. Our main target this morning was the Cuban Solitaire, which we managed to see and we heard its melodious song, but we got more than that, like our second sighting of the endangered Giant Kingbird, as well good views of the endangered Gundlach's Hawk (possibly the most difficult Cuban endemic to see) that decided to attack a Turkey Vulture. Other additions for the morning were Cuban Tody, Yellow-headed Warbler (one of the two members of the Teretristidae family), Summer Tanager and our first Cuban Bullfinch. We also checked the caves to see a group of Jamaican Fruit-eating Bats and with that we ended our session at the Cueva de Los Portales. The birding on the way back to San Diego de Los Baños had a combination of pine woodlands, lagoons, and agricultural areas. We managed to see another main target for the tour, the Olive-capped Warbler, but some other species like Great Lizard Cuckoo, Common Ground Dove, Northern Jacana, Anhinga, Belted Kingfisher, Loggerhead Kingbird, Tree Swallow, Northern Mockingbird, Western Spindalis, Northern Waterthrush, Magnolia, Myrtle, Yellow-throated Warbler and American Yellow Warbler which was a write-in for the tour.

The afternoon birding sites included some water reservoirs on the way to La Habana, where we got to see things like big groups of Lesser Scaups and Ring-necked Ducks, American Coot, Common Gallinule, Limpkin, Least and Pied-billed Grebe, Greater Yellowlegs, American Herring Gull, Common and Black Tern (a write-in for the trip), Peregrine Falcon, Common Yellowthroat, the first Prairie Warbler, and other regular warblers. We continued our return to the hotel in Havana, where we spent a pleasant night.

We left Havana before dawn to go in a southeast direction and were mostly driving to get to Camagüey, but we did a productive birding stop in the morning at Rio Hatiguanico. This is located on the edge of the Parque Nacional Ciénega de Zapata. The best bird of our session was a pair of the nominate subspecies of Zapata Sparrow (*inexpectata*), but it was an entertained birding session overall that included Black-crowned Night Heron, Cuban Pygmy Owl, Cuban Trogon, West Indian and Cuban Green Woodpecker, the resident subspecies of Northern Flicker (*chrysocaulosus*), Merlin, Loggerhead Kingbird, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Cuban Vireo, Blue-grey Gnatcatcher, Western Spindalis, Yellow-headed Warbler, our first Black-throated Blue Warbler and Cuban Bullfinch. Lunch was at Santa Clara where we also did some birding and saw things like Cuban Tody, Cuban Pewee, Yellow-throated Vireo, American Redstart, Black-and-white, Cape May, Black-throated Blue and Prairie Warbler and Red-legged Honeycreeper.

The rest of the day was mostly focused on the drive with some sights of raptors from the bus like Red-tailed Hawk, Crested Caracara and American Kestrel. We arrived at Camagüey in the early evening.

After an early breakfast we headed up to the protected area of "Sierra de Los Chorrillos", where we met our local guide Camilo. It was a very successful birding session where we saw several additions to the trip like Plain Pigeon, Scaly-naped Pigeon, Cuban Amazon, Cuban Parakeet, Cuban Palm Crow and Cuban Crow. Other good birds of the morning were Gundlach's Hawk and Giant Kingbird, as well as regular birds like Cuban Trogon and Great Lizard Cuckoo. Later on, we did our first try for Fernandina Flicker, but without success. We came back to the hotel in Camagüey and went to look for 'Cuban' Eastern Meadowlark (*hippocrepis* subspecies).

The afternoon was spent at the Manuel Ascunce water reservoir, where we got to see Pied-billed Grebe, Killdeer, Least Sandpiper, Caspian Tern, the only sight of Neotropic Cormorant of the trip, Roseate Spoonbill, Great Blue and Tricolored Heron, Northern Waterthrush, Cape May, Black-throated Blue, Myrtle, and Palm Warblers and Yellow-faced Grassquit.

After breakfast we left Camagüey to start our journey to Cuba's North Cays. On the way we crossed the ridge of Sierra de Cubitas, where we did our first birding stop. Here we managed to complete the Teretistridae Family, when we saw the other member of this family, the Oriente Warbler. Other birds like Cuban Trogon, Loggerhead Kingbird, La Sagra's Flycatcher, Cuban Vireo and other warblers were seen during our birding session at Sierra Cubitas. Our only Northern Harrier of the trip was seen in this journey to the North Cays as well. At Moron city we met our great local guide Odey, a biologist and professional chess player who joined our group during our days at the Cuba's north Cays.

