

Trip Report — Jamaica I 2026

February 27-March 6, 2026 with Cory Gregory & local guide
Dwayne Swaby



The Jamaican Spindalis is a stunner and we got to enjoy many repeated views of this fantastic endemic. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

Why visit Jamaica? Well, this Caribbean nation hosts incredible food, kind people, terrific scenery, and of course an amazing variety of birds. Our short trip there sampled these things and we came away with a much better understanding of the local culture, cuisine, and avifauna, thanks to our wonderful local guide Dwayne and driver Raymond. This trip truly was a delight and I want to thank each of you for signing up and making this tour happen. Down below I'll do a quick rundown on our day-to-day activities.



There is an endemic subspecies of Bahama Mockingbird found only in Jamaica. It was a target of ours on the first morning and, success, we found them! Photo by participant Kathy Calvert.

We got underway from Kingston the first morning and immediately started to head west. We arrived at Hellshire Hills hoping to find a very rare resident there, the Bahama Mockingbird. It wasn't long after we left the bus that Raymond called us back, the mockingbird was singing right in front of the bus! We enjoyed incredible views, through the scopes even, of this endemic subspecies. Shortly after, we found our first Stolid Flycatcher of the trip. We had time for a quick peek at the Portmore Sewage Ponds which

added a number of new species to our list. A flock of Stilt Sandpipers were foraging together, a few yellowlegs joined them, jacanas were seen on the far shore, herons dotted the edges, and even a Least Bittern called for a bit. After this, we ventured to Hope Botanical Gardens to see what we could find there. We were greeted by White-crowned Pigeon, Antillean Palm Swift, Rose-ringed Parakeet, and even the endemic Yellow-billed Amazon sitting nearly at eye level. Nearby flowering trees were attracting incredible numbers of Cape May Warblers and a few Northern Parulas and Black-throated Blue Warblers joined in. After a bit though, it was time for lunch and to head up and over the mountains. Once we arrived at Goblin Hill Villas, we settled in and met for our checklist and a lovely dinner. What a grand first day of birding in Jamaica.



There are a couple of species of thrushes found only in Jamaica. The most common of those is certainly the White-chinned Thrush. These were seen daily including, like this one, in our yard. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

The next morning, we ventured farther east and birded the Ecclesdown Road area, a well-known spot to track down lots of good Jamaican endemic

birds. We spent the morning slowly and systematically birding alongside the quiet roadside and before long, we were greeted by dozens of species of birds. Key endemics that we picked up here included Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, Black-billed Streamertail, Jamaican Tody, Jamaican Woodpecker, Black-billed and Yellow-billed amazons, Jamaican Becard, Sad and Rufous-tailed flycatchers, Arrowhead Warbler, Yellow-shouldered Grassquit, and the list goes on and on. For lunch, we visited a local restaurant and enjoyed a very real and authentic Jamaican jerk lunch. Yum! We took an afternoon siesta to relax but then joined up again before dinner and enjoyed a few more birds on the grounds, like the endemic Ring-tailed Pigeon, White-chinned Thrush, White-eyed Thrush, Jamaican Euphonia, Jamaican Spindalis, and just incredible view of the normally-skulky Yellow-shouldered Grassquit. We enjoyed another delicious dinner before heading back to our villas for the night.



One morning we visited the coast and enjoyed more than a dozen White-tailed Tropicbirds as they wheeled around offshore. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

