



Field Guides Tour Report

Christmas in Oaxaca 2017

Dec 23, 2017 to Dec 30, 2017

Dan Lane & Doug Gochfeld

For our tour description, itinerary, past triplists, dates, fees, and more, please [VISIT OUR TOUR PAGE](#).



The stone work at Mitla was engineered by the Zapotecas to withstand the sporadic earthquakes several hundred years ago, and they were still able to maintain the strong symbolism of the art. Photo by guide Doug Gochfeld.

This year saw the return of the Christmas in Oaxaca tour to the Field Guides schedule, and it was a wonderful return indeed. From the chilly mornings in the ethereal pine forests of Cerro San Felipe, to the thorn scrub that rims the valley around Oaxaca City, and the fantastic centuries old Zapotec ruins, it was a truly memorable week in this fascinating corner of Mexico.

We spent the entire tour based out of our comfortable accommodations at the Hotel Mission de San Antonio, which not only had good food, but provided us with good birding to boot.

Our first day of birding saw us working the area around the town of Teotitlan del Valle, to the east of Oaxaca City. This area is world-renowned for its skilled textile workers, though we wouldn't explore that aspect of their culture quite this early in the tour – there were still so many birds we had yet to see! Birding the road on the way into Teotitlan was rewarding right off the bat, starting with several Mexican endemics, including our only Boucard's Wrens of the tour, which put on quite a show, and our first Gray-breasted Woodpeckers and Dusky Hummingbirds. Blue-black Grassquit, a species we don't usually encounter on the tour, was a surprise here, and we got good looks at several species of sparrow, including Lincoln's, and our only Grasshopper and Vesper sparrows of the week. The reservoir in Teotitlan had a higher-than-normal water level, but we still pulled out a few birds of interest, especially at the stream that feeds it, where we got a phenomenally cooperative Louisiana Waterthrush and our only "Myrtle" Warbler of the week- a familiar sight to the easterners on tour. It was also the start of our week-long barrage of Blue-gray Gnatcatchers. Our first shot at the specialty vireos was successful almost immediately, with the oft-difficult Dwarf Vireo responding quickly and showing well for all. We also got stellar looks at a pair of handsome Bridled Sparrows nearby. We continued working up the hillside, ending in a picnic lunch at the top, but not before picking up some more odds and ends at Rio Verde, including cooperative Rufous-capped Warblers and Blue-throated Hummingbird.

Our next day was our full day birding Cerro San Felipe, starting at Pollo Niño and working our way up to La Cumbre, where we hiked in on the Cabeza de Vaca trail. The misty pine forest, at more than 9,000 feet above sea level, was one of the most beautiful settings of the tour. The vibrant pink and yellow thistle flowers were a welcome (and awe-inspiring) shock of color in the overcast morning, as were native wild tomatoes growing as vines up some of the old growth trees. We also had some great birds here, with Dwarf Jay, the charismatic Gray-barred Wrens, White-eared Hummingbirds and a symphony of singing Mexican Violetears being some of the most unique or memorable. A picnic lunch at Corral de Piedras produced more than just calories, as we got good views of Mountain Trogon and Strong-billed Woodcreeper, our only experiences with both of these species during the tour. It was also a great day for warbler diversity, with eleven species. Dinner was at Asador Vasco, a Basque restaurant on the Zocalo in the center of the city.