Once at Cayos Coastway we started to see ocean birds like Cabot's Tern, Herring and Laughing Gull, Magnificent Frigatebird and Ruddy Turnstone. We arrived at our hotel at Cayo Coco by lunch.

The afternoon session started with the West Indian Whistling Duck, which we found not too far from our hotel at Cayo

Coco. Then we went to a site to look for Cuban Gnatcatcher which we managed to see really well, as well other birds like Reddish Egret, White Ibis and Roseate Spoonbill. The last section of the afternoon we went to the Cueva del Javali to check some feeders and water pools where birds came to bathe and drink water. A good selection of warblers included Ovenbird, American Redstart, Worm-eating, Black-throated Blue, Cape May, Yellow-throated Warbler, the subspecies of Zapata Sparrow (varonai), Red-legged Thrush, Grey Catbird, Great Antillean Grackle, Cuban Blackbird and Yellow-faced Grassquit. Also attracted to the water and feeders we saw Zenaida Dove, Common Ground Dove and in the last moments before leaving, the Key West Quail-Dove made its appearance. After that we checked the former discotheque caves, that today is a home of the Waterhouse's Leaf-nosed Bat (*Macrotus waterhousii*) and the Big Brown Bat (*Eptesicus fuscus*) which by the way, is very tiny.

The following day our morning birding session included habitats like coastline and mangrove areas; initially in Cayo Cocos and then at Cayo Guillermo. The main bird of the morning was the Bahama Mockingbird that showed really well, also other interesting sights like the "Great White" form of Great-Blue Heron (*occidentalis*), close views of Piping Plover and Mangrove Cuckoo, White-cheeked Pintail, American Wigeon, Clapper Rail, Sora, American Coot, American Flamingo, American Oystercatcher, American Avocet, Red Knot, Short-billed Dowitcher, Laughing and Ring-billed Gull and White Ibis.

In the afternoon we went to a different Cay, the Cayo Paredon Grande, with the purpose to find the rare and localized Thick-billed Vireo, but unfortunately, we didn't succeed with our quest. The habitat around the site is under pressure of development for new hotels and there were several construction projects ongoing. In the afternoon we had good views of Cuban Black Hawk and one single Lesser Black-Backed Gull (a very exiting bird for most of the group), Cuban Bullfinch as well as some regular North American warblers, while we were searching for the vireo.

During our last morning in Cayo Coco, we went again to the Cueva del Javali, where we improved our views of the Key West Quail Dove, as well we improved our views of the local subspecies of Zapata Sparrow. We also checked some oxidation lagoons where we saw Blue-winged Teal, Northern Shoveler, Ruddy Duck, Killdeer, American Avocet and Greater and Lesser Yellowlegs.

After check from our Hotel at Cayo Cocos we did a couple of birding stops along Los Cayos Coastway, where we got to see Red-breasted Merganser and American White Pelican. After that, it was pretty much a drive to have lunch at Santa Clara, and onwards to Playa Giron where we would stay the last nights of the trip to explore the different sites of Parque Nacional Ciénega de Zapata.

The following day we met Mario, our local expert of the area, who joined us the rest of our days in the Zapata Marsh and surrounding areas. The first pre-dawn birding session we tried for Cuban Nightjar where we managed to see it flying about. In the early morning, we arrived at Santo Tomas village, where Grey-fronted Quail-Dove was calling and we went right away to look for it and we managed to see the bird singing in a tree.

After that, we went to look for Zapata Wren, where we had to use small boats to get to the Zapata Wren site. Luckily, we managed to see the wren on our first attempt, with good views. After that, we got a brief glimpse of a pair of Zapata Sparrow, also other birds like Yellow-headed Warbler and Common Yellowthroat. The rest of the morning we spent in woodlands where we got to see some regular warblers, Cuban Trogon, Cuban Tody and Cuban Parakeet in flight. The afternoon session we went to the Palm Savannas to look for Fernandina Flicker, that gave us a bit of a work-around, but we managed to see it in the last part of the afternoon. Once it became dark, we managed to see the Bare-legged Owl and the Cuban Nightjar and then we went back to our hotel.

