

# Trip Report — Dominican Republic 2025

April 5-13, 2025 with Jesse Fagan & Cory Gregory



Ashy-faced Owl was one of our most-wanted endemics and on this night, we had the most incredible experience with a trio of calling owls! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

The island of Hispaniola, which consists of the countries of Haiti in the west and the Dominican Republic in the east, hosts more endemic birds than any other Caribbean Island! With at least 32 endemics, this is a must-visit spot for any serious birder but also, the enjoyable climate, beautiful scenery, and fascinating ecological diversity makes it enjoyable for birders of all skill levels. And getting there is easy; a short flight from Miami and you can be in the bustling, old colonial town of Santo Domingo! Our trip together aimed to track down as many of these specialties as possible as well as enjoy the many unique habitats, culture, and geology. I'm happy to report that the trip was indeed a great success; we tallied each and every endemic species!

Our trip together got under way in Santo Domingo where we had dinner together and then left promptly the next morning. We wound our way east, tallying Antillean Palm-Swifts and even a couple of White-tailed Tropicbirds en route. Shortly after, a few stops netted us our first endemics such as Hispaniolan Woodpecker and the strange Palmchat. We made our way north to the Los Haitises area where we enjoyed a boat ride through the mangroves. New birds came fast and furious; West Indian Whistling-Ducks lined many of the mangroves, a Peregrine Falcon swooped repeatedly on nesting Cave Swallows, Magnificent Frigatebirds soared in lazy circles overhead, and Gray Kingbirds sputtered from exposed branches. What came next was one of the highlights of the trip; we were lucky to stop and have a tour of cave drawings, primarily pictographs, that dated from 500+ years ago. The history of the Taino people was eye-opening, as were the many drawings including some of owls and herons. Overall, it was just a real treat getting to see this cave which we accessed by boat.

After our boat trip, we continued birding in the Paraiso Cano Hondo area. More endemics fell into place such as Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo, Hispaniolan Mango, Antillean Piculet, Broad-billed Tody, White-necked Crow, and Black-crowned Palm-Tanager. However, the star of the show was the exceedingly rare and endangered Ridgway's Hawk! Not only did we see this specialty, we even got to hear it. What a successful first day, smiles all around.





The higher elevations in Hispaniola host a variety of pines and, because of that, crossbills! Here's our group shortly before we found several Hispaniolan Crossbills. Photo by guide Jesse Fagan.

We arose the next day to a beautiful morning in the northern Dominican Republic. Before breakfast we explored some on foot around Paraiso Cano Hondo and especially enjoyed a pair of Broad-billed Todies digging a nest burrow right in front of us! After breakfast, we ventured farther afoot, this time getting even better views of the critically endangered Ridgway's Hawk! We filled out our list in other ways too; we tallied 7 species of warblers, a quick Ruddy Quail-Dove, and a nice mix of flycatchers that included Gray Kingbird and Stolid Flycatcher. Before long though, it was time to head back towards Santo Domingo. That evening we enjoyed the spectacle of dozens of Hispaniolan Parakeets, an island endemic, coming into roost while the endemic Palmchats looked on from their chosen palms.





Usually one of the main draws of birding in the Caribbean are the many todies. On Hispaniola, there are two endemic species. Here's a Narrow-billed Tody photographed by guide Cory Gregory.

We had another fun day planned out and so we packed up and left Santo Domingo promptly this morning. We started venturing west from the city, first reaching the salt flats at the Monumento Natural Bahia de las Calderas. Our 1-2 hours there were quite productive; we saw everything from White-cheeked Pintail, Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo, Hispaniolan Mango, Clapper Rail, to things like Gull-billed Tern and Least Tern. Shorebirds were well represented with at least 9 species tallied here. Herons danced in the shallows, palm-swifts zoomed overhead, and a dozen American Flamingos colored the shoreline with pink. After continuing west and drawing nearer to our hotel, we spent the late afternoon out in some beautiful forest near Duverge. The highlights were many; Greater Antillean Bullfinch, Hispaniolan Oriole, Antillean Siskin, and Hispaniolan Euphonia were all new for our list, as was Hispaniolan Amazon, Narrow-billed Tody, and, maybe the biggest star of the show, Key West Quail-Dove. This wasn't a brief view of a sneaky

bird shuffling away, no, it was a full sun, eye-level, crushing view! What a way to close out another great day of birding.