Day three began with our farthest flung destination, as we dropped into some more dry coastal habitat of the Pacific slope. Km 77 was one of our most bird-rich mornings of the trip, with one great bird after another in quick succession throughout our couple of hours at the site. Russet-crowned Motmot was our first highlight, but we also had a few very exhibitionist Rufous-naped Wrens, great views of Streak-backed Orioles, repeated great views of spiffy White-lored Gnatcatchers, Green-fronted Hummingbird, both Golden-fronted and Gray-breasted woodpeckers, Thick-billed Kingbird, and a small group of showy White-throated Magpie-Jays. The Magpie-Jays would've been in the running for favorite bird of that morning, but for the appearance and cooperation of a pair of drop-dead gorgeous Orange-breasted Buntings. The male perched in view for a good long while, allowing us to bask in its vivid color palette, and discovering some new shade of brilliant green or blue or orange or yellow each time we took another look in the scope. Then it was off to Rancho Zapata for a demonstration on how they make Mezcal, the trademark liquor of this region, before an ample and delectable lunch. We then continued onto the archaeological sites of Mitla and Yagul, both of which were fascinating from a cultural, architectural, and anthropological perspective, and the latter of which also provided us with a vocal and cooperative Lesser Roadrunner that Dan pulled out of the thorn scrub of the hillside.

The fourth day brought us back to Teotitlan, where we got our third and final endemic vireo of the tour, Slaty Vireo, and also found Sumichrast's Scrub-Jay, West Mexican Chachalaca, Greater Pewee, and a good mix of migrants. Rio Verde and the road above was again good for us, with Chestnut-sided Shrike-Vireo, great views of Chestnut-capped Brushfinch, a very cooperative Slate-throated Redstart, great White-striped Woodcreeper, White-breasted Nuthatch, and a Grace's Warbler. We then went back down into the town, where we were served lunch, and then provided with a demonstration of wool work, by the incomparable Mendoza sisters. Deciding which was better, the food or the textile work, would be a difficult one, but luckily we didn't have to choose!

Our penultimate day of birding dawned as we headed over to the most iconic cultural site in the region: the ruins of Monte Albán, in Oaxaca City. Our primary avian target here was the always difficult Ocellated Thrasher, and we would eventually get it from inside the ruins with the help of Jorge, though it did take attempts in several different places both inside and outside the grounds. Jorge gave a great interpretive tour of the ruins, and our eventual thrasher success happened to occur right under a tree that was loaded with mistletoe and hosted a pair of exceptionally cooperative Elegant Euphonias. Lunch and then a break at the hotel turned into lunch and then birding, since on the way to lunch Dan heard a Blue Mockingbird that we went to track down as a group after we ate. In addition to the mockingbird, we had a couple of cooperative Rufous-backed Robins, and a very inquisitive Golden Vireo—an amazing collection of birds for such a small patch of habitat, in the middle of the city no less. After that, those who chose to spend an afternoon and evening back up at Cerro San Felipe came for an owling jaunt. On the way up a couple of Dwarf Jays showed well, but the real stars of the show (in addition to the picnic dinner and the warm drinks) were a pair of Fulvous Owls, a Flammulated Owl, and a very active Mexican Whip-poor-will, as well as the glowing night's sky which we spent a little time looking at through the scope before the chill wind sent us running for the heat and shelter of the van.

Our final day of birding together took us back up to La Cumbre, but this time we went east along the road to Yuvila. We started out by hearing some Long-tailed Wood-Partridges here, though they were far downslope, and they never got quite close enough for us to see them. One of the major highlights for this morning was being serenaded by the constant tinkling of Brown-backed Solitaires, which have what must be one of the most striking and memorable birdsongs in the entire world. Other highlights here were a great Spot-crowned Woodcreeper at point-blank range, a good pair of Collared Towhees, a boisterous flock of the "Black-eared" Bushtits (candidates for a split, anyone?), the stricklandi subspecies of Red Crossbill, an atypically cooperative Russet Nightingale-Thrush, and close views of a male Crescent-chested Warbler. We then ate lunch at the Colibri restaurant on the other slope of the mountain, where we enjoyed yet more great Oaxacan fare, as well as some exceptionally close Rivoli's Hummingbirds coming to the feeder out front.

Thus wrapped up a stupendously successful holiday week in Oaxaca. From birds, to food, to culture, to landscapes, to more birds, this was a lovely voyage through this exceptionally interesting region. Dan and I were overjoyed to have the privilege of spending our Christmas holiday with such a splendid group. We both sincerely look forward to meeting you in the field again, somewhere on this wonderful planet of ours.

