

Trip Report — Jamaica I 2025

February 28-March 7, 2025 with Cory Gregory & local guide
Dwayne Swaby



The Jamaican Tody is always a popular endemic that we target. Thankfully they're common and we had no shortage of encounters with these tiny insectivores. Photo by participant Hans Liao.

Jamaica, with its tropical climate, numerous endemic birds, interesting sights, sounds, and food, makes for a great quick trip! Our tour, led by our local guide Dwayne, and being driven by our driver Raymond, was a great one, filled with successful birding, and, I'm happy to say, a very clean sweep of the endemics. Thank you each for coming with Field Guides and I hope you enjoyed the birds and made plenty of good memories. Now, for the birds...



Visiting the famed Rocklands Bird Sanctuary usually results in full camera memory cards! The photo opportunities are countless and the birds were amazing as ever. Photo of this Orangequit was taken by guide Cory Gregory.

We gathered up in the outskirts of Kingston to kick-off this relaxed trip around the island. We didn't waste time on our first morning and we took our early departure over to Hellshire Hills where we aimed to knock off a couple of key targets right away. Specialties started pouring in immediately; Mangrove Cuckoo, Jamaican Mango, and a very key target, Stolid Flycatcher. We tallied Shiny Cowbird, Bananaquit, Black-faced Grassquit, Jamaican Vireo, and finally, the very important Bahama Mockingbird! We retreated before it became too hot and steamy out. At the Portmore Sewage Ponds, and yes, of course we visited sewage ponds, we quickly tallied a couple dozen species. Quality species we encountered included Zenaida Dove, Purple Gallinule, Black-necked Stilt, Stilt Sandpiper, Glossy Ibis, a variety of herons, and some exotic Saffron Finches. After this though, it was time to drive north, up and over the mountains towards the north shore. As we approached, we stopped along the Wag Water River and tallied a few more new species like Ruddy Turnstone, Green Heron, a wintering Belted

Kingfisher, Pied-billed Grebe, and even some Tricolored Herons. After this, we descended to the coast and made our way east, along a gorgeous tropical shoreline, all the way to Goblin Hill Villas, our home for the next four nights!



Perhaps the main draw at the Rocklands Bird Sanctuary are the well-known Red-billed Streamertails that will even land on your finger! The photos from here can be great and participant Pete Ferrera got this awesome shot of one all spread out!

We were in for a treat that next morning; we made our way east to a spot along the coast where White-tailed Tropicbirds were swirling around right offshore! Photo opportunities were great as we watched these black-and-white seabirds flying by, long tails and all, which is something one rarely gets to experience from shore. How many there were was hard to estimate but probably between 20-30. After we pulled ourselves away from the

shore, and after our picnic breakfast, we drove up, deep into the tropical forest, up to Ecclesdown Road. What we enjoyed here for the next 3-4 hours was just downright great and fun birding. Of the quick 28 species we tallied, at least 15 of them were Jamaican endemics! Our checklist was filled out with additions like Ring-tailed Pigeon, Vervain Hummingbird, Black-billed Streamertail, Jamaican Woodpecker, Yellow-billed Amazon, Jamaican Becard, Sad and Rufous-tailed flycatchers, White-chinned and White-eyed thrushes, and the strange Orangequit. It was also here that we witnessed what would end up being a major highlight of the trip. A pair of Chestnut-bellied Cuckoos, which is a large Jamaican endemic, was seen, heard calling a ton, and then we excitedly watched as they started displaying, fanning their tails, and making all sorts of strange sounds. It was a real treat to get to see such personal behavior from a sneaky and hard-to-see species. After our traditional Jamaican jerk lunch, we enjoyed a little downtime at our villas before taking a walk on the nearby trails. It was a quiet afternoon but we still added new things like Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, White-crowned Pigeon, Olive-throated Parakeet, Jamaican Euphonia, and others.



