



*Field Guides Tour Report*

**Jamaica III 2017**

Nov 19, 2017 to Nov 25, 2017

Jesse Fagan

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



*Ahhh, Jamaica. What is there not to love? This was our home base at Green Castle Estate for 5 nights. Not bad, eh? In the distance, one can see the Blue Mountains, home to endemic birds and famous coffee. This awesome photo was taken by participant Maureen Phair.*

We couldn't have done it without the Silver Bullet. And then there was Dwayne and Raymond, guide and driver/guide extraordinaire. I was happy to carry the scope, which we used once or twice. What a team! We had serious fun and despite the rain, we turned it on its head and made the trip a winner. Thanks to this most fun group. Y'all persevered and adapted to the rain and heat with rounds of rum punches and dips in the pool. Did we miss an endemic? Not a chance, but what about that Jamaican Pauraque record from 1860? We loved the Mountain Witch (at least after we saw her!), any today, anywhere, spindalis, woodpecker, and I didn't know that Jamaican Owls liked night tennis?! Thanks again for coming to Jamaica with us and I can't wait until the next adventure.

Fagan...Jesse Fagan...aka Motmot (from Lima, Peru)

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**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

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## BIRDS

### Anatidae (Ducks, Geese, and Waterfowl)

**BLUE-WINGED TEAL** (*Anas discors*) – Good numbers on the reservoir at GCE, but again in Montego Bay at the sewage facility.

**NORTHERN SHOVELER** (*Anas clypeata*) – Supposedly rare in Jamaica, but possibly increasing as a winter visitor? We had large numbers (as in Mar 2016) at the sewage facility in Montego Bay.

**RING-NECKED DUCK** (*Aythya collaris*) – Five individuals on the reservoir at GCE.

**RUDDY DUCK** (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – A few at the reservoir and again in Montego Bay.

### Podicipedidae (Grebes)

**LEAST GREBE** (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – Dwayne spotted a couple on the ponds in Montego Bay. One may have been near a nest.

**PIED-BILLED GREBE** (*Podilymbus podiceps*) – A pair were on the Swift River and one was at the reservoir. They are resident in Jamaica.

### Fregatidae (Frigatebirds)

**MAGNIFICENT FRIGATEBIRD** (*Fregata magnificens*) – Seen along the coast in various places. A couple were sitting on power poles, not often you see them like that!

### Pelecanidae (Pelicans)

**BROWN PELICAN (SOUTHERN)** (*Pelecanus occidentalis occidentalis*) – Small numbers along the coast. Mostly juveniles.

### Ardeidae (Heron, Egrets, and Bitterns)

**GREAT BLUE HERON** (*Ardea herodias*) – Singles a couple of different days.

**GREAT EGRET** (*Ardea alba*) – Slightly more common than the previous species.

**SNOWY EGRET** (*Egretta thula*) – Uncommon, not seen most days, but we had one or two at the Swift River Bridge.

**LITTLE BLUE HERON** (*Egretta caerulea*) – Pretty common, seen most days.

**TRICOLORED HERON** (*Egretta tricolor*) – Just one on our drive to GCE the first day.

**CATTLE EGRET** (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Seen most days.

**GREEN HERON** (*Butorides virescens*) – One was at the Swift River Bridge.

**BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nycticorax nycticorax*) – One adult at the Swift River Bridge.

**YELLOW-CROWNED NIGHT-HERON** (*Nyctanassa violacea*) – A small group of 5 or 6 adults were along the shoreline at Swift River Bridge.

### Threskiornithidae (Ibises and Spoonbills)

**GLOSSY IBIS** (*Plegadis falcinellus*) – Just a couple on our way back to Montego Bay.

### Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

**TURKEY VULTURE** (*Cathartes aura*) – Everyday of the tour despite the rain.

### Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

**RED-TAILED HAWK (JAMAICENSIS)** (*Buteo jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – Nice to see it here in Jamaica, the country that it is named after and where first described.

### Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

**COMMON GALLINULE** (*Gallinula galeata*) – Most wetlands we looked at had this species. Formerly, Common Moorhen, which is now the Old World name.