-Doug

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)

BLUE-WINGED TEAL (*Spatula discors*) – We had these on both of our visits to Piedra Azul (The reservoir at Teotitlan).

GREEN-WINGED TEAL (*Anas crecca*) – On our second (brief) visit to Piedra Azul we saw a handful of these around the mudflats.

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – At least one of these was on Piedra Azul on our first morning.

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

WEST MEXICAN CHACHALACA (*Ortalis poliocephala*) – On our second visit to the thorn scrub above Teotitlan we spotted two of these feeding up in a tree on the slope above us, and we got very good scope views, and then they re-located a couple of times. It's especially a trip when you see these hefty birds take flight and lumber through the air.

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

LONG-TAILED WOOD-PARTRIDGE (*Dendrortyx macroura*) – We heard these a couple of times far below us on the road to Yuvila. It's a loud, distinctive and unique vocalization, and it's a good thing we get so much out of hearing it, because we never did lay eyes on them. [*]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – Plenty around Piedra Azul.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Our second visit to Piedra Azul.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Both of our visits to Piedra Azul.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – Our first morning at Piedra Azul produced a couple of these with their yellow slippers. One was even perched on the stone dam itself.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – An adult on the far side of Piedra Azul on our first visit was our only encounter with this species.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Both of our visits to Piedra Azul.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – One of these was trying to blend in to the vegetation on the far side of the mudflats at Piedra Azul on our second visit, but those bright orange legs betrayed its presence.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Encountered only slightly more seldom than the next species on this list.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Abundant. We achieved the daily sweep; we didn't once miss it- hooray!

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – Most folks saw these on the drive on day three.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – Dan and Wilbur saw one of these briefly at Yagul.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – We saw these on five out of our six birding days, and we got to see a tremendous variation in plumage, from all dark birds, to ones with very buffy underparts, to fairly pale ones. The range of variation within the local, largely resident, subspecies seems to account entirely for this variation. One of the more memorable moments of the trip were a mixed pair (dark morph and intermediate pale and buffy morph) of these in the mountains above Teotitlan doing a legs down display with each other right over the road.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Piedra Azul.

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – Piedra Azul on our second visit.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – Over thirty on our first visit to Piedra Azul, fewer on our second.

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – Both visits to Piedra Azul.

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves)

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Present in areas of human habitation.

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – We saw these mountain pigeons on two days in a row, including scope views along the road to Yuvila. [E]

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Most common around the hotel, but a couple at other scattered locations.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – KM 77.

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – The most widespread native dove species in our travels, thought restricted mostly to open areas.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – We had this species on two different days, including our first morning, below Teotitlan.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos)

LESSER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx velox*) – Always one of the big targets on this tour, and also always (due to their unpredictability and unresponsiveness) one of the most difficult species to track down. Dan summoned one of these seemingly out of thin air while Jorge was interpreting the ruins at Yagul for us, and we quickly hotfooted back to Dan, and everyone got great scope views. [E]

Strigidae (Owls)

FLAMMULATED OWL (*Psiloscopus flammeolus*) – An individual high in some pine trees in Cerro San Felipe that was eventually cooperative (in that it perched in plain view while it called its little owl heart out).

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (MOUNTAIN) (*Glaucidium gnoma gnoma*) – Heard only during the Cerro San Felipe owling, and then the next day along the road to Yuvila. They're not usually this difficult to track down. We barely heard them, and didn't get a sniff of any during the day this year. [*]

FULVOUS OWL (*Strix fulvescens*) – During our evening of owling on Cerro San Felipe we were fortunate enough to find a dueting pair of these mysterious strix owls. This species wasn't known to be in this region until only a few years ago, so seeing it here still feels like a novelty, even to those who have been birding the region for many years.

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies)

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antrastomus arizonae*) – Several singing very loudly at at least three locations on Cerro San Felipe during our nocturnal expedition. They are often quite difficult to get a visual on, but we eventually had reasonable looks of a bird repeatedly flying over our heads at our very last stop.