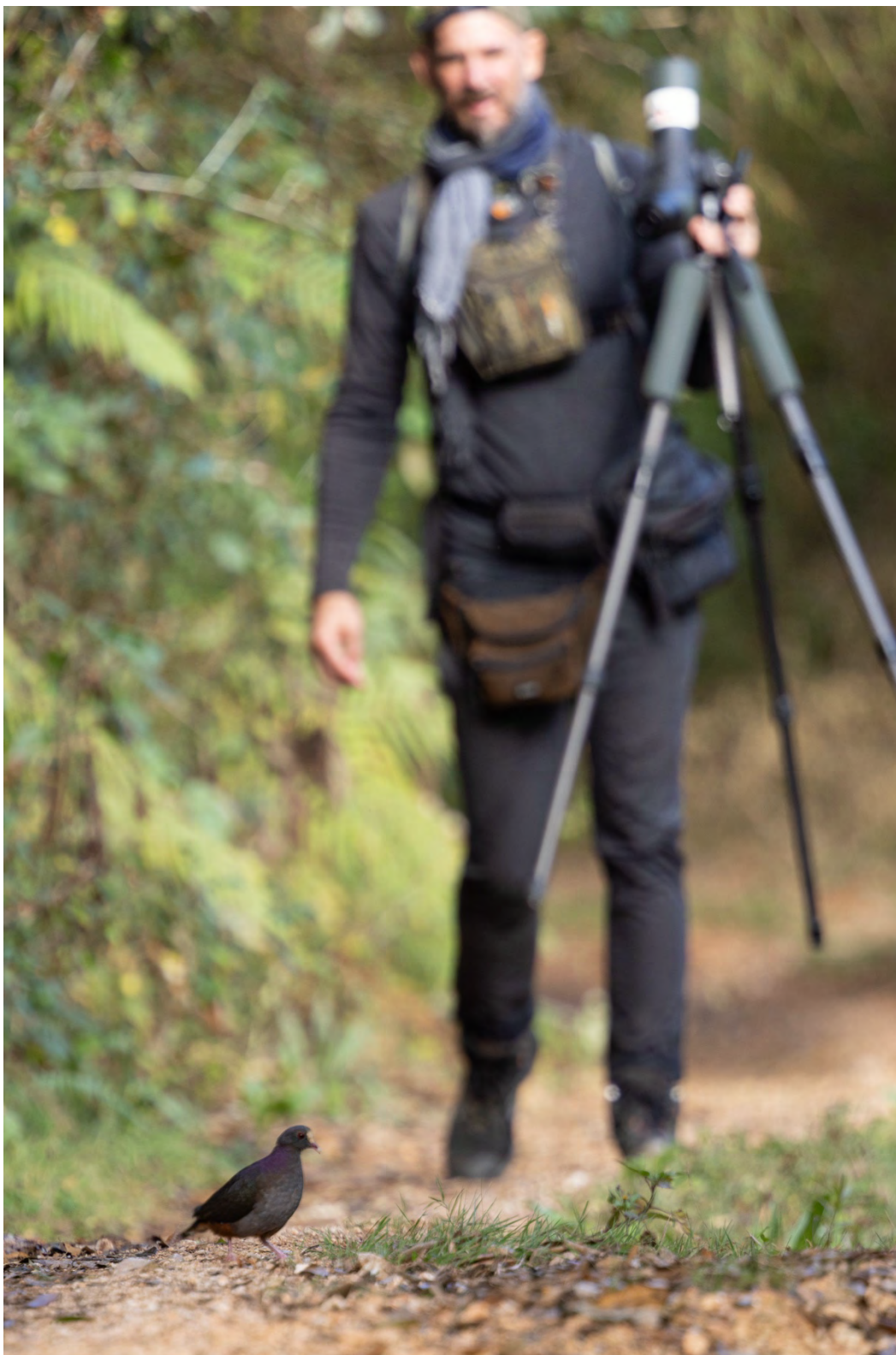


Hispaniola hosts more endemics than any other Caribbean island. One of the rarest of those endemics is this skulky bird, the La Selle Thrush. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