Our next morning, we first visited Refugio Fauna Bermeja where we visited a hide where Quail-Doves have become accustomed to people, thanks to the local guide Orlando, who over the years has developed methods to see this shy birds. Our visit only had Blue-headed Quail-Dove present, but that was the one we wanted to see! After our Quail-Dove session we went to some nearby marshes to look for the Red-Shouldered Blackbird. This one can be a tricky endemic to see but we got really good views from relatively close distance. We kept looking for other birds in rice fields and agricultural areas where we got to see Glossy Ibis, Limpkin, Killdeer, Cuban Parakeet and Tricolored Munias. We came back to Refugio Fauna Bermeja in the afternoon, to look what birds came to drink and take a bath in some water ponds in the forest. A good variety of Warblers that included Ovenbird, American Redstart, Worm-eating Warbler, Black-throated Blue Warbler, among others, were the ones that came in this afternoon session. Other interesting sighting was the local Caribbean subspecies of Broad-winged Hawk.

As our nights in Playa Giron were lit by a full moon, we decided to give a try to Stygian Owl before dawn of the following day around the grounds of our hotel, but without success but did see some Yellow-crowned Night-Herons.

After our owling session we went to the Brito Salinas, where we had chance to see some shorebirds and other water birds. The highlight of our morning at Brito Salinas was the Cuban Martin that flew over us, as well other additions to the tour list like Dunlin, Gull-billed Tern, Black Skimmer, Semipalmated and Western Sandpipers and Mangrove Warbler. Other birds seen that morning were the American Flamingos, American Avocet, Grey Plover, Red Knot, Short-billed Dowitcher, Lesser Yellowlegs, Reddish Egret, American White and Brown Pelicans, Cuban Black Hawk, and Belted Kingfisher among others.

The rest of the morning was spent at Palpite Casa de Bernabé, a famous location of hummingbird feeders, where the main star is nothing more and nothing less than the smallest bird in the world, the Bee Hummingbird. At this point of the trip, it was also the last remaining endemic we managed to see!

Other birds that we saw in the feeder area were Cuban Emerald, Cuban Oriole, Shiny Cowbird, Cuban Blackbird and

some warblers like the Black-throated Blue, Cape May and Yellow-throated Warbler.

The afternoon we gave the choice to the group to do another try to see forest birds coming to bathe and drink water at Fauna Bermeja, or to go with Mario, Alejandro and Rolando to the Babiney Rice Fields and have a more relaxing afternoon.

The ones who came with me and Orlando at Fauna Bermeja were hoping to see the last species of Quail-Dove that we needed for Cuba, the Ruddy Quail-Dove, but this one didn't show up. However, in this afternoon session we managed to see the other three species of Quail-Doves in just a couple of hours, probably a record for myself to see three Quail-Doves in the same day (Grey-fronted, Blue-headed and Key West Quail-Doves) or even in just one afternoon. We also saw Magnolia, Worm-eating, Black-throated Blue Warbler and Zenaida Dove, as well a dead Stygian Owl laying in the middle of the trail.

The other members of the group who went to the Babiney Rice Fields added some birds to the trip list like Wilson's Snipe and Scaly-breasted Munia. Other birds that they got to see were White-winged Dove, Bare-legged Owl, Cuban Pygmy Owl, Merlin, Tricolored Munia, Shiny Cowbird and Yellow-faced Grassquit.

Well, at this point of the tour we had seen all the endemics birds of the island, so we were going to attempt to see one of the most difficult birds to see in Cuba; the resident Cuban subspecies of Sandhill Crane (nesiotes). Mario took us to a site with savannas that was burned last year where we had a chance of finding them. Once at the site we were lucky to see at least five different individuals that flew at different moments and allowed us to see them in flight. We also heard Red-shouldered Blackbirds at that site. After that we did some forest birding where we got to see another Key West Quail-Dove and a Cuban Racer (the brown snake). Other regular birds like Cuban Pygmy Owl, Cuban Vireo, and some regular warblers were other birds seen during our morning.

Our last afternoon of the trip, Mario took us to Soplillar woodlands, which also has a watering hole where warblers and Quail-Doves came to drink and bathe in the afternoons. Here we saw more Worm-eating, Black-throated Blue, Yellow-throated Warblers, American Redstart, Zenaida Dove and one Grey-fronted Quail-Dove. We waited until dark to give a try for Stygian Owl but missed it. We did get really good views of the Cuban Nightjar which made it end up in the top 5 birds of the trip.