Today was a big day mostly because it was the day we ventured way up into the Blue Mountains! Although it was an early departure, it was worth it once we arrived, got out into the cool morning air, and started seeing some new specialty birds! Red-billed Streamertails zoomed about, Jamaican Woodpeckers squabbled nearby, and, thankfully, a few Jamaican Blackbirds came through providing us great looks of this rare endemic. A few Arrowhead Warblers, another Jamaican endemic, flitted about, joined by a Jamaican Vireo, many Orangequits, Jamaican Spindalis, and of course the Bananquits. Over the course of the morning, we visited a variety of stops in the Blue Mountains, each one with something worthwhile. Some stops provided us with Jamaican Oriole and Jamaican Tody, others delivered Blue Mountain Vireo, Greater Antillean Bullfinch, and, finally, success with a Crested Quail-Dove! Shortly after, we connected with another one of the toughest Jamaican endemics, the newly-split Blue Mountain Elaenia. Whew! With the blackbird, quail-dove, and Blue Mountain Elaenia in the bag, we were floating pretty high. After lunch at a restaurant up in the mountains, we headed back to Goblin Hill to have a break before dinner. After dinner, however, there was another treat to be had; just outside of the lodge, we found a Northern Potoo sitting on a powerline and even a young Jamaican Owl as it screeched from high up in a tree. Very, very cool.



We did some nightbirding on this trip and one of the goals was to see the odd Northern Potoo. We found this one right outside our lodge! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

The following morning, we rounded out our local experience by visiting another habitat, open ocean alongside a gorgeous seashore! We watched as about 20 White-tailed Tropicbirds spun and wheeled around offshore, showing us the distinctive black in the wings. It was a beautiful scene to soak up. Later that morning we birded some nearby roadsides with a couple of target birds. First, the Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo, but it didn't take long before we had several around us! We watched their antics as they climbed around, running along branches and probing through clusters of vines. We enjoyed other things on this walk too, including a male Jamaican Becard, Jamaican Euphonia, Jamaican Spindalis, and, a cherry on top, a day-roosting Jamaican Owl. Brilliant! After our lunch at Juici Patties, we checked out Errol Flynn Marina and enjoyed seeing more Vervain Hummingbirds, Jamaican Mangos, and Antillean Palm Swifts overhead. We even found a White Ibis here which is a great pick-up and a rare bird here. Finally, we enjoyed a relaxing evening back at Goblin Hill Villas.



The Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo, which is only found in Jamaica, is a large species and is fond of climbing around in treetops looking for prey. Photo by participant Kim Tavernia.

This next day was an important one; it was the day we said goodbye to the Goblin Hill Villas and started moving our group westward. We made a few stops as we went west, such as at the Spanish River Bridge where we added a Yellow-crowned Night-Heron to our growing triplist. Another quick stop in Annotto Bay was highlighted by many Magnificent Frigatebirds actually perched on the pilings (how often do you get to enjoy perched frigatebirds at eye-level?). Meanwhile, Ruddy Turnstones, another new trip bird, in nice colors actually blended in with the rusty metal pilings. After lunch at a nice cafe, we drove into Cockpit Country hoping to find some Jamaican Crows. Well, the crows weren't hard to find at all, there was half a dozen all around us and we even got to hear their odd, gurgling calls. After we departed, we enjoyed seeing some Least Grebes in some roadside ponds and even spotted a Solitary Sandpiper before winding our way into Montego Bay

and checking in at the lovely Mynt, complete with its great staff and amazing host, Valarie. They even put together a lovely dinner inside after a massive rainstorm rolled in.



Our local guide, Dwayne, took us right to the exact spot to see this stunner, a roosting Jamaican Owl. What a great view! Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

And then Thursday rolled around, sadly our final full day of birding. After a lovely home-cooked breakfast on the balcony, we went to Rocklands Bird Sanctuary straight away and enjoyed seeing the Red-billed Streamertails as they fed inches from our faces. Some lucky people even had them land on their fingers while the birds sipped sugar water! Although the trees and local forests had taken a major hit from the hurricane, it was encouraging to see some of the birds returning to the sanctuary. Our next stop, just down the road, was the very birdy Montego Bay Sewage Ponds. It was a great hour of birding as we scoped through all the waterbirds; Ring-necked Ducks, hundreds of dabblers, even a few Lesser Scaup and Ruddy Ducks. But, hands down, the major highlight here was finding eight West Indian

Whistling-Ducks! This is a rare, regional specialty and a great one to end the day on! After returning to the hotel, we said our goodbyes to Raymond and Dwayne and thanked them for all their wonderful insight, top-notch leadership, and excellent driving too. That evening our group enjoyed a gorgeous dinner in the courtyard thanks to Valerie and her staff. The following morning some of us enjoyed a little bit of birding on the balcony before having another lovely breakfast at the Mynt. But before long, it was time to start heading to the airport.