**AMERICAN COOT** (*Fulica americana*) – The reservoir had a few resident "Caribbean Coots" with a broader white foreshield. There were good numbers of winter visitors around, too.

### Recurvirostridae (Stilts and Avocets)

**BLACK-NECKED STILT** (*Himantopus mexicanus*) – Small numbers in the mangroves and at the sewage ponds.

### Jacaniidae (Jacanas)

**NORTHERN JACANA** (*Jacana spinosa violacea*) – Just a couple along the road.

### Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

**SANDERLING** (*Calidris alba*) – There was a group of birds feeding along the coastline as we headed back to Montego Bay.

**LEAST SANDPIPER** (*Calidris minutilla*) – A small group of 5 or so were along the edge of the sewage pond.

**SPOTTED SANDPIPER** (*Actitis macularius*) – Small numbers at Swift River and again at the sewage ponds.

**LESSER YELLOWLEGS** (*Tringa flavipes*) – A pair were foraging along the water's edge at the sewage ponds.

### Laridae (Gulls, Terns, and Skimmers)

**LAUGHING GULL** (*Leucophaeus atricilla*) – Along the coast and especially common in Montego Bay. Most were in non-breeding plumage.

**ROYAL TERN** (*Thalasseus maximus*) – Small numbers along the coast and in Montego Bay.

### Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

**ROCK PIGEON** (*Columba livia*) – Most days of the tour. [I]

**WHITE-CROWNED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas leucocephala*) – Fairly common including on the grounds of GCE.

**RING-TAILED PIGEON** (*Patagioenas caribaea*) – Seen well at Ecclesdown feeding in the Ficus tree. Another was seen in the Blue Mountains. [E]

**COMMON GROUND-DOVE** (*Columbina passerina jamaicensis*) – Mostly flushed from the road in front of the vehicle.

**CRESTED QUAIL-DOVE** (*Geotrygon versicolor*) – Nice work, Raymond! Awesome views of the Mountain Witch in the scope! [E]

**RUDDY QUAIL-DOVE** (*Geotrygon montana*) – Seen a few times in front of us in the trail at Stewart Town and GCE.

**CARIBBEAN DOVE** (*Leptotila jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – We caught up with this bird in the scope at GCE, but also so easy at Rocklands.

**WHITE-WINGED DOVE** (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Seen in flight a few times around GCE and Rocklands.

**ZENAIDA DOVE** (*Zenaida aurita*) – Fairly common at several sites we visited on this tour. A pair were at one of our gas station bathroom stops! Can be difficult to see in other parts of the Caribbean where it is mainly a forest bird.

**MOURNING DOVE** (*Zenaida macroura*) – One in Montego Bay. Woohoo, swept the columbids!

#### Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

**SMOOTH-BILLED ANI** (*Crotophaga ani*) – Most days on the drive.

**MANGROVE CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus minor*) – A couple were seen on the GCE property our first day.

**CHESTNUT-BELLIED CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus pluvialis*) – Seen multiple days which is very unusual for this rare and skulky species. Awesome looks each time! [E]

**JAMAICAN LIZARD-CUCKOO** (*Coccyzus vetula*) – Our first sighting was memorable as it crossed the GCE entrance road and perched for a long period in full view. [E]

#### Strigidae (Owls)

**JAMAICAN OWL** (*Pseudoscops grammicus*) – Amazing! How lucky can a group get?! One flushed up from the ground and perched in a tree just over our vehicle. We must have good karma. [E]

#### Nyctibiidae (Potoos)

**NORTHERN POTOO (CARIBBEAN)** (*Nyctibius jamaicensis jamaicensis*) – One was feeding in the lights on the GCE property.

#### Apodidae (Swifts)

**WHITE-COLLARED SWIFT** (*Streptoprocne zonaris pallidifrons*) – Second largest swift in the world. We saw them swirling around vehicle as we headed back into Montego Bay.