Our final day of the trip we left our hotel after breakfast, to go back to La Habana, but before we did a stop one more time at Palpite hummingbird feeders to see the Bee Hummingbird one more time. Also, we stopped in a gas station where we saw some Cave Swallow nests, but without the swallows.

Once at La Habana, Alejandro gave us a very nice and informative city tour around la Havana, beginning from the famous Malecon, where we got to see the last bird for our trip, when two Bonaparte's Gulls were flying around. Despite the amazing architecture of the old Habana city, and the interesting history of the place, the main highlight of the tour was to see a Cuban Martin male in a hole of one of the walls of a church.

Our tour ended with one of the best meals of the trip, also with Mojitos and Cuban music. After that, we went to drop some people at the airport and the hotel.

Thanks to all the members of our group who made it a very enjoyable trip, as well as to our great driver Rolando and the superb local guide Alejandro, who made this trip very smooth. As well as to all our local guides Merlin, Camilo, Odey, Mario and Orlando, for all their expertise in their regions, who helped us to get all the Cuban endemics and many more birds, as well to give us the opportunity to learn so much of their country.

BIRDS OF THE TRIP

- 1st Cuban Hummingbird
- 2nd Cuban Tody
- 3rd Blue-headed Quail Dove
- 4th Cuban Nightjar
- 5th Gundlach's Hawk
- 6th Grey-fronted Quail Dove
- 7th Cuban Martin
- 8th Zapata Wren
- 9th Bare-legged Owl
- 10th Red-shouldered Blackbird

SYSTEMATIC LIST OF SPECIES RECORDED

BIRDS

West Indian Whistling Duck *◊ Dendrocygna arborea* Three birds roosting at Cayo Coco.

Blue-winged Teal *Spatula discors* Seen on the northern cays.

Northern Shoveler *Spatula clypeata* Seen at different localities on the northern cays.

American Wigeon *Mareca americana* 10 at Cayo Guillermo and 6 at Cayo Coco.

White-cheeked Pintail *Anas bahamensis* A pair at Cayo Guillermo.

Ring-necked Duck *Aythya collaris* Seen at the water reservoirs outside La Habana.

Lesser Scaup *Aythya affinis* Big numbers at the water reservoirs outside La Habana.

Red-breasted Merganser *Mergus serrator* Few birds seen from Los Cayos Coastway.

Ruddy Duck *Oxyura jamaicensis* Seen at the oxidation lagoons at Cayo Coco.

Cuban Nightjar *◊ Antrostomus cubanensis* Endemic. Great views from Zapata Marsh area.

Antillean Palm Swift *◊ Tachornis phoenicobia* A common and widespread species.

Bee Hummingbird *◊ Mellisuga helenae* Endemic. Palpite feeders, at Bernabe's house.

Cuban Emerald *◊ Riccordia ricordii* A common and widespread species.

Smooth-billed Ani *Crotophaga ani*

Mangrove Cuckoo *Coccyzus minor* One bird seen at Cayo Coco.

Great Lizard Cuckoo *◊ Coccyzus merlini* Seen at several localities.

Rock Dove (introduced) *Columba livia*

White-crowned Pigeon *◊ Patagioenas leucocephala*

Scaly-naped Pigeon *◊ Patagioenas squamosa* Seen at Hacienda La Belen, Camaguey.

Plain Pigeon *◊ Patagioenas inornata* Seen at Hacienda La Belen and one bird from Las Terrazas pig farm.

Eurasian Collared Dove (introduced) *Streptopelia decaocto*

Common Ground Dove *Columbina passerina*

Blue-headed Quail-Dove *◊ Starnoenas cyanocephala* Endemic. Seen on different occasions at Fauna Bermaja Reserve.

Ruddy Quail-Dove *Geotrygon montana* (LO) Just seen by Alejandro our local guide at Pinar del Rio.

Grey-fronted Quail-Dove *◊ Geotrygon caniceps* Endemic. Nice views at Fauna Bermeja Reserve and Soplillar.

Key West Quail-Dove *◊ Geotrygon chrysis* First seen at Cueva de Javali, Cayo Coco. Also, at Fauna Bermeja.

Mourning Dove *Zenaida macroura*

Zenaida Dove *◊ Zenaida aurita*

White-winged Dove *Zenaida asiatica* One bird at Las Terrazas pig farm, and Babiney Rice Fields.