This trip had to have been the best one for seeing the Jamaican endemic Yellow-shouldered Grassquit! We found them at a number of locations and got some really fantastic views. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

Other critters we saw:

Mammals:

Small Indian Mongoose (*Urva auropunctata*) - An introduced and invasive species, seen daily.

Reptiles:

American Crocodile (*Crocodylus acutus*) - A few were seen at the Portmore Sewage Ponds.

Jamaican Giant Anole (*Anolis garmani*) - These were the common, large, all-green anoles we saw many times.

Graham's Anole (*Anolis grahami*) - We photographed this all-dark anole on the fence at the Mynt.

Stripefoot Anole (*Anolis lineatopus*) - Photographed at the Mynt, down in the plant below us.

Dragonflies:

Band-winged Dragonlet (*Erythrodiplax umbrata*) - This dragonfly was seen at Hellshire Hills the first morning.

Butterflies:

Jamaican Mestra (*Mestra dorcas*) - This white butterfly with orange tips was seen in Cockpit Country.

Zebra Longwing (*Heliconius charithonia*) - Distinctive, all yellow-and-black in a striped pattern.

Julia Heliconian (*Dryas iulia*) - Fairly common, big and bright orange.

I want to thank you for joining me on this Caribbean adventure! A huge thanks to Dwayne and Raymond for all their help, Valerie at the Mynt, and also Maria at the Field Guides office for all her expert arrangements. I hope you all made some good memories in Jamaica and I hope to see you again sometime on another Field Guides trip!

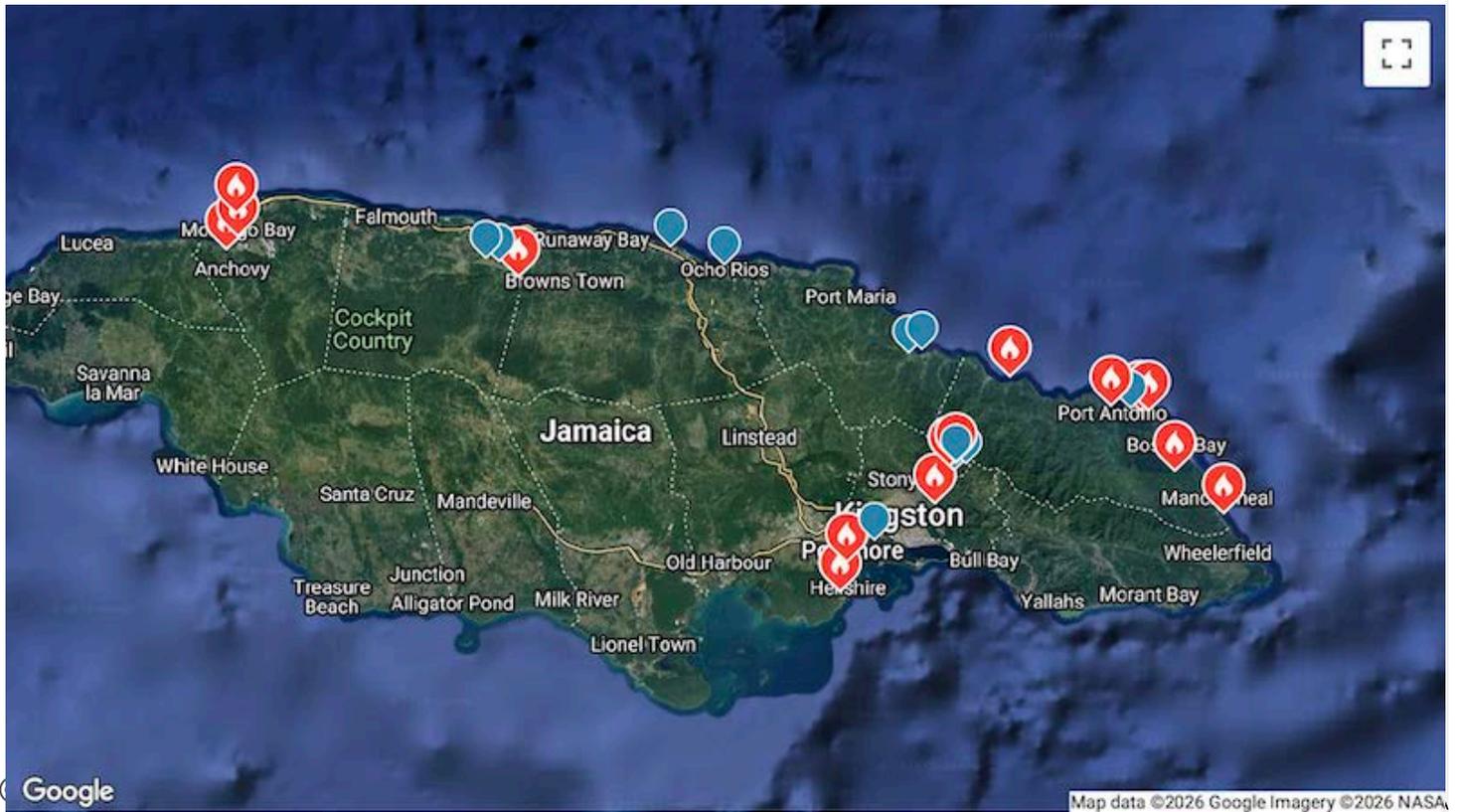
You can see my complete trip report on eBird at this link: <https://ebird.org/tripreport/484226>