The Crested Quail-Dove, one of the prized Jamaican endemics, can be devilishly tricky to find but our local guide Dwayne delivered in a big way and ensured that we all had views like this one! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

The following day was an important one! We departed early and wound our way up into the deep and dark forests of the Blue Mountains. This location was a key spot for us for a number of reasons; a couple of our most-difficult endemics were lurking about somewhere and it was our job to stir them up and find them! We enjoyed seeing Red-billed Streamertail, Jamaican Tody, Jamaican Elaenia, Jamaican Pewee, Jamaican Spindalis, and finally a few Arrowhead Warblers! This fascinating species is only found in Jamaica and was one of our main targets. Next up, we encountered what is the rarest of the endemics, the bizarre Jamaican Blackbird. We watched at length as this blackbird climbed about, probing into bark, vines, and bromeliads! Pretty strange behavior for a blackbird, which is one reason they're such an interesting Jamaican endemic. Next up, a near-mythical endemic, usually one of the skulkiest and toughest endemics to find... the Crested Quail-Dove. But what we found was stunning; we witnessed a number of these all together and at close range, which blew all of us away. The views and photos we got

were downright stunning. As it neared lunchtime, we saw still more target species such as Greater Antillean Bullfinch, White-eyed Thrush, and Rufous-throated Solitaire along with the usual Jamaican Tody, spindalis, woodpecker, pewee, etc. We made our way back down to our villas for the afternoon. That night, we joined up and did some nightbirding, where we successfully saw the elusive Jamaican Owl. What a day!



There are three species of cuckoos regularly found in Jamaica and this is one of them, the Mangrove Cuckoo. This nice shot was taken by participant Hans Liao in the Hellshire Hills area.

After morning broke and we arose to the sounds of Loggerhead Kingbirds outside our villas, we made our way to the San San area a very short distance away. We birded a roadside there that has been proven through the years to be a reliable place for some of our remaining targets. Again, the birding was great; we saw Ring-tailed Pigeons, Jamaican Tody, Jamaican Becard, Sad Flycatcher, Rufous-throated Solitaire, a quick Yellow-shouldered

Grassquit, and even a day-roosting Jamaican Owl! After lunch, a quick stop at the marina netted us Antillean Palm-Swift, Jamaican Mango, and even a very rare vagrant, a Yellow-throated Vireo! What better way to top off the day of birding than with some ice cream which we enjoyed with swaying palm trees around us, a warm tropical breeze in our faces.



Although not the flashiest of birds, the big-billed Blue Mountain Vireo is a special Jamaican endemic that we saw very nicely on our last full day. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

It was sad to leave our villas behind but we were also excited to head west and to see some new parts of Jamaica. After packing and loading up, we started west. Our first stop was at the Spanish River Bridge where we added both species of waterthrushes, Osprey, a variety of herons including Yellow-crowned Night-Heron, enjoyed some flyover frigatebirds, and scoped some Royal Terns. Enjoying lunch at a restaurant right on the water was pretty neat; enjoying some traditional Jamaican food while the Laughing Gulls and Magnificent Frigatebirds swirled just outside. That afternoon we were excited to visit the famed Rocklands Bird Sanctuary. Our cameras were

busy as we fed streamertails and Jamaican Mangos as they perched on our fingers! Yellow-faced and Black-faced grassquits perched on our knees, literally, while the nearby ground was covered with Caribbean Doves and Common Ground Doves. After we pulled ourselves away from this magical place, we swung by the treatment ponds and added Northern Jacana and hundreds of Blue-winged Teal with a few Northern Shovelers and Ruddy Ducks mixed in. We capped off this night with a lovely candle-lit dinner in the courtyard of our small hotel. Another beautiful day of birding in Jamaica.



As the name suggests, the Jamaican Mango is indeed an endemic and is found nowhere else on earth. We had repeated great looks at these throughout the trip. Photo by participant Hans Liao.

Our final full day of birding was upon us. Still, we didn't let that fact dampen our spirits; in fact, we found an American Barn Owl right near our hotel predawn which was a great way to start the day. Next, we went to a special spot to witness dozens of Plain Pigeons as they left their roost and flew up

to the mountains. Believe it or not, this tricky species was never something we could expect until recent years. We didn't argue as we photographed them as they zoomed overhead! Our main destination today though was in Cockpit Country, the small village of Stewart Town. After we ate our picnic breakfast, we birded the area for 3-4 hours in which we easily knocked off the remaining two targets: Blue Mountain Vireo and Jamaican Crow. Our sweep of the Jamaican endemics was complete! Yahoo! The birding in Stewart Town really is special and we thoroughly enjoyed repeat views of Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, Jamaican Elaenia, Jamaican Becard, and a fantastic view of Northern Potoo on a day roost! Black-billed Amazons showed nicely, Olive-throated Parakeets perched overhead, we finally found a tame Yellow-shouldered Grassquit, and Jamaican Crows gurgled overhead as we soaked up the last of our Jamaican birding.