This morning was an important one for us! We got an early start and began our journey up to the forests around Zapoten. Before we even got there, a singing Hispaniolan Nightjar was an awesome, predawn lifer for most. As dawn broke around us, we found ourselves high up in some of the most fascinating and bird-rich forests in the Caribbean; Scaly-naped Pigeons arched overhead, multiple White-fronted Quail-Doves showed nicely, Hispaniolan Emeralds darted by, and the sounds of the Rufous-throated Solitaire dawn chorus was otherworldly. Key birds started falling into place, one after the other. We tallied endemics such as La Selle Thrush, Golden Swallow, Hispaniolan Crossbill, White-winged Warbler, Green-tailed Warbler, and more. Another one of the many highlights here was the Western Chat-Tanager that we managed to see. It's one skulky island endemic! Later that

morning, farther down the mountain, we encountered another Hispaniolan endemic, the understated Flat-billed Vireo. After a lovely picnic lunch with Hispaniolan Amazons for company, we continued birding our way back to town. After a siesta, we birded a little bit in Sierra de Baoruco where we finally found one of the hardest endemics, the sneaky Bay-breasted Cuckoo! As dusk set in and we closed out our day, we heard some Least Pauragues as they started to sing. A beautiful send off for this fun day of birding.





It's usually a good thing when the rare endemic bird is so close that you have to worry about stepping on it! Here's guide Jesse Fagan with a White-fronted Quail-Dove on the ground ahead of him, trying to decide which way to walk. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

We had some different habitats to visit this morning and we spent our first couple stops doing just that. Primarily, we explored the unique, dry country around Lago Enriquillo. The landscape was dotted with unique plants and animals. Whether it was the Hispaniola Cat-eyed Snake (a rare endemic!), Neotropic Cormorant, or the Hispaniolan Palm-Crow, we had new species to add to our growing list. Venturing towards Paraiso midday, we enjoyed a gorgeous beachside lunch with a pleasant breeze coming in off the water. We watched as Sandwich Terns flew by with purpose and Brown Pelicans glided along the breaking waves; it was a beautiful scene indeed. That afternoon we made our way to Cabo Rojo where we explored some salt ponds. And wow, the birding here was great for watching as well as photographing. At least 9 species of shorebirds were present including close looks at Stilt Sandpiper, Short-billed Dowitcher, and Semipalmated Plover. That evening we made our way to Perdernales where we spent the night.



Ridgway's Hawk is one of the rarest raptors in this hemisphere with fewer than 400 remaining. Lucky for us, we had cracking views including of this one soaring right overhead! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.



Up early, it was important for us to be up the mountain a bit before dawn broke. And it's a good thing we did, we encountered a very hard-to-find bird indeed, the mythical Stygian Owl! A short while later, Antillean Nighthawks started calling and later yet, they started displaying! We stood there in the silence, in the dark, listening to the fascinating booming display that this migrant performs. As dawn arrived, we started birding the area a bit more and came away with a dozen Hispaniolan Crossbills, Antillean Siskins, Hispaniolan Spindalis, a dozen Pine Warblers, Caribbean Martin, and a long list of Hispaniolan endemics. Later that morning we even heard Northern Bobwhite, although it's an introduced species here. We returned to the salt flats once more near Cabo Rojo before starting towards our beachside hotel near Barahona. As we prepped for some night birding, some White-collared Swifts zoomed overhead which must have been a good omen because we struck gold that night. Without a doubt the highlight was a memorable encounter with a trio of Ashy-faced Owls! Not only did we see them well, we heard them, and even saw one come in with prey! You couldn't have had a more interesting, in-your-face experience with this special island endemic!



Usually quail-doves are skulking and difficult to see well but this Key West Quail-Dove had different ideas. It posed in full light, at eye-level, for all of us to enjoy! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

On our last full day of birding, we started up towards Cachote before the sun came up. Conditions looked ominous as rain continued to fall. We quietly approached the forest where our final Hispaniolan endemic lurked, the sneaky Eastern Chat-Tanager. Would conditions allow us to search for the final bird? As it started to get light, Key West Quail-Doves started giving their mournful songs, Red-legged Thrushes started milling about and, yes, an Eastern Chat-Tanager started to call! With some patience, and as the rain let up, we successfully got looks at this very range-restricted endemic. Whew! We retreated down the mountain as the rain continued to fall. We spent much of this day returning to Santo Domingo where we had our final dinner and said our goodbyes.