-- Cory Gregory (Curlew)

Field Guides Birding Tours -- JAMAICA I, 2026 (with Cory Gregory and local guide Dwayne Swaby)



28 Feb – 6 Mar 2026 (7 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...



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Species Observed

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8	West Indian Whistling-Duck <i>Dendrocygna arborea</i>	 1
115	Blue-winged Teal <i>Spatula discors</i>	 2
300	Northern Shoveler <i>Spatula clypeata</i>	 1
8	Ring-necked Duck <i>Aythya collaris</i>	 1
4	Lesser Scaup <i>Aythya affinis</i>	 1
12	Ruddy Duck <i>Oxyura jamaicensis</i>	 1
13	Rock Pigeon <i>Columba livia</i> *	 3
12	White-crowned Pigeon <i>Patagioenas leucocephala</i>	 6
15	Ring-tailed Pigeon <i>Patagioenas caribaea</i>	 2  7
2	Eurasian Collared-Dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i> *	 1
3	Common Ground Dove <i>Columbina passerina</i>	 2
3	Crested Quail-Dove <i>Geotrygon versicolor</i>	 3
1	Ruddy Quail-Dove <i>Geotrygon montana</i>	 1
9	Caribbean Dove <i>Leptotila jamaicensis</i>	 4
22	White-winged Dove <i>Zenaida asiatica</i>	 10
24	Zenaida Dove <i>Zenaida aurita</i>	 7
3	Mourning Dove <i>Zenaida macroura</i>	 1
26	Smooth-billed Ani <i>Crotophaga ani</i>	 7
4	Chestnut-bellied Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus pluvialis</i>	 1  3
3	Jamaican Lizard-Cuckoo <i>Coccyzus vetula</i>	 2  1