Jamaican Orioles, known locally as the Auntie Katie bird, are widespread in Jamaica and we enjoyed many good looks at this special species. Interestingly, these aren't technically endemic to Jamaica because they're found on San Andrés, a tiny Colombian island. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

Last but not least, most of us gathered on the roof of our hotel the final morning and welcomed the day by one last hour of birding. White-crowned Pigeons posed nicely, a Sad Flycatcher sat still for our cameras, 6 species of warblers showed up including Cape May, Prairie, and Yellow-throated, and, rarest of all, a Blue Grosbeak came in and landed right in front of us! Talk about a rare bird as a last hurrah!

There wasn't much of a list of other wildlife but we did encounter:

Small Indian Mongoose (*Urva auropunctata*)

American Crocodile (*Crocodyllus acutus*)

Jamaican Giant Anole (*Anolis garmani*)

On behalf of Field Guides, I want to thank each of you for coming along on this tropical adventure. I know Dwayne, Raymond, and I enjoyed your company and we hope you made lots of fun memories as we enjoyed the rich avifauna of this Caribbean nation. Thanks to Maria and Sharon in the home office for making it such a seamless visit! Until we meet again on another Field Guides adventure, be safe and good birding!

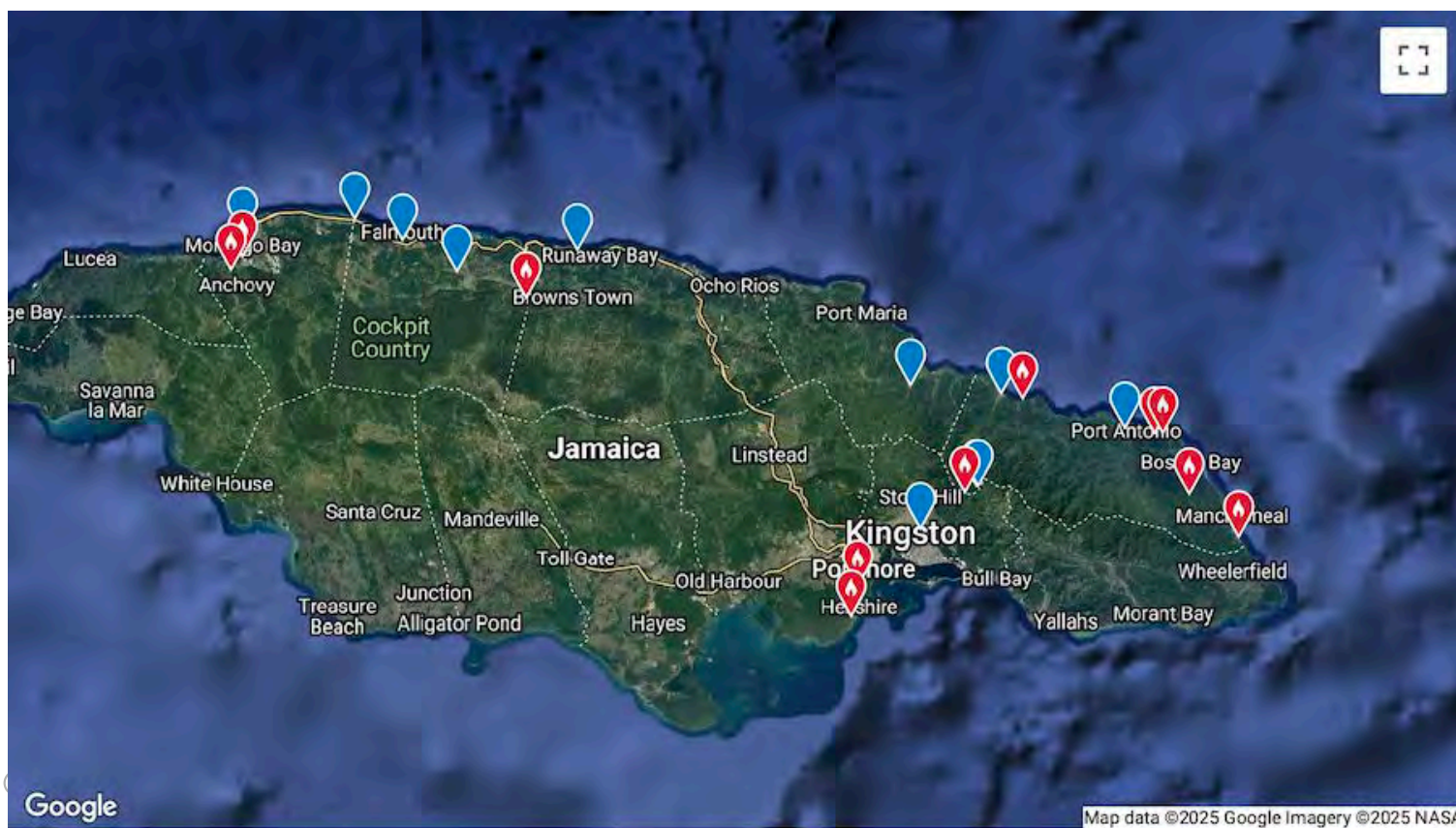
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link:

<https://ebird.org/tripreport/338447>

- - Cory Gregory (Curlew)

Field Guides Birding Tours -- JAMAICA I, 2025 (with Cory Gregory and local guide Dwayne Swaby)

1 – 6 Mar 2025 (6 days) Link-only



 Jamaica

Portland | Saint Andrew | Saint Ann | Saint Catherine | Saint James | Saint Mary | Trelawny

 Cory Gregory








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
































Species Observed



















[Show all details](#)

308	Blue-winged Teal	<i>Spatula discors</i>	▶ 3
20	Northern Shoveler	<i>Spatula clypeata</i>	▶ 1
9	Ruddy Duck	<i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	▶ 1
11	Rock Pigeon	<i>Columba livia</i> *	▶ 2
12	White-crowned Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	▶ 4
45	Plain Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas inornata</i>	▶ 1
37	Ring-tailed Pigeon	<i>Patagioenas caribaea</i>	▶ 4
1	Eurasian Collared-Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	▶ 1
10	Common Ground Dove	<i>Columbina passerina</i>	▶ 4
6	Crested Quail-Dove	<i>Geotrygon versicolor</i>	▶ 2
15	Caribbean Dove	<i>Leptotila jamaicensis</i>	▶ 1
21	White-winged Dove	<i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	▶ 6
15	Zenaida Dove	<i>Zenaida aurita</i>	▶ 7
4	Mourning Dove	<i>Zenaida macroura</i>	▶ 1
12	Smooth-billed Ani	<i>Crotophaga ani</i>	▶ 2
4	Mangrove Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus minor</i>	▶ 2
5	Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus pluvialis</i>	▶ 2
3	Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo	<i>Coccyzus vetula</i>	▶ 2
1	Northern Potoo	<i>Nyctibius jamaicensis</i>	▶ 1
12	Antillean Palm Swift	<i>Tachornis phoenicobia</i>	▶ 4
11	Jamaican Mango	<i>Anthracothorax mango</i>	▶ 3

4	Vervain Hummingbird	<i>Mellisuga minima</i>	▶  3
26	Red-billed Streamertail	<i>Trochilus polytmus</i>	▶  4
3	Black-billed Streamertail	<i>Trochilus scitulus</i>	▶  1
34	Common Gallinule	<i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶  4
7	American Coot	<i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  2
2	Purple Gallinule	<i>Porphyrio martinica</i>	▶  1
143	Black-necked Stilt	<i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  3
4	Killdeer	<i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  3
2	Northern Jacana	<i>Jacana spinosa</i>	▶  1
15	Spotted Sandpiper	<i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  4
8	Lesser Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa flavipes</i>	▶  1
1	Greater Yellowlegs	<i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	▶  1
13	Ruddy Turnstone	<i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶  2
1	Stilt Sandpiper	<i>Calidris himantopus</i>	▶  1
45	Least Sandpiper	<i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶  2
15	Laughing Gull	<i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	▶  1
11	Royal Tern	<i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	▶  2
5	Least Grebe	<i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	▶  1
5	Pied-billed Grebe	<i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	▶  3
25	White-tailed Tropicbird	<i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	▶  1
18	Magnificent Frigatebird	<i>Fregata magnificens</i>	▶  4
37	Glossy Ibis	<i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	▶  4
10	Yellow-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	▶  4
1	Black-crowned Night Heron	<i>Nycticorax nycticorax</i>	▶  1