If you're interested in seeing all the families of birds in the world, you'll want to come to the Dominican Republic where this is an endemic family consisting of just one species, the Palmchat. Our trip had many good looks at this common endemic. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

**Some other critters we encountered included:**

Hispaniolan Ground Iguana (*Cyclura ricordi*) - Very range restricted, encountered near Lago Enriquillo.

Hispaniola Rhinoceros Iguana (*Cyclura cornuta cornuta*) - Very range restricted, encountered near Bani.

Hispaniolan Khaki Curlytail (*Leiocephalus schreibersii*) - Endemic to Hispaniola.

Hispaniola Cat-eyed Snake (*Hypsirhynchus ferox*) - A rare endemic, encountered near Lago Enriquillo.

Strahm's Anole (*Anolis strahmi*) - Endangered and found only in southwest Dominican Republic.

In summary, this trip exploring the Dominican Republic side of Hispaniola was a great success due to the hard work from our many local guides. Together with the support from our Austin office, everything went

without a hitch. Jesse and I want to take a moment to thank you all for coming with us. It's because of your participation that this was possible and we enjoyed showing you some of what this island has to offer. We hope to see you on another Field Guides trip and until then, be well, stay safe, and good birding!

You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/365416>

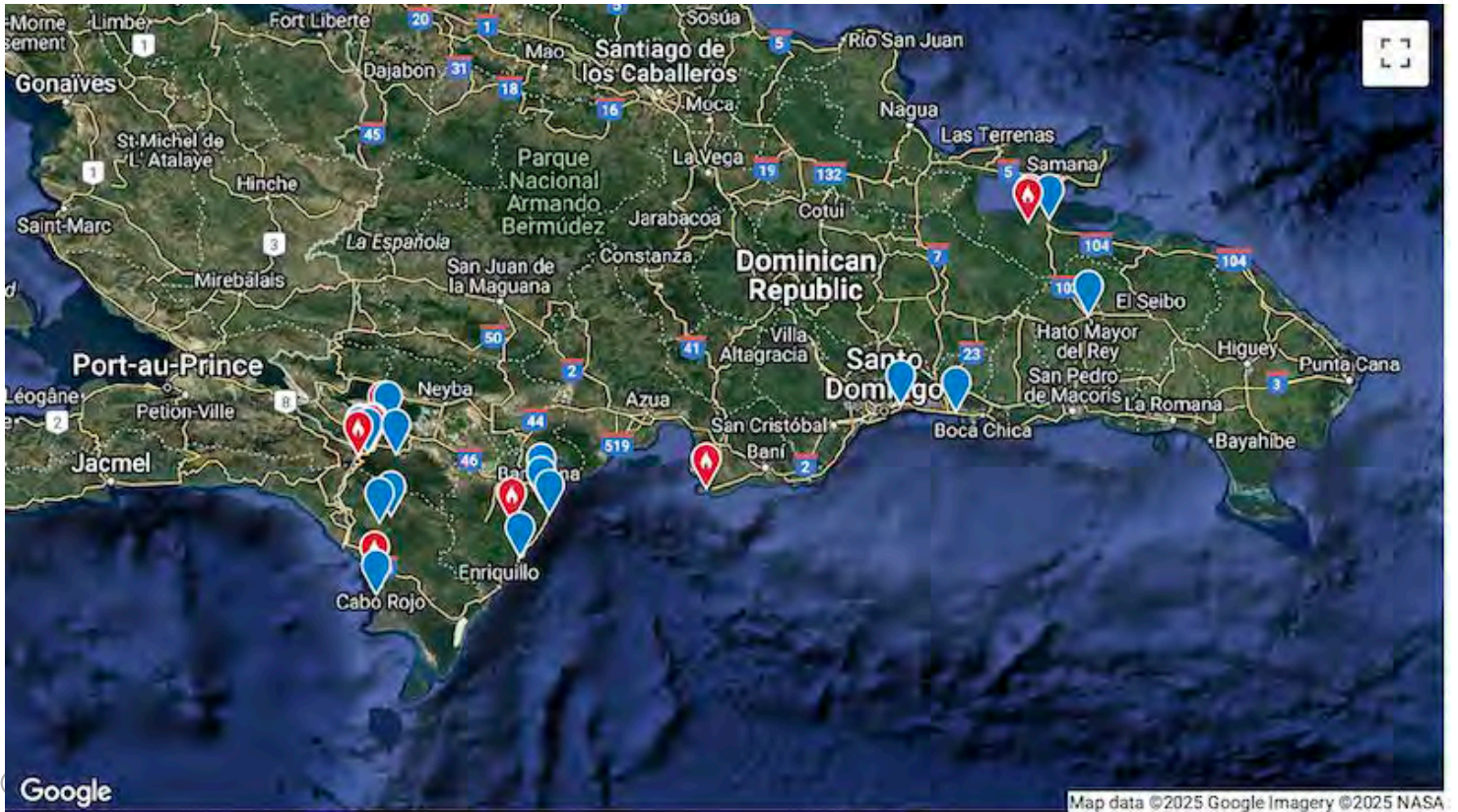
-- Jesse Fagan (Motmot) & Cory Gregory (Curlew)