1	Northern Potoo <i>Nyctibius jamaicensis</i>	▶  1  1
18	White-collared Swift <i>Streptoprocne zonaris</i>	▶  1
36	Antillean Palm Swift <i>Tachornis phoenicobia</i>	▶  2  4
8	Jamaican Mango <i>Anthracothorax mango</i>	▶  5
5	Vervain Hummingbird <i>Mellisuga minima</i>	▶  1  4
11	Red-billed Streamertail <i>Trochilus polytmus</i>	▶  1  4
8	Black-billed Streamertail <i>Trochilus scitulus</i>	▶  1  4
26	Common Gallinule <i>Gallinula galeata</i>	▶  6
17	American Coot <i>Fulica americana</i>	▶  1
119	Black-necked Stilt <i>Himantopus mexicanus</i>	▶  2
7	Killdeer <i>Charadrius vociferus</i>	▶  3
2	Northern Jacana <i>Jacana spinosa</i>	▶  1
19	Spotted Sandpiper <i>Actitis macularius</i>	▶  4
1	Solitary Sandpiper <i>Tringa solitaria</i>	▶  1
27	Lesser Yellowlegs <i>Tringa flavipes</i>	▶  3
2	Greater Yellowlegs <i>Tringa melanoleuca</i>	▶  1
8	Ruddy Turnstone <i>Arenaria interpres</i>	▶  1
35	Stilt Sandpiper <i>Calidris himantopus</i>	▶  1
10	Least Sandpiper <i>Calidris minutilla</i>	▶  2
8	Laughing Gull <i>Leucophaeus atricilla</i>	▶  2
22	Royal Tern <i>Thalasseus maximus</i>	▶  2
11	Least Grebe <i>Tachybaptus dominicus</i>	▶  3
1	Pied-billed Grebe <i>Podilymbus podiceps</i>	▶  1
20	White-tailed Tropicbird <i>Phaethon lepturus</i>	▶  1  1

18	Magnificent Frigatebird <i>Fregata magnificens</i>	▶ 📷 4
1	White Ibis <i>Eudocimus albus</i>	▶ 📷 1
14	Glossy Ibis <i>Plegadis falcinellus</i>	▶ 📷 3
1	Least Bittern <i>Botaurus exilis</i>	▶ 📷 1
1	Yellow-crowned Night Heron <i>Nyctanassa violacea</i>	▶ 📷 1
5	Little Blue Heron <i>Egretta caerulea</i>	▶ 📷 3
6	Snowy Egret <i>Egretta thula</i>	▶ 📷 4
5	Green Heron <i>Butorides virescens</i>	▶ 📷 2
66	Western Cattle-Egret <i>Ardea ibis</i>	▶ 📷 7
5	Great Egret <i>Ardea alba</i>	▶ 📷 4
1	Great Blue Heron <i>Ardea herodias</i>	▶ 📷 1
4	Brown Pelican <i>Pelecanus occidentalis</i>	▶ 📷 3
113	Turkey Vulture <i>Cathartes aura</i>	▶ 📷 13
6	Red-tailed Hawk <i>Buteo jamaicensis</i>	▶ 📷 1 📷 5
5	Jamaican Owl <i>Asio grammicus</i>	▶ 📷 2 📷 3
13	Jamaican Tody <i>Todus todus</i>	▶ 📷 1 📷 7
1	Belted Kingfisher <i>Megaceryle alcyon</i>	▶ 📷 1
1	Yellow-bellied Sapsucker <i>Sphyrapicus varius</i>	▶ 📷 1
19	Jamaican Woodpecker <i>Melanerpes radiolatus</i>	▶ 📷 1 📷 10
5	American Kestrel <i>Falco sparverius</i>	▶ 📷 4
2	Merlin <i>Falco columbarius</i>	▶ 📷 2
8	Black-billed Amazon <i>Amazona agilis</i> 🌐	▶ 📷 1 📷 2
26	Yellow-billed Amazon <i>Amazona collaria</i>	▶ 📷 1 📷 4