Clapper Rail *◊ Rallus crepitans* Seen at Cayo Guillermo.

Sora *Porzana carolina* Seen at Cayo Guillermo.

Common Gallinule *Gallinula galeata*

American Coot *Fulica americana*

Purple Gallinule *Porphyrio martinica* Best views at Babiney Rice Fields.

Sandhill Crane *Antigone canadensis* At least 5 individuals from Zapata Marsh area. An endemic sub species (*nesiotis*) from Cuba and Isle of Pines.

Limpkin *Aramus guarauna* A few sites in different localities.

Least Grebe *Tachybaptus dominicus*

Pied-billed Grebe *Podilymbus podiceps*

American Flamingo (Caribbean F) *Phoenicopterus ruber* Seen at Los Cayos area and Salinas de Brito.

American Oystercatcher *Haematopus palliatus* Three individuals at Playa Las Coloradas, at Cayo Coco.

Black-necked Stilt *Himantopus mexicanus* Seen at several localities.

American Avocet *Recurvirostra americana* Seen at Salinas de Britos, and Los Cayos area.

Grey Plover (Black-bellied P) *Pluvialis squatarola*

Semipalmated Plover *Charadrius semipalmatus* Seen at Playa Las Coloradas and Salinas de Britos.

Killdeer *Charadrius vociferus*

Piping Plover ♦ *Charadrius melodus* Great views from Playa Las Coloradas and Salinas de Britos.

Northern Jacana *Jacana spinosa*

Hudsonian Whimbrel *Numenius hudsonicus*

Ruddy Turnstone *Arenaria interpres* Seen at Salinas de Britos and coastal areas.

Red Knot *Calidris canutus* Around 30 individuals at Salinas de Britos.

Sanderling *Calidris alba* Several at Playa Las Coloradas, Cayo Cocos.

Dunlin *Calidris alpina* Seen at Salinas de Britos.

Least Sandpiper *Calidris minutilla*

Semipalmated Sandpiper *Calidris pusilla* Seen at Salinas de Britos.

Western Sandpiper *Calidris mauri* Seen at Salinas de Britos.

Short-billed Dowitcher *Limnodromus griseus* Seen at Salinas de Britos and Playa Las Coloradas.

Wilson's Snipe *Gallinago delicata* Seen at Babiney Rice Fields.

Spotted Sandpiper *Actitis macularius*

Lesser Yellowlegs *Tringa flavipes* Seen at different localities.

Willet *Tringa semipalmata*

Greater Yellowlegs *Tringa melanoleuca* Seen at Los Cayos and Salinas de Brito.

Black Skimmer *Rynchops niger* Seen at Salinas de Brito.

Bonaparte's Gull *Choroicocephalus philadelphia* At least two individuals seen from "El Malecon" at La Habana City. A write in for the tour.

Laughing Gull *Leucophaeus atricilla*

Ring-billed Gull *Larus delawarensis* Seen at Cayo Guillermo.

American Herring Gull *Larus smithsonianus* Seen at Los Cayos Coastway and Coronel water reservoir.

Lesser Black-backed Gull *Larus fuscus* Seen on the way to Cayo Paredon Grande.

Gull-billed Tern *Gelochelidon nilotica* Seen at Salinas de Brito.

Caspian Tern *Hydroprogne caspia* First seen at Manuel Ascunce Reservoir, Camaguey.

Royal Tern *Thalasseus maximus*

Cabot's Tern *Thalasseus acufavidus* Seen at Los Cayos Coastway.

Common Tern *Sterna hirundo* Seen at Embalse Nina Bonita.

Black Tern *Chlidonias niger* Seen at Presa la Coronela, a write in for the tour.

Wood Stork *Mycteria americana* One bird soaring at Soplillar savannas.

Magnificent Frigatebird *Fregata magnificens* Seen in areas near the coast.

Anhinga *Anhinga anhinga* Seen few times in wetland areas.

Neotropic Cormorant *Nannopterum brasilianum* Only one bird at Camaguey.

Double-crested Cormorant *Nannopterum auritum* Fairly common.

American White Ibis *Eudocimus albus* Seen at Los Cayos area and Salinas de Brito.

Glossy Ibis *Plegadis falcinellus* A big group (100+) at Babiney Rice Fields.

Roseate Spoonbill *Platalea ajaja* Bigger numbers at Salinas de Brito, and Los Cayos area.

