



Field Guides Tour Report

Jamaica I 2017

Feb 26, 2017 to Mar 4, 2017

Jesse Fagan & local guide

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE.



Orangequit is one of the many distinctive endemics we enjoyed on this tour! Photo by participant Brian Armstrong.

This was my first trip to Jamaica, and I was blown away. Not literally, like in a hurricane of the sort that sometimes hit the island, but by the diversity (and uniqueness) of the avifauna/endemics, the jerk pork, and the beautiful people. Island birding doesn't get much better than this! Green Castle Estate was also the perfect base for us. I want to thank all our local support, including the staff at GCE, but, of course, to our steady driver, Raymond, who did a wonderful job. It was also great working with our talented local guide, Dwayne Swaby, who did an excellent job. Thanks to all.

There were a lot of bird highlights to this trip. Maggie and Raven (of course, Raven!) thought the Jamaican Crow with its bizarre call and active behavior was a hit. I agree. Our Jamaican Owl experience was hard to beat. Which did you prefer? The bird we found along the entrance road (after working hard to find one for several nights) or the pair we ran into in Cockpit Country on a day roost?! There are two endemic parrots to Jamaica, and Roger enjoyed those perched Yellow-billed in the scope. Brian liked the Black-billed. Either way, you can't go wrong. Dean loved the Stolid Flycatcher interaction we had at Green Castle Estate. Finally, Susan enjoyed watching the Orangequit feeding on the palm fruits. However, there was one clear favorite in the group: Crested Quail-Dove! We had awesome looks in the Blue Mountains and again in the John Crow. Such a bizarre bird. Thanks to Brian for capturing its image so nicely.

I want to thank you for a fun trip. I look forward to seeing you again on the birding trail. All the best for 2017!

Jesse (aka Motmot) from Lima, Peru

KEYS FOR THIS LIST

One of the following keys may be shown in brackets for individual species as appropriate: * = heard only, I = introduced, E = endemic, N = nesting, a = austral migrant, b = boreal migrant

BIRDS

Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

WEST INDIAN WHISTLING-DUCK (*Dendrocygna arborea*) – Several were on the small pond at Green Castle Estate (GCE). Local on several islands in the West Indies.

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Anas discors*) – At the GCE pond and again in Montego Bay.

NORTHERN SHOVELER (*Anas clypeata*) – Large numbers were on the sewage ponds in Montego Bay. The biggest concentrations that the local guides had ever seen!

RING-NECKED DUCK (*Aythya collaris*) – Several on the pond at GCE.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – Small numbers at GCE and larger numbers on the sewage ponds at Montego Bay.

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – Both grebe species were at the sewage ponds in Montego Bay. Both are resident on the islands.

PIED-BILLED GREBE (*Podilymbus podiceps*)

Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD (*Fregata magnificens*) – Soaring over the open waters of the blue Caribbean.

Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

BROWN PELICAN (SOUTHERN) (*Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*) – Not many, but a few along the water's edge during our drives to different birding sites.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Just one the day we visited Ecclesdown Road. A winter visitor to the island.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Small numbers around Montego Bay, especially along the mangroves.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – The next few species of ardeids were seen on our final days drive back to Montego Bay along the mangroves and on the coastal mudflats.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*)

TRICOLORED HERON (*Egretta tricolor*)

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Seen everyday in the fields (with cattle!).

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – A pair were on the small pond at GCE.

YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – An immature was on the GCE pond.

Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

GLOSSY IBIS (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – A small flock flew over our vehicle on our final day.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Good numbers on the island. Seen everyday.

Pandionidae (Osprey)

OSPREY (*Pandion haliaetus*) – Just one migrant (?) soaring high over the Vinery.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

RED-TAILED HAWK (JAMAICENSIS) (*Buteo jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – The true Red-tailed Hawk!

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

COMMON GALLINULE (*Gallinula galeata*) – A few at GCE and then again at Montego Bay.

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – This is a local breeding resident on Jamaica. We also saw one or two "Caribbean" Coots with the large white foreshields.

Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

BLACK-NECKED STILT (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Small numbers at GCE and again on the drive back to Montego Bay in the mangroves.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

BLACK-BELLIED PLOVER (*Pluvialis squatarola*) – Do you see the Nike swoosh? Just to the left. ;-)

SEMPALMATED PLOVER (*Charadrius semipalmatus*) – One was on the beach along the entrance road to GCE.

Jacanidae (Jacanas)

NORTHERN JACANA (*Jacana spinosa violacea*) – Just a pair on the small pond at GCE. These were our only ones.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

RUDDY TURNSTONE (*Arenaria interpres*) – A few on the beach near GCE.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – Good numbers in the mudflats and mangroves on our drive back to Montego Bay.

LESSER YELLOWLEGS (*Tringa flavipes*) – Small numbers on the mudflats near Montego Bay.

Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

LAUGHING GULL (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Seen along the waterfront in Montego Bay.

ROYAL TERN (*Thalasseus maximus*) – These were around in small numbers along the beaches on the north coast.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – A few seen in the cities and towns. [I]

WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) – One of the more common columbids on the tour.

RING-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas caribaea*) – This endemic was seen super well in the scope in the Blue Mountains. [E]

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina jamaicensis*) – Common. Seen everyday.

CRESTED QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon versicolor*) – Ouch. What a bird. We lucked out and found one walking along the road in the Blue Mountains (had we almost given up hope?). And, we scoped another one in the John Crow Mountains. Fantastic! [E]

RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE (*Geotrygon montana*) – One was briefly seen the first day. Hear a few times.

CARIBBEAN DOVE (*Leptotila jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – Good numbers in several locations.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Fairly common. Seen most days.

ZENAIDA DOVE (*Zenaida aurita*) – These were common at GCE where they could be seen walking around the grounds.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Just one along the entrance road to GCE.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

SMOOTH-BILLED ANI (*Crotophaga ani*) – Seen most days in the cutover fields and scrub habitat.

MANGROVE CUCKOO (*Coccyzus minor*) – Nice looks in the GCE forest. Heard a few other times.

CHESTNUT-BELLIED CUCKOO (*Coccyzus pluvialis*) – We scoped one individual in the top of a tree during our first stop in the Blue Mountains. Awesome. This is one of the tougher endemics to see. Indeed, we only heard one other. [E]

JAMAICAN LIZARD-CUCKOO (*Coccyzus vetula*) – Good looks at GCE and again at Vinery. I love the lizard-cuckoos and find it hard to believe they are in the same genus as Mangrove! [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

JAMAICAN OWL (*Pseudoscops grammicus*) – Wow. We worked at seeing one near GCE which eventually paid off during one early morning stop. However, could we ever have predicted finding a day roosting pair?! Unbelievable. [E]

Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

NORTHERN POTOO (CARIBBEAN) (*Nyctibius jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – One was at its usual post near the parking lot at GCE most mornings.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT (*Streptoprocne zonaris pallidifrons*) – Several in the lowlands near GCE during one hot afternoon.

ANTILLEAN PALM-SWIFT (*Tachornis phoenicobia phoenicobia*) – At the airport in Montego Bay and again in the John Crow Mountains.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

JAMAICAN MANGO (*Anthracothorax mango*) – There was a male hanging around the ornamentals at GCE. [E]

VERVAIN HUMMINGBIRD (*Mellisuga minima minima*) – Seen on their tall perches a few times near the cabins at GCE.

STREAMERTAIL (RED-BILLED) (*Trochilus polytmus polytmus*) – These were the common ones seen most days at GCE and other sites. Found in the central and western part of the country. [E]

STREAMERTAIL (BLACK-BILLED) (*Trochilus polytmus scitulus*) – Seen in the John Crow Mts. The streamertail found in the eastern part of the country. [E]

Todidae (Todies)

JAMAICAN TODY (*Todus todus*) – Thankfully, this little treat was a fairly common sight in the forests. [E]

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – Singles on different days. A wintering visitor to the island.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

JAMAICAN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes radiolatus*) – Seen well a few times and heard most other days. Common. [E]

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

AMERICAN KESTREL (HISPANIOLAN) (*Falco sparverius dominicensis*) – This paler subspecies was seen along the road during our drives. Including the gas station stop where it appeared to nesting. Scoped once or twice, as well.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – A large female was seen at Ecclesdown Road.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

BLACK-BILLED PARROT (*Amazona agilis*) – This species was seen in the John Crow and again in the Cockpit Country. The more common of the two endemic parrots. [E]

YELLOW-BILLED PARROT (*Amazona collaria*) – Scoped nicely in the John Crow Mountains. [E]

GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET (*Forpus passerinus*) – Several small groups on the property at GCE. [I]

OLIVE-THROATED PARAKEET (JAMAICAN) (*Eupsittula nana nana*) – Seen on the property of GCE and at a few other sites. A species widespread on the mainland, but per the subspecies originally described from Jamaica (the only island in the Caribbean where it is native).

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

JAMAICAN ELAENIA (*Myiopagis cotta*) – Not common at all. Just singles on the first two days of the tour. After that, nothing. [E]

JAMAICAN PEWEE (*Contopus pallidus*) – A few times throughout the tour. Easily overlooked, however. [E]

SAD FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus barbirostris*) – Didn't appear super sad? However, maybe the call seemed mournful to a few folks. [E]

RUFOUS-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus validus*) – Seen well at GCE and in Cockpit Country among other sites. Like a resident Great Crested Flycatcher. [E]

STOLID FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus stolidus stolidus*) – Seen at Vinery and again on the grounds at GCE where we had a very responsive pair. Also found on the island of Hispaniola.