Apodidae (Swifts)

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – We had a handful of these flying around high overhead while we were birding the mountain above Teotitlan on our very first morning. Some of them were exceptionally high, but most folks got to see these aerial masters as they flew around in the company of the less dynamic Violet-green Swallows.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds)

MEXICAN VIOLETEAR (*Colibri thalassinus*) – We had these in several places in the different mountain roads that we birded, but the most memorable experience was along the Cabeza de Vaca trail above La Cumbre, where we had a symphony of half a dozen of them surrounding us. The entire ambiance of that setting was truly an A-plus experience. [I]

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – This was one of the new species created when Magnificent Hummingbird was split. We had a couple of views here and there in the higher elevation forests, but then we really cleaned up our views with point blank views of at least one male repeatedly visiting the feeders in front of the Colibri restaurant.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Our best views of this species were around Rio Verde above Teotitlan, where they perched long enough for scope views for everybody multiple times. We also had them at a few other places, including feeding at the gorgeous thistles along the Cabeza de Vaca trail.

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – These migrants from the eastern US were encountered at low elevations in a couple of places, with our best views coming at Monte Albán.

DUSKY HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus sordidus*) – A Mexican endemic that we got great view after great of on this tour. This species inhabits the lower lying, more arid, areas of the valley, and we saw it so well so many times, that it's hard to figure out just where our "best" views" were! [E]

BERYLLINE HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia beryllina*) – Fairly common at the lower elevations, including around the hotel.

GREEN-FRONTED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia viridifrons*) – We got some brief views of this specialty at the km 77 site, though it didn't stick around for too long during each observation. [E]

WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – Common at the upper elevation forests, and an absolutely stunning bird!

Trogonidae (Trogons)

MOUNTAIN TROGON (*Trogon mexicanus*) – These were on site as we arrived at the Corral de Piedras for lunch on our first trip to Cerro San Felipe. A male and female flew a large circle around us, and we got good scope views of the female, though the male wasn't as much of a show off.

Momotidae (Motmots)

RUSSET-CROWNED MOTMOT (*Momotus mexicanus*) – We got this almost immediately upon our arrival at the km 77 site. This part of the canyon was still in shadow while we were watching this guy, but that may have been to our benefit, as it sat up on a fairly exposed perch for a while, and we were able to view it at our leisure through the scope.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers)

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – Dan pulled out a well camouflaged one on the other side of the reservoir at Piedra Azul on our first morning.

Picidae (Woodpeckers)

GRAY-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes hypopolius*) – An elegant looking melanerpes of the lower, dryer areas, that likes perching up conspicuously on cacti. With good scope views you could even see the rosy blush on its grayish cheeks, and we had several encounters where we could see that. [E]

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (WEST MEXICO) (*Melanerpes aurifrons polygrammus*) – We had these at km 77, where they share the space with their Gray-breasted Woodpecker congeners.

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Scattered around the low elevation and foothill areas.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (SOUTH MEXICAN) (*Picoides villosus jardinii*) – We heard these on our first visit to Cerro San Felipe, but we never did track it down. [*]

NORTHERN FLICKER (RED-SHAFTED) (*Colaptes auratus mexicanus*) – We heard it on our first visit to La Cumbre, but then saw it on the final day there, along the road to Yuvila.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras)

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – We had a few here and there in the lowlands, and one flew by while we were eating at Rancho Zapata.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – A couple in the lower elevations of the valley.

MERLIN (*Falco columbarius*) – We had one shoot by while we were at the reservoir on our first morning, and then a while later we had what was likely the same individual perched up in a tree much to the alarm of a couple of Tropical Kingbirds.

PEREGRINE FALCON (*Falco peregrinus*) – Circling over one of the ridges at km 77.

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers)

STRONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus sclateri*) – What a schnozz on this one! We got really good views of this aptly-named species at Corral de Piedras.

WHITE-STRIPED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes leucogaster*) – We got great views of one of these on the road above Teotitlan.

