

Trip Report — Bahamas: Endemics & Kirtland's Warbler 2026

March 21-26, 2026 with Jesse Fagan



Celebrating on Eleuthera after fantastic views of Kirtland's Warbler and Great Lizard-Cuckoo.

Participants often ask me which tour is my favorite, and the Bahamas consistently rises to the top. This itinerary is compact yet full of charm, offering charismatic endemic birds, excellent meals, and (usually!) delightful weather. Island-hopping adds its own sparkle, too. The 2026 adventure delivered once again. We explored three islands—Abaco, Eleuthera, and Andros—with a brief stop on New Providence, tallying 79 species, including every possible endemic and regional specialty. That may not sound like a huge list, but this tour is all about *quality*, not quantity.

Avian highlights included Great Lizard-Cuckoo (still amazing that it's a *Coccyzus* cuckoo!), Bahama Woodstar, Kirtland's Warbler, Cuban Parrot, and the striking Bahama Oriole, which easily claimed **Bird of the Trip** honors. Our non-bird moments were equally memorable: learning about native plants and coppice habitat at the Leon Levy Preserve on Eleuthera, savoring a sunrise breakfast at the Abaco Beach Resort, and flying to Andros aboard a 59-year-old De Havilland Canada DHC-6—an experience in itself.



Thanks to participant Eric Gustafson for this nice photo of an endemic Bahama Yellowthroat on Abaco Island.

Abaco

Our journey began on Abaco Island, just a quick hop from the U.S. mainland. On our first morning, we headed south to Abaco National Park, where reminders of Hurricane Dorian's 2019 devastation are still visible. The native Caribbean Pine forest (*Pinus caribaea*) shelters several endemics, including

Bahama Woodstar, Bahama Yellowthroat, and Bahama Warbler. We also tracked down Cuban Pewee, Greater Antillean Bullfinch, and a couple of fleeting but satisfying views of Bahama Swallow, which nests in tree cavities. Cuban Parrots—uniquely nesting in limestone holes—also made an appearance.

Lunch at the lively Pete’s Pub featured seared yellowfin tuna sandwiches and a backdrop of turquoise water on a picture-perfect day. Later, we caught up with more parrots at Bahama Palm Shores, quietly feeding in gumbo-limbo trees.



One of those memorable Bahamian sunsets. Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.

Eleuthera

We visit long, narrow Eleuthera for several reasons, but the star attraction is experiencing Kirtland’s Warbler on its wintering grounds. It’s also a superb island for Bahama Mockingbird and Great Lizard Cuckoo. Our first morning began with fantastic views of a very vocal Bahama Mockingbird.

Next, we headed to my secret Kirtland's spot and wandered for a while without much luck. Doubt was creeping in when I finally heard the distinctive "chip" note. Slowly, the bird worked its way toward us and eventually perched just above our heads. Moments later, a Great Lizard Cuckoo barreled in to proclaim his territory. Finding both target species within minutes left us all grinning.

We celebrated with a group photo on Eleuthera's famous pink-sand beach. That evening, we enjoyed dinner on the deck—tasty Caribbean dishes (spiny lobster, anyone?) accompanied by live music—and capped the day with another spectacular Bahamian sunset.



A Western Red-legged Thrush photographed by participant Eric Gustafson on Andros, our last new bird of the trip.

Andros

Our final island was Andros. Despite being the largest island in the Bahamas, it remains one of the least developed and least visited—though anglers and divers know it well. For birders, Andros is essential because it is the *only* place on Earth to see the Bahama Oriole. This elusive endemic occurs at low densities and favors nesting in native palms. After steady searching, we were rewarded with a pair perched beautifully for the group.

We also enjoyed improved views of Bahama Swallow around Fresh Creek and again on the drive north to Stafford Creek. With that, we completed a clean sweep of all the Bahamian endemics and regional specialties.

Thank you to everyone who joined this adventure. It was a lively, fun-spirited group, and I wish you all excellent birding throughout 2026.



This photo by guide Jesse Fagan just screams "Bahamas"!

Other Noteworthy Critters:

Bahamian Racer (*Cuphobis vuddii*) = The snake we found at Captain Bill's Blue Hole on Andros Island.

Keys Bark Scorpion (*Centruroides guanensis*) = The scorpion we found in Abaco National Park turning over rocks. This is the only native scorpion found in the Bahamas.