Least Bittern *Ixobrychus exilis* Good views at Embalse Nina Bonita and seen in flight at Babiney Rice Fields.

Black-crowned Night Heron *Nycticorax nycticorax* First seen at Rio Hatiguanico, also in other localities.

Yellow-crowned Night Heron *Nyctanassa violacea* Seen at Playa Giron.

Green Heron *Butorides virescens*

Western Cattle Egret *Bubulcus ibis*

Great Blue Heron *Ardea herodias*

Great Blue Heron (G White H) *Ardea [herodias] occidentalis* Seen at Cayo Guillermo.

Great Egret (American G E) *Ardea [alba] egretta*

Reddish Egret *Egretta rufescens* Seen at Cayo Coco and Guillermo and Salinas de Brito.

Tricolored Heron *Egretta tricolor*

Little Blue Heron *Egretta caerulea*

Snowy Egret *Egretta thula*

American White Pelican *Pelecanus erythrorhynchos* Seen at Los Cayos Coastway and Salinas de Brito.

Brown Pelican *Pelecanus occidentalis* Different sites near the coast.

Turkey Vulture *Cathartes aura*

Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*

Gundlach's Hawk ♦ *Accipiter gundlachi* Endemic. Seen at Cueva Los Portales and Hacienda La Belen.

Northern Harrier *Circus hudsonius* Seen in sugar cane fields on the way to Los Cayos.

Snail Kite *Rostrhamus sociabilis* Seen in Tilapia fishponds on the way to Pinar del Rio.

Cuban Black Hawk ♦ *Buteogallus gundlachi* Endemic. Seen at Cayo Guillermo and Salinas de Brito.

Broad-winged Hawk ♦ *Buteo platypterus* One bird seen at Refugio Fauna Bermejo.

Red-tailed Hawk *Buteo jamaicensis* Seen at different localities, mostly at random sites during our drives.

American Barn Owl *Tyto furcata* Heard only at our hotel in Playa Giron and Soplillar.

Bare-legged Owl ♦ (Cuban Screech O) *Margarobyas lawrencii* Endemic. Good views at Soplillar at night, and near Babiney Rice Fields at daytime.

Cuban Pygmy Owl ♦ *Glaucidium siju* Endemic. Majority of sittings at Zapata Marsh area, as well at Pinar del Rio.

Stygian Owl ♦ *Asio stygius* A dead bird at Refugio Fauna Bermejo, no sights of these owl despite all our efforts.

Cuban Trogon ♦ *Priotelus temnurus* Endemic. The Cuban national bird; it was quite common in wooded areas.

Belted Kingfisher *Megaceryle alcyon* Seen at different localities.

Cuban Tody ♦ *Todus multicolor* Endemic. A common and colourful species.

West Indian Woodpecker ♦ *Melanerpes superciliaris* A common regional endemic.

Yellow-bellied Sapsucker *Sphyrapicus varius* Seen in three different days in different localities.

Cuban Green Woodpecker ♦ *Xiphidiopicus percussus* A common endemic, it was seen practically in every locality.

Northern Flicker ♦ *Colaptes auratus* 1 at Rio Hatiguanico and another at Cayo Coco. Splitable endemic *chrysocaulosus*.

Fernandina's Flicker ♦ *Colaptes fernandinae* Endemic. A pair was seen at Soplillar, the only sight of the trip.

Crested Caracara (Northern C C) *Caracara [plancus] cheriway*

American Kestrel ♦ *Falco sparverius*

Merlin *Falco columbarius* Seen in 6 different days at different localities.

Peregrine Falcon *Falco peregrinus* Two individuals seen at Tilapia fishpond, West of La Habana.

Cuban Amazon ♦ (Rose-throated Parrot) *Amazona leucocephala* Seen at Hacienda La Belén, and Zapata Marsh area. Regional endemic.

Cuban Parakeet ♦ *Psittacara euops* Endemic. Best views at Bermeja area, but also at Hacienda La Belén.

Cuban Pewee ♦ (Crescent-eyed P) *Contopus caribaeus* A very common regional endemic.

Giant Kingbird ♦ *Tyrannus cubensis* Endangered, endemic (presumably extinct in Bahamas). Best views at Hacienda Cortina, as well in Hacienda La Belen.

Loggerhead Kingbird ♦ *Tyrannus caudifasciatus* A common regional endemic.