SPOT-CROWNED WOODCREEPER (NORTHERN) (*Lepidocolaptes affinis affinis*) – A good experience with this woodcreeper which is restricted to low densities in high elevation forests along the road to Yuvila. [E]

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers)

GREENISH ELAENIA (*Myiopagis viridicata*) – Heard by Dan and a few others around the Scrub-Jay area of the thorn-scrub above Teotitlan. [*]

TUFTED FLYCATCHER (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) – We heard this a few times in various locations, including above Teotitlan, but somehow never connected visually. [*]

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – Good views of a bird perched just above eye level in the thorn-scrub above Teotitlan.

LEAST FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax minimus*) – Common at km. 77.

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – The common empidonax in the highlands.

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Monte Albán supplied us with good views of a couple of these.

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – One perching in a fence along the road to Yuvila on our last full birding day.

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Around Piedra Azul.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – Best views were males right outside some of the hotel rooms in Oaxaca City!

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – We had one of these down in the arid stuff on km. 77, which was mildly surprising.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – Widespread in lower elevation dry habitats.

NUTTING'S FLYCATCHER (NUTTING'S) (*Myiarchus nuttingi inquietus*) – The most common *Myiarchus* flycatcher on our tour, especially common around the lower slopes above Teotitlan, but also a bunch at km. 77.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Fairly widespread lower down.

SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (SOCIAL) (*Myiozetetes similis pallidiventris*) – We had a couple of these perched along the entrance road into Yagul.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Several around the hotel, and also at Yagul and along the entrance road towards Teotitlan the first morning.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – Abundant in the dryer stuff, it was one of our first birds of the tour, with several perched over the vans at our first stop. [E]

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – Good views at km. 77, and then heard only on a couple of other occasions.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – Our best views of these were at Monte Albán.

Vireonidae (Vireos, Shrike-Babblers, and Erpornis)

CHESTNUT-SIDED SHRIKE-VIREO (*Vireolanius melitophrys*) – What a striking bird! We caught up with this sharp looker along the road in the mountains well above Teotitlan, and got scope views of a singing individual to boot! [E]

GOLDEN VIREO (*Vireo hypochryseus*) – An exceptional tour for this bold and often difficult to find endemic! We saw this species on five occasions, and very well twice: at Pollo Niño and at the hotel grounds! [E]

SLATY VIREO (*Vireo brevipennis*) – Our final of the three big endemic vireos, we picked up this handsome vireo (perhaps the handsomest of the vireos?) in the thorn-scrub above Teotitlan. You gotta love that pale eye!

DWARF VIREO (*Vireo nelsoni*) – This teeny guy was the very first of the trio of endemic vireos that we found, and it was on our very first try! It gave some really excellent views, relative to what the species usually does, on the road above Teotitlan.

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – Foraging in the subcanopy at Rio Verde on our first day. [E]

CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – Several of these at km. 77.

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*) – We had this species on our second day, when we headed up to Cerro San Felipe.

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – Km. 77 and then in the forest above Teotitlan.

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

DWARF JAY (*Cyanolyca nanus*) – We found this sought after endemic twice, the first time along the Cabeza de Vaca trail on our first visit to La Cumbre. Then, those that came on the owl excursion got to see it with less mist and fog on that late afternoon before our picnic dinner. [E]

WHITE-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY (*Calocitta formosa*) – A great last second acquisition on our walk at km 77. Just as we were trying around at the end of the wash, these gaudy jays started vocalizing and they eventually escorted us all the way back to the vans. We even saw a couple of them cavorting actively, to what end we couldn't begin to guess, on top of cactuses before we left. [E]

STELLER'S JAY (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Cyanocitta stelleri coronata*) – We ran into these charismatic and vocal jays at the higher elevations of our exploits, both above Teotitlan and at La Cumbre. the ones here have much more extensive blue on the head than the ones we see up north in the USA. [E]

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (SUMICHRAST'S) (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii sumichrasti*) – Good scope views of this Scrub-Jay, which is ripe for the splitting, the second time we birded the road above Teotitlan. If split, the new species name would likely become Sumichrast's Jay or Sumichrast's Scrub-Jay.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – We heard these croaking above us over the forest near El Ojo de Agua, on the ridgetop above Teotitlan, but we didn't see them through the trees. [*]

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – Both visits to Piedra Azul and then at Monte Albán.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – The most memorable experiences with this species were the swarm of a couple of hundred high up over the mountain road above Teotitlan, and the strong morning movement over Monte Albán.