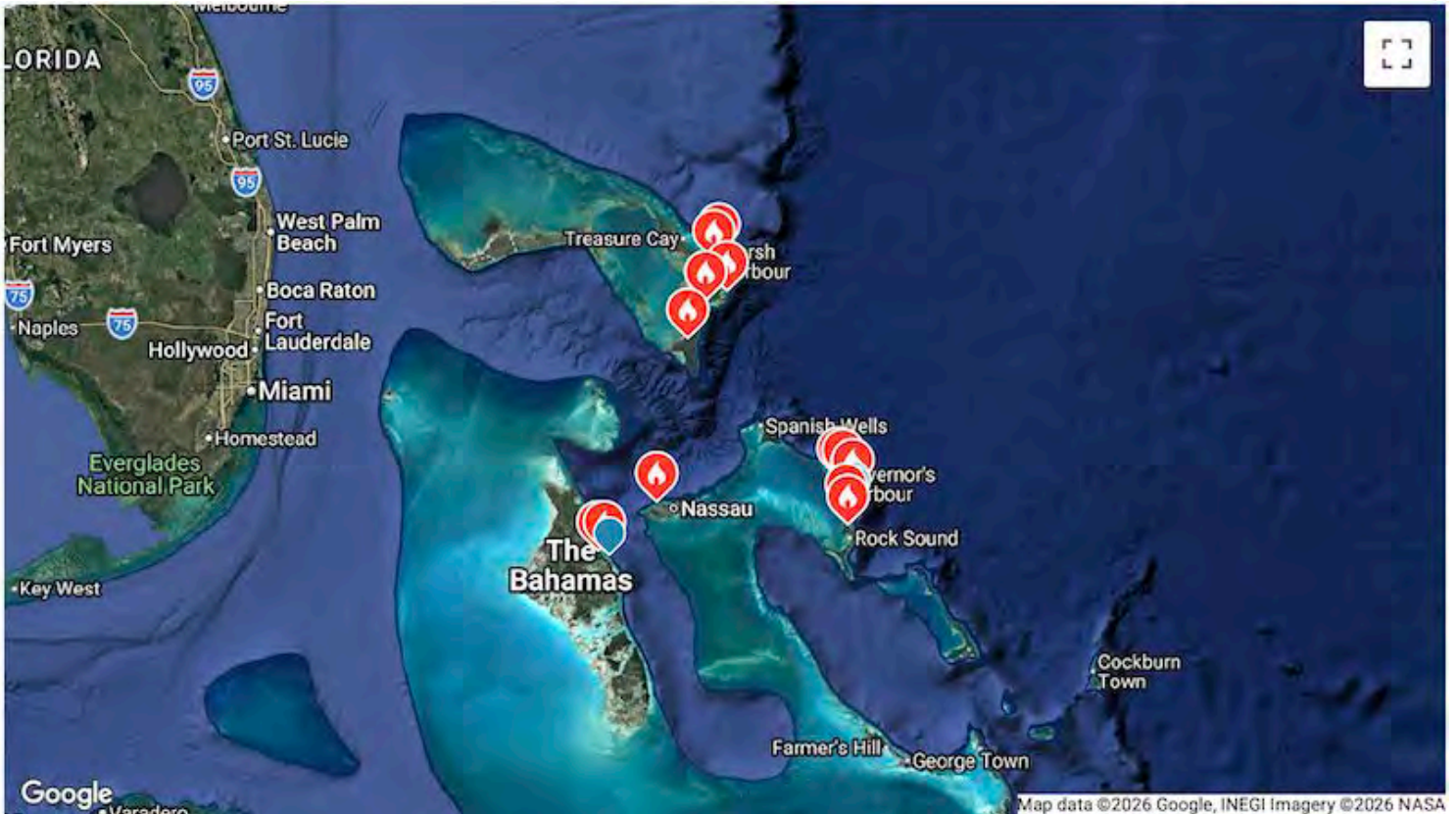
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/519083>

You can download a combined PDF of this page and the eBird report at this link: <https://fieldguides.com/triplists/bah26TRIPLIST.pdf>

-- Jesse Fagan (aka Motmot) from Dahlonaga, Georgia, USA

Field Guides Birding Tours -- BAHAMAS, 2026 (with Jesse Fagan)

21 – 25 Mar 2026 (5 days) Public



Bahamas

Central Abaco, Hope Town and Green Turtle Cay | Central Eleuthera | New Providence | North Andros | South Abaco and Moore's Island | South Eleuthera

Jesse Fagan



For a narrative summary of this tour, including a Field Guides photo gallery and additional media for this trip...
















































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Species Observed

[Show all details](#)