14	Olive-throated Parakeet	<i>Eupsittula nana</i>	▶  4
3	Jamaican Becard	<i>Pachyrhamphus niger</i>	▶  2  3
3	Jamaican Elaenia	<i>Myiopagis cotta</i>	▶  3
1	Blue Mountain Elaenia	<i>Elaenia fallax</i> 	▶  1  1
2	Jamaican Pewee	<i>Contopus pallidus</i>	▶  1
5	Sad Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus barbirostris</i>	▶  2
9	Rufous-tailed Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus validus</i>	▶  4
3	Stolid Flycatcher	<i>Myiarchus stolidus</i>	▶  2
17	Loggerhead Kingbird	<i>Tyrannus caudifasciatus</i>	▶  10
3	Blue Mountain Vireo	<i>Vireo osburni</i>	▶  1  2
6	Jamaican Vireo	<i>Vireo modestus</i>	▶  4
3	Black-whiskered Vireo	<i>Vireo altiloquus</i>	▶  2
10	Jamaican Crow	<i>Corvus jamaicensis</i>	▶  1  3
3	Barn Swallow	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	▶  1
20	Cave Swallow	<i>Petrochelidon fulva</i>	▶  1
4	European Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> *	▶  2
3	Bahama Mockingbird	<i>Mimus gundlachi</i>	▶  1  1
16	Northern Mockingbird	<i>Mimus polyglottos</i>	▶  7
6	Rufous-throated Solitaire	<i>Myadestes genibarbis</i>	▶  4
28	White-chinned Thrush	<i>Turdus aurantius</i>	▶  2  11
5	White-eyed Thrush	<i>Turdus jamaicensis</i>	▶  4
10	Scaly-breasted Munia	<i>Lonchura punctulata</i> *	▶  1
3	House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i> *	▶  1

9	Jamaican Euphonia <i>Euphonia jamaica</i>	▶  6
22	Jamaican Spindalis <i>Spindalis nigricephala</i>	▶  1  8
13	Jamaican Oriole <i>Icterus leucopteryx</i>	▶  1  7
4	Jamaican Blackbird <i>Nesopsar nigerrimus</i>	▶  2  1
13	Great-tailed Grackle <i>Quiscalus mexicanus</i>	▶  2
78	Greater Antillean Grackle <i>Quiscalus niger</i>	▶  1  9
1	Ovenbird <i>Seiurus aurocapilla</i>	▶  1
3	Worm-eating Warbler <i>Helmitheros vermivorum</i>	▶  3
1	Northern Waterthrush <i>Parkesia noveboracensis</i>	▶  1
10	Black-and-white Warbler <i>Mniotilta varia</i>	▶  6
2	Common Yellowthroat <i>Geothlypis trichas</i>	▶  1
8	Arrowhead Warbler <i>Setophaga pharetra</i>	▶  4
18	American Redstart <i>Setophaga ruticilla</i>	▶  8
22	Cape May Warbler <i>Setophaga tigrina</i>	▶  1  2
20	Northern Parula <i>Setophaga americana</i>	▶  7
9	Black-throated Blue Warbler <i>Setophaga caerulescens</i>	▶  1  7
5	Palm Warbler <i>Setophaga palmarum</i>	▶  2
1	Yellow-throated Warbler <i>Setophaga dominica</i>	▶  1
2	Prairie Warbler <i>Setophaga discolor</i>	▶  2
1	Rose-breasted Grosbeak <i>Pheucticus ludovicianus</i>	▶  1
35	Bananaquit <i>Coereba flaveola</i>	▶  1  13
6	Yellow-faced Grassquit <i>Tiaris olivaceus</i>	▶  1  3
24	Orangequit <i>Euneornis campestris</i>	▶  6

4 **Greater Antillean Bullfinch** *Melopyrrha violacea* ▶ 📄 4

5 **Yellow-shouldered Grassquit** *Loxipasser anoxanthus* ▶ 📄 2 📄 2

12 **Black-faced Grassquit** *Melanospiza bicolor* ▶ 📄 6

EXOTIC: PROVISIONAL

2 **Rose-ringed Parakeet** *Psittacula krameri* 🌸 ▶ 📄 1