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – We picked a couple of these up on each of our three visits to the high elevation forest near La Cumbre.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (MELANOTIS GROUP) (*Psaltriparus minimus melanotis*) – What a cool looking Bushtit! Very distinctive from the one we see in the states, and perhaps a candidate for a future split some time in the future.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis mexicana*) – We picked this up in the mixed flock that also contained Grace's Warbler and White-striped Woodcreeper on our second trip up the mountain above Teotitlan.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA) (*Certhia americana alticola*) – We had really good looks at these adorable little climbers on both of the first two days, and then heard it after that.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – On our first morning at Piedra Azul.

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – Heard only at several places, but usually quite far away. [*]

HOUSE WREN (NORTHERN) (*Troglodytes aedon parkmanii*) – Heard during our first morning at Piedra Azul [*]

HOUSE WREN (BROWN-THROATED) (*Troglodytes aedon brunneicollis*) – We had good looks at this taxon on our first day of birding, above Teotitlan, way up high on the mountain, and then heard it again the next day at Le Cumbre.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – Heard in several places and finally seen above Teotitlan.

GRAY-BARRED WREN (*Campylorhynchus megalopterus*) – These excitable and charismatic wrens are atypical in North America in that they're actual canopy-dwelling wrens. We were keeping an eye out for them as they are often flock leaders of medium and large bird flocks that can have Dwarf Jay in them. We picked these up on at least four different days to high elevation forest, including 14 (!!) together along the road on the way up to our picnic dinner and owl excursion on Cerro San Felipe (and those fourteen were indeed in the company of multiple Dwarf Jays).

RUFOUS-NAPED WREN (SCLATER'S) (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha humilis*) – Some exceptionally brazen individuals at km 77 put on a great show, mostly on top of some Saguaro cacti right in front of us. We were somehow able to pry our eyes away from the Orange-breasted Bunting for a bit to watch these wrens do their wren thing.

BOUCARD'S WREN (*Campylorhynchus jocosus*) – A specialty of the low desert areas around Oaxaca, this is very reminiscent of Cactus Wren, and it was one of our very first endemics of the tour, on morning #1. [E]

GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Henicorhina leucophrys festiva*) – Some truly exceptional looks at this typically very shy and skulky wren with a big bold voice. Often you just hear their absurdly loud and distinctive voice, but won't don't see them well, no matter

how close you are. This time, after playing with a bird that acted like a shadow darting back and forth just off the trail, we serendipitously encountered one which apparently hadn't been informed that it was supposed to play hard to get.

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila caerulea*) – Abundant just about everywhere we went.

WHITE-LORED GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila albiloris*) – We got to see these handsome gnatcatchers that are restricted to southern Mexico and northern Central America on our morning at km 77, where they were actually fairly common. Even cooler, we often got to study them side-by-side with Blue-gray Gnatcatcher.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

GOLDEN-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus satrapa*) – Dawn saw and described one of these very well on our first morning at Cerro San Felipe, and because of that we were able to target it and eventually get good looks for everybody of this low density winter inhabitant of the high pine forest of the region. [E]

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – Kinglets, and kinglets, and kinglets, oh my. Quite common at the higher elevations with more greenery.

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

BROWN-BACKED SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes occidentalis*) – This must have one of the best songs of any species in the entire world, and a symphony of them serenaded us wonderfully on our final day along the road to Yuvila.

ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus aurantiirostris*) – These skulky buggers were seen by a few folks at Pollo Niño and heard in a couple of other places, which is pretty par for the course for this species.

RUSSET NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus occidentalis*) – Like the last species, it's often very difficult to get looks at, despite hearing them here and there. However, we had one feeding in a fruiting tree along the road to Yuvila on the final morning.

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*) – Great looks at the hotel.

RUFOUS-BACKED ROBIN (*Turdus rufopalliatus*) – Also great looks at the hotel.

AMERICAN ROBIN (MIGRATORIUS GROUP) (*Turdus migratorius phillipsi*) – A couple among the fruiting trees along the road to Yuvila on our final day. [E]

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

BLUE MOCKINGBIRD (*Melanotis caerulescens*) – We struggled for this species, hearing it a couple of times before finally getting excellent views of a bird that Dan found on the way to lunch at the hotel one afternoon. Then, because when it rains it pours, we had another good look at one the next morning at Pollo Niño.

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (CURVIROSTRE GROUP) (*Toxostoma curvirostre curvirostre*) – The lowlands below Teotitlan, and then again at km. 77. [E]

OCELLATED THRASHER (*Toxostoma ocellatum*) – A real bugger at this time of year, we finally pulled one out for scope views at Monte Albán, and it sat in its vine tangle for quite some time.

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – On day one and then again at km. 77.

Ptiliogonatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER (*Ptiliogonys cinereus*) – We encountered these sleek birds many times over the course of the trip, often first detected by their light chirps raining down over us from on high as they flew over in mixed flocks.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – We got at least one of these on day two, at Cerro San Felipe.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – On our first morning, just above Piedra Azul, we had an exceptionally cooperative one of these guys, even singing at one point! [I]

BLACK-AND-WHITE WARBLER (*Mniotilta varia*) – Seen in several spots along the way, on three different days.

CRESCENT-CHESTED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis superciliosa*) – We saw this species briefly on two different occasions, both times at Cerro San Felipe.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – A few folks saw one of these on the road above Teotitlan on our second day of birding that location.

NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Seen in several places, including above Teotitlan and at km. 77.

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – Really good looks for all at km. 77. [E]

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – We heard this chipping and saw it briefly skulking across the road at Pollo Niño, but nobody ever got it in binoculars. [*]

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE) (*Setophaga coronata coronata*) – One of these the first morning just above Piedra Azul was interesting, and it could perhaps have some hybrid/intergrade ancestry between Myrtle and Audubon's, though it mostly resembled a pure Myrtle Warbler.

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – Very widespread and fairly common, especially around the hotel grounds.

GRACE'S WARBLER (*Setophaga graciae*) – A low density winterer in this part of the world, we found one of these in a mixed flock of warblers above Teotitlan on day four.

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – We had this species on day two (at Pollo Niño), and then again on day four when we birded the road above Teotitlan and Piedra Azul.

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – Fairly common.

HERMIT WARBLER (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – We encountered reasonable numbers of these high elevation conifer lovers at all of our birding stops in montane conifer habitat.

RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (RUFIFRONS GROUP) (*Basileuterus rufifrons rufifrons*) – We had several of these on a couple of days, the first of which was at Rio Verde above Teotitlan on day one.

GOLDEN-BROWED WARBLER (*Basileuterus belli*) – An absolutely stunning warbler, and perhaps the best looking basileuterus around. We got great looks at them on Cerro San Felipe, and then again on the final day as well.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – Common. Their calls were a constant backdrop during our birding. [E]

RED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubra*) – An absolute stunner of a bird, and one of the gaudiest draws in this region full of showy birds.

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – Fairly common from mid-elevations up, we got some great looks at this species whose breeding range makes it all the way into the southwest US.

SLATE-THROATED REDSTART (*Myioborus miniatus miniatus*) – Really great looks at a couple of these elegant redstarts on different days in the foothills and mountains.