## Field Guides Birding Tours -- DOMINICAN REPUBLIC, 2025 (with Jesse Fagan & Cory Gregory)



6 – 12 Apr 2025 (7 days) Link-only



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 Cory Gregory



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## Species Observed

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35	<a href="#">West Indian Whistling-Duck</a>	<i>Dendrocygna arborea</i>	  2  1
3	<a href="#">Blue-winged Teal</a>	<i>Spatula discors</i>	  2
21	<a href="#">White-cheeked Pintail</a>	<i>Anas bahamensis</i>	  4
3	<a href="#">Helmeted Guineafowl</a>	<i>Numida meleagris</i> * 	  1
1	<a href="#">Northern Bobwhite</a>	<i>Colinus virginianus</i> *	  1
75	<a href="#">Rock Pigeon</a>	<i>Columba livia</i> *	  1  3
76	<a href="#">Scaly-naped Pigeon</a>	<i>Patagioenas squamosa</i>	  4
6	<a href="#">White-crowned Pigeon</a>	<i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	  2
20	<a href="#">Plain Pigeon</a>	<i>Patagioenas inornata</i>	  6
11	<a href="#">Eurasian Collared-Dove</a>	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	  4
11	<a href="#">Common Ground Dove</a>	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	  4
1	<a href="#">Ruddy Quail-Dove</a>	<i>Geotrygon montana</i>	  1
3	<a href="#">White-fronted Quail-Dove</a>	<i>Geotrygon leucometopia</i>  	  3  1
11	<a href="#">Key West Quail-Dove</a>	<i>Geotrygon chrysia</i> 	  1  3
19	<a href="#">White-winged Dove</a>	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	  6
41	<a href="#">Mourning Dove</a>	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	  9
5	<a href="#">Smooth-billed Ani</a>	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	  3
2	<a href="#">Mangrove Cuckoo</a>	<i>Coccyzus minor</i>	  2
4	<a href="#">Bay-breasted Cuckoo</a>	<i>Coccyzus ruficularis</i>  	  1  3
9	<a href="#">Hispaniolan Lizard-Cuckoo</a>	<i>Coccyzus longirostris</i>  	  1  6
2	<a href="#">Antillean Nighthawk</a>	<i>Chordeiles gundlachii</i>	  1






















6	<b>Least Pauraque</b>	<i>Siphonorhis brewsteri</i>	✓	▶  2
2	<b>Hispaniolan Nightjar</b>	<i>Antrostomus ekmani</i>	✓ 	▶  1  2
2	<b>White-collared Swift</b>	<i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>		▶  1
61	<b>Antillean Palm Swift</b>	<i>Tachornis phoenicobia</i>		▶  1  12
12	<b>Hispaniolan Mango</b>	<i>Anthracothonax dominicus</i>	✓ 	▶  2  7
2	<b>Hispaniolan Emerald</b>	<i>Riccordia swainsonii</i>	✓ 	▶  1  1
2	<b>Clapper Rail</b>	<i>Rallus crepitans</i>		▶  1  1
8	<b>Common Gallinule</b>	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>		▶  3
2	<b>Limpkin</b>	<i>Aramus guarauna</i>		▶  2
58	<b>Black-necked Stilt</b>	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>		▶  1  5
7	<b>Black-bellied Plover</b>	<i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>		▶  2
24	<b>Killdeer</b>	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>		▶  5
24	<b>Semipalmated Plover</b>	<i>Charadrius semipalmatus</i>		▶  4
14	<b>Short-billed Dowitcher</b>	<i>Limnodromus griseus</i>		▶  2
8	<b>Spotted Sandpiper</b>	<i>Actitis macularius</i>		▶  6
28	<b>Lesser Yellowlegs</b>	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>		▶  1  4
11	<b>Greater Yellowlegs</b>	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>		▶  2
95	<b>Stilt Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>		▶  2  3
75	<b>Least Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>		▶  4
5	<b>Semipalmated Sandpiper</b>	<i>Calidris pusilla</i>		▶  2
13	<b>Laughing Gull</b>	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>		▶  2
8	<b>Least Tern</b>	<i>Sternula antillarum</i>		▶  1
6	<b>Gull-billed Tern</b>	<i>Gelochelidon nilotica</i>		▶  1  1
2	<b>Caspian Tern</b>	<i>Hydroprogne caspia</i>		▶  1