12	Little Blue Heron	<i>Egretta caerulea</i>	▶  5
6	Tricolored Heron	<i>Egretta tricolor</i>	▶  3
24	Snowy Egret	<i>Egretta thula</i>	▶  4
3	Green Heron	<i>Butorides virescens</i>	▶  3
29	Western Cattle-Egret	<i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶  6
6	Great Egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>	▶  4
1	Great Blue Heron	<i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶  1
6	Brown Pelican	<i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶  2
126	Turkey Vulture	<i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶  10
1	Osprey	<i>Pandion haliaetus</i>	▶  1
3	Red-tailed Hawk	<i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶  3
1	American Barn Owl	<i>Tyto furcata</i>	▶  1
3	Jamaican Owl	<i>Asio grammicus</i>	▶  3
12	Jamaican Tody	<i>Todus todus</i>	▶  5
2	Belted Kingfisher	<i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	▶  2
10	Jamaican Woodpecker	<i>Melanerpes radiolatus</i>	▶  7
4	American Kestrel	<i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶  3
1	Peregrine Falcon	<i>Falco peregrinus</i>	▶  1
30	Black-billed Amazon	<i>Amazona agilis</i>	▶  1
34	Yellow-billed Amazon	<i>Amazona collaria</i>	▶  2
12	Olive-throated Parakeet	<i>Eupsittula nana</i>	▶  3
7	Jamaican Becard	<i>Pachyramphus niger</i>	▶  3
4	Jamaican Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis cotta</i>	▶  2

5	Jamaican Pewee	<i>Contopus pallidus</i>	▶  2
3	Sad Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus barbirostris</i>	▶  3
3	Rufous-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus validus</i>	▶  3
3	Stolid Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus stolidus</i>	▶  1
16	Loggerhead Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	▶  6
3	Blue Mountain Vireo	<i>Vireo osburni</i>	▶  1
14	Jamaican Vireo	<i>Vireo modestus</i>	▶  5
1	Yellow-throated Vireo	<i>Vireo flavifrons</i>	▶  1
4	Black-whiskered Vireo	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	▶  1
8	Jamaican Crow	<i>Corvus jamaicensis</i>	▶  1
5	Cave Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon fulva</i>	▶  1
2	Bahama Mockingbird	<i>Mimus gundlachii</i>	▶  1
14	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  6
3	Rufous-throated Solitaire	<i>Myadestes genibarbis</i>	▶  2
7	White-chinned Thrush	<i>Turdus aurantius</i>	▶  6
4	White-eyed Thrush	<i>Turdus jamaicensis</i>	▶  3
14	Jamaican Euphonia	<i>Euphonia jamaica</i>	▶  6
12	Jamaican Spindalis	<i>Spindalis nigricephala</i>	▶  4
12	Jamaican Oriole	<i>Icterus leucopteryx</i>	▶  5
1	Jamaican Blackbird	<i>Nesopsar nigerrimus</i>	▶  1
3	Shiny Cowbird	<i>Molothrus bonariensis</i>	▶  2
4	Great-tailed Grackle	<i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	▶  2
29	Greater Antillean Grackle	<i>Quiscalus niger</i>	▶  5

2	Worm-eating Warbler	<i>Helmitheros vermivorum</i>	▶  2
1	Louisiana Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia motacilla</i>	▶  1
1	Northern Waterthrush	<i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	▶  1
3	Black-and-white Warbler	<i>Mniotilta varia</i>	▶  3
7	Arrowhead Warbler	<i>Setophaga pharetra</i>	▶  2
12	American Redstart	<i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	▶  6
2	Cape May Warbler	<i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	▶  2
10	Northern Parula	<i>Setophaga americana</i>	▶  6
1	Yellow Warbler	<i>Setophaga petechia</i>	▶  1
12	Black-throated Blue Warbler	<i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	▶  7
1	Palm Warbler	<i>Setophaga palmarum</i>	▶  1
1	Yellow-throated Warbler	<i>Setophaga dominica</i>	▶  1
5	Prairie Warbler	<i>Setophaga discolor</i>	▶  4
2	Saffron Finch	<i>Sicalis flaveola</i> *	▶  1
27	Bananaquit	<i>Coereba flaveola</i>	▶  7
7	Yellow-faced Grassquit	<i>Tiaris olivaceus</i>	▶  2
25	Orangequit	<i>Euneornis campestris</i>	▶  5
3	Greater Antillean Bullfinch	<i>Melopyrrha violacea</i>	▶  3
3	Yellow-shouldered Grassquit	<i>Loxipasser anoxanthus</i>	▶  2
19	Black-faced Grassquit	<i>Melanospiza bicolor</i>	▶  4