LOGGERHEAD KINGBIRD (LOGGERHEAD) (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus jamaicensis*) – Most days of the tour. Pretty common.

Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

JAMAICAN BECARD (*Pachyrhamphus niger*) – We had a responsive pair in the Blue Mountains, but much better looks at the male in Cockpit Country. [E]

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

BLUE MOUNTAIN VIREO (*Vireo osburni*) – One of the tougher endemics to find. We had several eye-level looks in the Blue Mountains and a surprise individual at Vinery (where apparently not recorded before). [E]

JAMAICAN VIREO (*Vireo modestus*) – This one was common. We like common endemics. [E]

BLACK-WHISKERED VIREO (*Vireo altiloquus altiloquus*) – Heard and seen a few times. Are these birds returning or do they just become quiet in the winter?

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

JAMAICAN CROW (*Corvus jamaicensis*) – Seen well (and heard!) in the John Crow Mountains and Cockpit Country. [E]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – Seen in the lowlands.

CAVE SWALLOW (CARIBBEAN) (*Petrochelidon fulva poeciloma*) – Several feeding during the heat of the day along the entrance to GCE. A resident subspecies in the Caribbean.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

RUFOUS-THROATED SOLITAIRE (RUFOUS-THROATED) (*Myadestes genibarbis solitarius*) – We had just one seen briefly at Vinery. Their ethereal song was strangely missing from the highlands.

WHITE-EYED THRUSH (*Turdus jamaicensis*) – Good numbers in the Blue Mountains, but that was the only place. Seen well. [E]

WHITE-CHINNED THRUSH (*Turdus aurantius*) – Common and widespread. [E]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Also, common and widespread.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

WORM-EATING WARBLER (*Helminthos vermivorum*) – Singles on few different days.

NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) [*]

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – Fairly common in the forests.

COMMON YELLOWTHROAT (*Geothlypis trichas*) – A adult male was seen in Cockpit Country.

ARROWHEAD WARBLER (*Setophaga pharetra*) – This is a cool looking warbler, but, at a glance, quite similar to Black-and-white. We saw them well at a few different sites. [E]

HOODED WARBLER (*Setophaga citrina*) – A rare find on the island. An adult male was seen at Vinery.

AMERICAN REDSTART (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Seen everyday of the tour. A common winter resident to Jamaica.

CAPE MAY WARBLER (*Setophaga tigrina*) – Just a single bird on our first day birding the estate. Responding to the Silver Bullet!

NORTHERN PARULA (*Setophaga americana*) – One of the more common wintering warblers on the island.

MAGNOLIA WARBLER (*Setophaga magnolia*) – Two were on the grounds of GCE, a surprise to our local guide. Rare on the island in winter.

BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – These were uncommon, but seen in some numbers in the highlands.

PALM WARBLER (*Setophaga palmarum*) – Just once and the subspecies was nominate, palmarum.

PRAIRIE WARBLER (*Setophaga discolor*) – Seen a few times.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN) (*Coereba flaveola flaveola*) – This species is super common on the island.

YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris olivaceus olivaceus*) – Seen nearly everyday. A frequent song in cutover areas.

BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT (*Tiaris bicolor marchii*) – Slightly less common than the previous species.

ORANGEQUIT (*Euneornis campestris*) – Encountered frequently feeding on the palm fruits. [E]

GREATER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH (*Loxigilla violacea ruficollis*) – We had several in the John Crow Mts. and again in Cockpit Country. Not super common, however.

YELLOW-SHOULDERED GRASSQUIT (*Loxipasser anoxanthus*) – One of the tougher endemics to find and see well. We had our first pair at GCE, but again (a perched male) at Ecclesdown Rd. [E]

JAMAICAN SPINDALIS (*Spindalis nigricephala*) – We saw this species in most habitats we visited. Common on the island. [E]

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

JAMAICAN BLACKBIRD (*Nesopsar nigerrimus*) – Super tough to find, but we lucked out and had a pair at our first stop in the Blue Mountains. [E]

GREATER ANTILLEAN GRACKLE (*Quiscalus niger crassirostris*) – Very common on the island.

JAMAICAN ORIOLE (*Icterus leucopteryx leucopteryx*) – A lovely icterid seen most days, though uncommon. Also found on the island of San Andres, which belongs to Colombia.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

JAMAICAN EUPHONIA (*Euphonia jamaica*) – Quite a different looking euphonia with regards to color of plumage. Reminds me a lot of Plumbeous Euphonia from South America! (This appears to be its closest relative) [E]

MAMMALS

SMALL INDIAN MONGOOSE (*Herpestes auropunctatus*) – Singles seen running across the road a few times. [I]

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 104 bird taxa and 1 mammal taxa