4	<b>Sandwich Tern</b>	<i>Thalasseus sandvicensis</i>	▶  1
28	<b>Royal Tern</b>	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	▶  3  2
12	<b>American Flamingo</b>	<i>Phoenicopterus ruber</i>	▶  1  1
7	<b>White-tailed Tropicbird</b>	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	▶  2
29	<b>Magnificent Frigatebird</b>	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	▶  6
2	<b>Neotropic Cormorant</b>	<i>Nannopterum brasilianum</i>	▶  1
7	<b>White Ibis</b>	<i>Eudocimus albus</i>	▶  2
1	<b>Roseate Spoonbill</b>	<i>Platalea ajaja</i>	▶  1
3	<b>Yellow-crowned Night Heron</b>	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	▶  2
3	<b>Black-crowned Night Heron</b>	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	▶  2
15	<b>Little Blue Heron</b>	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	▶  1  1
25	<b>Tricolored Heron</b>	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	▶  3
10	<b>Reddish Egret</b>	<i>Egretta rufescens</i>	▶  3
12	<b>Snowy Egret</b>	<i>Egretta thula</i>	▶  3
4	<b>Green Heron</b>	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	▶  1  3
24	<b>Western Cattle-Egret</b>	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶  5
2	<b>Great Egret</b>	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  2
2	<b>Great Blue Heron</b>	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶  2
27	<b>Brown Pelican</b>	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶  6
205	<b>Turkey Vulture</b>	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  6
1	<b>Osprey</b>	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	▶  1
2	<b>Sharp-shinned Hawk</b>	<i>Accipiter striatus</i>	▶  1  2
3	<b>Ridgway's Hawk</b>	<i>Buteo ridgwayi</i>  	▶  1  2

3	<b>Red-tailed Hawk</b>	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	✓	1	3
3	<b>Ashy-faced Owl</b>	<i>Tyto glaucops</i>	✓	2	1
2	<b>Burrowing Owl</b>	<i>Athene cunicularia</i>		1	1
1	<b>Stygian Owl</b>	<i>Asio stygius</i>		1	1
5	<b>Hispaniolan Trogon</b>	<i>Priotelus roseigaster</i>	✓	1	3
17	<b>Broad-billed Tody</b>	<i>Todus subulatus</i>	✓	2	10
12	<b>Narrow-billed Tody</b>	<i>Todus angustirostris</i>	✓	1	4
6	<b>Belted Kingfisher</b>	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>		1	1
13	<b>Antillean Piculet</b>	<i>Nesocittes micromegas</i>	✓	4	6
66	<b>Hispaniolan Woodpecker</b>	<i>Melanerpes striatus</i>	✓	2	14
5	<b>American Kestrel</b>	<i>Falco sparverius</i>		1	5
1	<b>Peregrine Falcon</b>	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>		1	1
44	<b>Hispaniolan Amazon</b>	<i>Amazona ventralis</i>	✓	1	5
5	<b>Olive-throated Parakeet</b>	<i>Eupsittula nana</i>	*	2	2
52	<b>Hispaniolan Parakeet</b>	<i>Psittacara chloropterus</i>		3	3
4	<b>Greater Antillean Elaenia</b>	<i>Elaenia fallax</i>		2	2
2	<b>Hispaniolan Pewee</b>	<i>Contopus hispaniolensis</i>	✓	1	1
26	<b>Stolid Flycatcher</b>	<i>Myiarchus stolidus</i>		1	9
33	<b>Gray Kingbird</b>	<i>Tyrannus dominicensis</i>		13	13
1	<b>Flat-billed Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo nanus</i>	✓	3	1
64	<b>Black-whiskered Vireo</b>	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>		8	8
9	<b>Hispaniolan Palm-Crow</b>	<i>Corvus palmarum</i>	✓	1	2
17	<b>White-necked Crow</b>	<i>Corvus leucognaphalus</i>	✓	3	5