**ANTILLEAN PALM-SWIFT** (*Tachornis phoenicobia phoenicobia*) – Just over the supermarket as we blasted in to buy rum. Excellent habitat.

#### Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

**JAMAICAN MANGO** (*Anthracothorax mango*) – By far our best looks were at Rocklands. [E]

**VERVAIN HUMMINGBIRD** (*Mellisuga minima minima*) – This tiny hummingbird was seen well on the GCE property where it liked to sit waaaay up on top of the shooting palm fronds.

**STREAMERTAIL (RED-BILLED)** (*Trochilus polytmus polytmus*) – Common on the western 2/3 of the island. Some of you enjoyed feeding them in the hand at Rocklands. [E]

**STREAMERTAIL (BLACK-BILLED)** (*Trochilus polytmus scitulus*) – Once you cross the Rio Grande to the east you are in Black-billed territory. Seen well in the John Crow Mountains. [E]

#### Todidae (Todies)

**JAMAICAN TODY** (*Todus todus*) – Hard to not like a tody. And we love them! [E]

#### Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

**BELTED KINGFISHER** (*Megaceryle alcyon*) – A few at the river crossings like Swift River Bridge and along the coast.

#### Picidae (Woodpeckers)

**JAMAICAN WOODPECKER** (*Melanerpes radiolatus*) – A lovely woodpecker. Nice color and pattern. Thankfully, it was seen regularly. [E]

#### Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

**AMERICAN KESTREL (HISPANIOLAN)** (*Falco sparverius dominicensis*) – Seen everyday of the tour.

**MERLIN** (*Falco columbarius*) – One was seen in flight bombing across the Swift River Bridge in hot pursuit of something.

#### Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots)

**BLACK-BILLED PARROT** (*Amazona agilis*) – Fantastic perched scope views at Stewart Town and Ecclesdown Road. [E]

**YELLOW-BILLED PARROT** (*Amazona collaria*) – Our best look was in the scope at Ecclesdown Road. [E]

**GREEN-RUMPED PARROTLET** (*Forpus passerinus*) – Introduced from South America, but still nice to look at. We had several in the scope at Stewart Town. [I]

**OLIVE-THROATED PARAKEET (JAMAICAN)** (*Eupsittula nana nana*) – The only island in the Caribbean where they are native. Common on the mainland. Seen in good numbers especially around Stewart Town.

#### Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

**JAMAICAN ELAENIA** (*Myiopagis cotta*) – We worked hard to see one at Stewart Town, but also again in the Blue Mountains. [E]

**JAMAICAN PEWEE** (*Contopus pallidus*) – Seen at Stewart Town, but also again along Ecclesdown Road in the John Crow Mountains. Not common. [E]

**SAD FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus barbirostris*) – Seen well on the grounds of GCE (one of our first endemics in the rain!) among other places. Named for the mournful "pip" call it makes? [E]

**RUFIOUS-TAILED FLYCATCHER** (*Myiarchus validus*) – A family group was observed along the GCE entrance road our first rainy morning. Lots of rufous in the wings and tail. [E]

**LOGGERHEAD KINGBIRD (LOGGERHEAD)** (*Tyrannus caudifasciatus jamaicensis*) – These were common on the island.

#### Tityridae (Tityras and Allies)

**JAMAICAN BECARD** (*Pachyrhamphus niger*) – A female was guarding a nest at Stewart Town. A male was seen along Ecclesdown Road. [E]

#### Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

**BLUE MOUNTAIN VIREO** (*Vireo osburni*) – It was satisfying getting this hard-to-see species at Stewart Town on our first day. A new spot for Dwayne! [E]

**JAMAICAN VIREO** (*Vireo modestus*) – This endemic is common on the island. Seen well at GCE among many other spots. [E]

#### Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

**JAMAICAN CROW** (*Corvus jamaicensis*) – Their cackling calls were a treat during our birding at Stewart Town. We called in a pair for nice looks. [E]

*Hirundinidae (Swallows)*

**BARN SWALLOW** (*Hirundo rustica*) – A few during our drives foraging over the fields.

**CAVE SWALLOW (CARIBBEAN)** (*Petrochelidon fulva poeciloma*) – Seen along the GCE entrance road and again at the Swift River Bridge. These are resident swallows.

*Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)*

**WHITE-EYED THRUSH** (*Turdus jamaicensis*) – We struggled to see one in the Blue Mountains, but our effort paid off. Quiet this time of year. [E]

**WHITE-CHINNED THRUSH** (*Turdus aurantius*) – This endemic is common on the island. Seen most days. [E]

*Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)*

**NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD** (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Another species seen everyday of the tour.

*Parulidae (New World Warblers)*

**OVENBIRD** (*Seiurus aurocapilla*) – Several in the road at Stewart Town, Ecclesdown, and in the Blue Mountains.

**WORM-EATING WARBLER** (*Helmitheros vermivorum*) – One was seen briefly in the forest at GCE.

**LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia motacilla*) – We saw one along the road at Stewart Town. Rare in Jamaica.

**NORTHERN WATERTHRUSH** (*Parkesia noveboracensis*) – One was seen in the Blue Mountains.

**BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER** (*Mniotilta varia*) – Good numbers over several days. Pretty common winter visitor.

**SWAINSON'S WARBLER** (*Limnothlypis swainsonii*) [\*]

**COMMON YELLOWTHROAT** (*Geothlypis trichas*) – Detected often by their distinctive chip note.

**ARROWHEAD WARBLER** (*Setophaga pharetra*) – Seen well at Ecclesdown and again in the Blue Mountains. Sort of like a Black-and-white, but posture and behavior is much different. [E]

**AMERICAN REDSTART** (*Setophaga ruticilla*) – Common. Seen most days in a variety of forest types.

**CAPE MAY WARBLER** (*Setophaga tigrina*) – One was seen in the Blue Mountains.

**NORTHERN PARULA** (*Setophaga americana*) – Another common winter visitor. Lots of immatures.

**BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER** (*Setophaga caerulescens*) – Thankfully we got to see this sharp looking warbler most days. Lots of nice looking males around.

**PRAIRIE WARBLER** (*Setophaga discolor*) – Not super common, but singles or pairs seen on a few days.

*Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)*

**BANANAQUIT (CARIBBEAN)** (*Coereba flaveola flaveola*) – First described from Jamaica! Common on the island.

**YELLOW-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris olivaceus olivaceus*) – Singing on the grounds of GCE.

**BLACK-FACED GRASSQUIT** (*Tiaris bicolor marchii*) – Both grassquits were common on the island.

**ORANGEQUIT** (*Euneornis campestris*) – The males are a striking steely blue with just a small patch of orange on the chin/throat. We had our best looks at Rocklands, but seen well in other places. [E]

**GREATER ANTILLEAN BULLFINCH** (*Loxigilla violacea ruficollis*) – At least five males were feeding in a Cecropia tree during our walk at Stewart Town.

**YELLOW-SHOULDERED GRASSQUIT** (*Loxipasser anoxanthus*) – Always tough. We had one at Ecclesdown and briefly again in the Blue Mountains. Found in a variety of habitats, but low density. [E]

**JAMAICAN SPINDALIS** (*Spindalis nigricephala*) – This endemic is fairly common on the island. [E]

*Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)*

**JAMAICAN BLACKBIRD** (*Nesopsar nigerrimus*) – One of the hardest of the endemics to locate. A very local species. We had one that showed nicely in the Blue Mountains. Whew! [E]

**GREATER ANTILLEAN GRACKLE** (*Quiscalus niger crassirostris*) – Common, seen everyday of the tour.

**JAMAICAN ORIOLE** (*Icterus leucopteryx leucopteryx*) – Its sweet, melodic song was heard often. We saw it well at several sites. Also found on the island of San Andres (Colombia), but some authorities split this particular population.

*Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)*

**JAMAICAN EUPHONIA** (*Euphonia jamaica*) – Singles at Ecclesdown and in the Blue Mountains. [E]

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## MAMMALS

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

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## ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

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**Totals for the tour: 99 bird taxa and 1 mammal taxa**