La Sagra's Flycatcher ♦ *Myiarchus sagrae* A common regional endemic, seen in different localities.

Yellow-throated Vireo *Vireo flavifrons* Seen on five dates of the trip at different localities.

White-eyed Vireo *Vireo griseus* Seen twice on the trip at Zapata Marsh area.

Cuban Vireo ♦ *Vireo gundlachii* Endemic. A common species seen almost in each locality.

Cuban Palm Crow ♦ *Corvus minutus* 15+ seen at Hacienda La Belen, at Camaguey.

Cuban Crow ♦ *Corvus nasicus* Endemic. Seen (+25) at Hacienda La Belen. Also seen at Soplillar area.

Tree Swallow *Tachycineta bicolor* A common species of swallow in this time of the year.

Cuban Martin ♦ *Progne cryptoleuca* Endemic. Seen in flight at Salinas de Brito, as well one bird at Habana City.

Zapata Wren ♦ *Ferminia cerverai* Endemic. Seen in our first attempt at the Zapata Marsh.

Cuban Gnatcatcher ♦ *Polioptila lembeyi* Endemic. Seen once at Cayo Coco.

Blue-grey Gnatcatcher (W) *Polioptila caerulea* Seen on five dates of the trip at different localities.

Grey Catbird *Dumetella carolinensis* It was a common boreal migrant during our trip.

Northern Mockingbird *Mimus polyglottos* Common and widespread (regional endemic *orpheus*).

Bahama Mockingbird ♦ *Mimus gundlachii* One bird seen at Cayo Guillermo (regional endemic).

Cuban Solitaire ♦ *Myadestes elisabeth* Endemic. Seen at Cueva Los Portales.

Red-legged Thrush ♦ *Turdus plumbeus* A very common and widespread species (regional endemic).

House Sparrow (introduced) *Passer domesticus* Several encounters in towns.

Scaly-breasted Munia (introduced) *Lonchura punctulata* Seen at Babiney Rice Fields.

Tricolored Munia (introduced) *Lonchura malacca* 15+ at Babiney Rice Fields.

Zapata Sparrow ♦ (Cuban S) *Torreornis inexpectata* Endemic. Two different subspecies were seen. The nominate at Zapata Marsh area, and *varonai* at Cayo Coco.

Western Spindalis ♦ *Spindalis zena* A widespread and fairly common species (regional endemic).

Yellow-headed Warbler ♦ *Teretistris fernandinae* Endemic. Several encounters in woodland areas.

Oriente Warbler ♦ *Teretistris fornsi* Endemic. Two birds seen at Sierra de Cubitas.

Eastern Meadowlark ◊ *Sturnella magna* Seen in 2 days of the trip, in pastures. Endemic race *hippocrepis*.

Cuban Oriole ◊ *Icterus melanopsis* Endemic. Small numbers in 9 dates.

Tawny-shouldered Blackbird ◊ *Agelaius humeralis* Noted in 7 dates at widespread sites. Near endemic.

Red-shouldered Blackbird ◊ *Agelaius assimilis* Endemic. Seen one day and heard it in another day at Zapata Marsh area. One of the tricky endemics.

Shiny Cowbird *Molothrus bonariensis* Seen at Bermeja town, and Babiney Rice Fields.

Cuban Blackbird ◊ *Ptiloxena atroviolacea* Endemic. Very common and widespread endemic.

Greater Antillean Grackle ◊ *Quiscalus niger* Common and widespread species.

Ovenbird *Seiurus aurocapilla* Best views at Cueva del Javali but seen at different sites.

Worm-eating Warbler ◊ *Helminthos vermivorum* A regular warbler that came to the water wholes during afternoons.

Louisiana Waterthrush *Parkesia motacilla* First seen at Hacienda Cortina and 3 more dates of the trip.

Northern Waterthrush *Parkesia noveboracensis* Seen in 5 dates of the trip.

Black-and-white Warbler *Mniotilta varia* Seen in 9 dates of the trip.

Tennessee Warbler *Leiothlypis peregrina* Seen in the park outside our hotel in La Habana, but just after the tour ended up, with the people who stayed an extra night.

Common Yellowthroat *Geothlypis trichas* Several sights in 8 different dates. Not necessary in areas near water.