6	<b>Golden Swallow</b>	<i>Tachycineta euchrysea</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  1
75	<b>Caribbean Martin</b>	<i>Progne dominicensis</i>		▶  7
2	<b>Barn Swallow</b>	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>		▶  1
53	<b>Cave Swallow</b>	<i>Petrochelidon fulva</i>		▶  1  2
9	<b>Northern Mockingbird</b>	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>		▶  7
11	<b>Rufous-throated Solitaire</b>	<i>Myadestes genibarbis</i>		▶  1  2
5	<b>Bicknell's Thrush</b>	<i>Catharus bicknelli</i>		▶  1  1
24	<b>Red-legged Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus plumbeus</i>		▶  6
3	<b>La Selle Thrush</b>	<i>Turdus swalesi</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  1
66	<b>Palmchat</b>	<i>Dulus dominicus</i>	📷	▶  1  9
12	<b>Village Weaver</b>	<i>Ploceus cucullatus</i>	* ✓ 📷	▶  1  3
19	<b>House Sparrow</b>	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	*	▶  6
8	<b>Hispaniolan Euphonia</b>	<i>Chlorophonia musica</i>	✓	▶  3
19	<b>Hispaniolan Crossbill</b>	<i>Loxia megaplaga</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  2
14	<b>Antillean Siskin</b>	<i>Spinus dominicensis</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  2
3	<b>Western Chat-Tanager</b>	<i>Calyptophilus tertius</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  1
2	<b>Eastern Chat-Tanager</b>	<i>Calyptophilus frugivorus</i>	✓ 📷	▶  2  2
32	<b>Black-crowned Palm-Tanager</b>	<i>Phaenicophilus palmarum</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  10
6	<b>White-winged Warbler</b>	<i>Xenoligea montana</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  1
15	<b>Green-tailed Warbler</b>	<i>Microligea palustris</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  2
9	<b>Hispaniolan Spindalis</b>	<i>Spindalis dominicensis</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  2
2	<b>Hispaniolan Oriole</b>	<i>Icterus dominicensis</i>	✓ 📷	▶  1  1
16	<b>Greater Antillean Grackle</b>	<i>Quiscalus niger</i>		▶  4

3	<b>Ovenbird</b>	<i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	▶  2
7	<b>Northern Waterthrush</b>	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	▶  5
2	<b>Black-and-white Warbler</b>	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	▶  2
10	<b>Common Yellowthroat</b>	<i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	▶  6
6	<b>American Redstart</b>	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	▶  5
7	<b>Cape May Warbler</b>	<i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	▶  6
4	<b>Northern Parula</b>	<i>Setophaga americana</i>	▶  3
15	<b>Yellow Warbler</b>	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	▶  1  5
4	<b>Black-throated Blue Warbler</b>	<i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	▶  2
5	<b>Palm Warbler</b>	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>	▶  4
15	<b>Pine Warbler</b>	<i>Setophaga pinus</i>	▶  2
1	<b>Rose-breasted Grosbeak</b>	<i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	▶  1  1
48	<b>Bananaquit</b>	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>	▶  1  11
15	<b>Yellow-faced Grassquit</b>	<i>Tiaris olivaceus</i>	▶  5
4	<b>Greater Antillean Bullfinch</b>	<i>Melopyrrha violacea</i>	▶  2
1	<b>Black-faced Grassquit</b>	<i>Melanospiza bicolor</i>	▶  1

## EXOTIC: ESCAPEE

1	<b>Indian Peafowl</b>	<i>Pavo cristatus</i> *	▶  1
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## ADDITIONAL TAXA

2	<b>Tyto sp.</b>	<i>Tyto sp.</i>	▶  1
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