16	White-crowned Pigeon <i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	▶  4
14	Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	▶  4
7	Common Ground Dove <i>Columbina passerina</i>	▶  3
1	White-winged Dove <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	▶  1
5	Smooth-billed Ani <i>Crotophaga ani</i>	▶  2
1	Great Lizard-Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus merlini</i>	▶  1
1	Chuck-will's-widow <i>Antrostomus carolinensis</i>	▶  1
8	Bahama Woodstar <i>Nesophlox evelynae</i>	▶  4
6	Cuban Emerald <i>Riccordia ricordii</i>	▶  4
2	Clapper Rail <i>Rallus crepitans</i>	▶  1
15	American Coot <i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  1
3	Limpkin <i>Aramus guarauna</i>	▶  2
2	Black-necked Stilt <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  1
1	American Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus palliatus</i>	▶  1
5	Black-bellied Plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>	▶  3
14	Semipalmated Plover <i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>	▶  2
1	Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  1
1	Willet <i>Tringa semipalmata</i>	▶  1
27	Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶  4
237	Laughing Gull <i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	▶  7
1	Ring-billed Gull <i>Larus delawarensis</i>	▶  1

9	Lesser Black-backed Gull <i>Larus fuscus</i>	▶  2
1	Forster's Tern <i>Sterna forsteri</i>	▶  1
3	Royal Tern <i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	▶  3
1	Magnificent Frigatebird <i>Fregata magnificens</i>	▶  1
2	Double-crested Cormorant <i>Nannopterum auritum</i>	▶  2
3	White Ibis <i>Eudocimus albus</i>	▶  2
1	Tricolored Heron <i>Egretta tricolor</i>	▶  1
2	Western Cattle-Egret <i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶  1
1	Great Blue Heron <i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶  1
4	Brown Pelican <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶  4
20	Turkey Vulture <i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  6
4	Osprey <i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	▶  2
1	Belted Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	▶  1
1	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	▶  1
3	West Indian Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes superciliaris</i>	▶  1
4	Hairy Woodpecker <i>Leuconotopicus villosus</i>	▶  2
4	American Kestrel <i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶  3
2	Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>	▶  1
4	Cuban Amazon <i>Amazona leucocephala</i>	▶  2
6	Cuban Pewee <i>Contopus caribaeus</i>	▶  2
8	La Sagra's Flycatcher <i>Myiarchus sagrae</i>	▶  4
1	Gray Kingbird <i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>	▶  1
1	Loggerhead Kingbird <i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	▶  1
53	Thick-billed Vireo <i>Vireo crassirostris</i>	▶  11

15	Bahama Swallow <i>Tachycineta cyaneoviridis</i>	▶  3
8	Blue-gray Gnatcatcher <i>Polioptila caerulea</i>	▶  1
10	Gray Catbird <i>Dumetella carolinensis</i>	▶  5
7	Bahama Mockingbird <i>Mimus gundlachi</i>	▶  2
20	Northern Mockingbird <i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  10
1	Western Red-legged Thrush <i>Turdus plumbeus</i>	▶  1
24	House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶  4
6	Western Spindalis <i>Spindalis zena</i>	▶  4
2	Bahama Oriole <i>Icterus northropi</i>	▶  1
3	Red-winged Blackbird <i>Agelaius phoeniceus</i>	▶  2
1	Ovenbird <i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	▶  1
1	Worm-eating Warbler <i>Helmitheros vermivorum</i>	▶  1
1	Northern Waterthrush <i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	▶  1
3	Black-and-white Warbler <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	▶  1
2	Bahama Yellowthroat <i>Geothlypis rostrata</i>	▶  1
1	Common Yellowthroat <i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	▶  1
1	Hooded Warbler <i>Setophaga citrina</i>	▶  1
9	American Redstart <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	▶  4
1	Kirtland's Warbler <i>Setophaga kirtlandii</i>	▶  1
15	Cape May Warbler <i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	▶  4
4	Northern Parula <i>Setophaga americana</i>	▶  2
2	Mangrove Yellow Warbler <i>Setophaga petechia</i>	▶  1
5	Black-throated Blue Warbler <i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	▶  3

- 7 **Palm Warbler** *Setophaga palmarum* ▶ 5
 - 8 **Olive-capped Warbler** *Setophaga pityophila* ▶ 1
 - 13 **Pine Warbler** *Setophaga pinus* ▶ 3
 - 5 **Yellow-throated Warbler** *Setophaga dominica* ▶ 2
 - 6 **Bahama Warbler** *Setophaga flavescens* ▶ 1
 - 3 **Prairie Warbler** *Setophaga discolor* ▶ 2
 - 1 **Black-throated Green Warbler** *Setophaga virens* ▶ 1
 - 1 **Summer Tanager** *Piranga rubra* ▶ 1
 - 18 **Bananaquit** *Coereba flaveola* ▶ 5
 - 11 **Greater Antillean Bullfinch** *Melopyrrha violacea* ▶ 6
 - 5 **Black-faced Grassquit** *Melanospiza bicolor* ▶ 1
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