American Redstart *Setophaga ruticilla*

Cape May Warbler *Setophaga tigrina*

Northern Parula *Setophaga americana*

Magnolia Warbler *Setophaga magnolia* Single birds in 5 different dates.

Mangrove Warbler *Setophaga petechia* Seen at Salinas de Brito.

American Yellow Warbler *Setophaga aestiva* One bird seen away of the coast, at Pinar del Rio area. A write in for the tour.

Black-throated Blue Warbler *Setophaga caerulescens* Once we saw the first one, we saw it regularly.

Palm Warbler *Setophaga palmarum* A very common one.

Olive-capped Warbler ◊ *Setophaga pityophila* Good views of a pair, in pines at La Guira.

Myrtle Warbler *Setophaga coronata* Seen in seven dates.

Yellow-throated Warbler *Setophaga dominica* Seen in 9 different dates in different occasions in the same days.

Prairie Warbler *Setophaga discolor* Several sites in the trip, sometimes with several individuals.

Summer Tanager *Piranga rubra* One sight at Cueva de Los Portales.

Red-legged Honeycreeper (introduced) *Cyanerpes cyaneus*

Yellow-faced Grassquit *Tiaris olivaceus* Seen in 3 different dates at different localities.

Cuban Bullfinch ◊ *Melopyrrha nigra* First seen at Cueva de Los Portales, also at Los Cayos and Zapata Marsh area. Near endemic.

Cuban Grassquit ◊ *Phonipara canora* Endemic. More than 30 birds at Las Terrazas pig farm.

MAMMALS

Javan Mongoose *Urva javanica* One individual run across the highway when we drove from Playa Giron to La Havana.

Wild Boar *Sus scrofa* Some individuals run across the roads at Zapata Marsh area.

Jamaican Fruit-eating Bat *Artibeus jamaicensis* Seen at Cueva de Los Portales and Santa Clara restaurant.

Waterhouse's Leaf-nosed Bat *Macrotus waterhousii* Seen at the Cueva del Jabali, at Cayo Coco.

Big Brown Bat *Eptesicus fuscus* Seen at the Cueva del Jabali, at Cayo Coco.

REPTILES

Cuban Curlytail Lizard *Leiocephalus cubensis* Seen at Playa Giron.

Knight Anole *Anolis equestris* First seen at Rio Hatiguanico, also at Soplillar woodlands roosting at night.

Auber's Ameiva *Pholidoscelis auberi* Blue-tailed lizard in Cayo Coco.

Cuban Racer *Cubophis cantherigerus* (Snake) One seen in the woodlands of Zapata Marsh area.



Zapata Wren (image by Leo Garrigues)



Zapata Sparrow ssp varonia (image by Leo Garrigues)



Zapata Sparrow ssp inexpectata (image by Leo Garrigues)



West Indian Woodpecker (image by Leo Garrigues)



Yellow-headed Warbler (image by Leo Garrigues)



Sandhill Crane ssp nesiotes (image by Leo Garrigues)



Red-shouldered Blackbird (image by Leo Garrigues)



Red-legged Thrush (image by Leo Garrigues)



Piping Plover (image by Leo Garrigues)



Great Lizard Cuckoo (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Pewee (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Bullfinch (image by Leo Garrigues)



American Flamingo (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Crow (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Pygmy Owl (image by Leo Garrigues)



Grey-fronted Quail-Dove (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Racer (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Gnatcatcher (image by Leo Garrigues)



Bahama Mockingbird (image by Leo Garrigues)



Bare-legged Owl (image by Leo Garrigues)



Gundlach's Hawk (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Solitaire (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Grassquit (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Green Woodpecker (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Tody (image by Leo Garrigues)



Key West Quail-Dove (image by Leo Garrigues)



Loggerhead Kingbird (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Trogon (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Martin (image by Leo Garrigues)



Bare-legged Owl (image by Leo Garrigues)



Bee Hummingbird (image by Leo Garrigues)



Blue-headed Quail-Dove (image by Leo Garrigues)



Blue-headed Quail-Dove (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Black Hawk (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Parrot (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Parakeet (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Nightjar (image by Leo Garrigues)



Cuban Vireo (image by Leo Garrigues)



Fernandina Flicker (image by Leo Garrigues)



Giant Kingbird (image by Leo Garrigues)



Oriente Warbler (image by Leo Garrigues)



Olive-capped Warbler (image by Leo Garrigues)



Mangrove Cuckoo (image by Leo Garrigues)