Thraupidae (Tanagers and Allies)

BLUE-BLACK GRASSQUIT (*Volatinia jacarina*) – A surprise in the dry habitat just on the outskirts of Teotitlan on our first morning birding, it was Dan's first in the valley, though they are apparently scattered around in less productive habitats which we don't usually bird on the tour.

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows)

BRIDLED SPARROW (*Peucaea mystacalis*) – One of the most stunning sparrows in all the land. Great views on the road above Teotitlan on our first day.

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – Good views on the first morning.

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – On the road above Teotitlan on day four. [E]

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – The first morning, fairly early on, and then very good views at Yagul as well.

CHESTNUT-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH (CHESTNUT-CAPPED) (*Arremon brunneinucha suttoni*) – On both day 2 and day 4, at Cerro San Felipe and along the road above Piedra Azul. It's a Collared Towhee lookalike, but the behaviors of the two species are much different! [E]

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Up high in the vicinity of Cabeza de Vaca on day two.

VESPER SPARROW (*Pooecetes gramineus*) – We got one of these perching out quite nicely at our very first stop on our very first morning.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – A couple of times, and actually seen quite well on day one. [E]

WHITE-THROATED TOWHEE (*Melospiza albicollis*) – This endemic (the first endemic species which we tallied on tour) was fairly common in dry habitats.

RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Day four on the road above Teotitlan.

OAXACA SPARROW (*Aimophila notosticta*) – We had really good views of a couple of these striking and often skulky endemics right off the bat upon our arrival at Pollo Niño on day two! [E]

COLLARED TOWHEE (*Pipilo ocai*) – Seen on three different days, with the best views being along Cabeza de Vaca and then along the road to Yuvila. [E]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC TANAGER (NORTHERN) (*Piranga flava hepatica*) – Days two and four, at Pollo Niño and in the thornscrub along the road above Teotitlan.

SUMMER TANAGER (*Piranga rubra*) – Seen by some and heard by all on day one.

WESTERN TANAGER (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Several encounters, including around Teotitlan, at Monte Albán, and at km. 77.

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – A couple of these scattered around between Cerro San Felipe and the road above Teotitlan.

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – Great looks at one on our first morning of birding.

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – Both of our trips above Teotitlan, including a big flock of over 15 individuals, and at km. 77.

ORANGE-BREASTED BUNTING (*Passerina leclancherii*) – Certainly one of the most stunning birds of the entire trip, and one that you are never guaranteed to see. The different shades of vibrant yellows, oranges, blues, and greens left an impression in everyone's minds and retinas that is unlikely to go away any time soon.

VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – We had a cooperative female at km. 77.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

BLACK-VENTED ORIOLE (*Icterus wagleri*) – Fairly common at the lower elevations and in the foothills. Some really nice views of this one.

HOODED ORIOLE (*Icterus cucullatus*) – A couple of non-adult male individuals on our second trip up "vireo alley" above Teotitlan.

STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE (*Icterus pustulatus*) – Spectacular views at km. 77.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – Seen on four days, including feeding on a flowering tree in a valley below us on our second trip up the road above Teotitlan.

SCOTT'S ORIOLE (*Icterus parisorum*) – Two individuals at Monte Albán were a great way to round out of oriole list for the tour.

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Dan's van got to see some of these while driving on day three.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Common around the city, mostly while driving to and fro.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

ELEGANT EUPHONIA (*Euphonia elegantissima*) – Simply fabulous views of this species on two occasions- at Pollo Niño and then at Monte Albán. This is a mistletoe specialist, and we found some bunches of mistletoe that these individuals were going to town on. The ones at Monte Albán were especially cool, and many run-of-the-mill temple tourists ended up stopping and gawking up into the tree where we were looking to try and take part in whatever secret thing we were admiring.

HOUSE FINCH (COMMON) (*Haemorhous mexicanus roseipectus*) – These House Finches don't look like your momma's House Finches. The vibrant red males down here often throw people, and are often mistaken for some other unknown bird!

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra stricklandi*) – We got a male to cooperate very well at the open area along the road to Yuvila.

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Our days along the road above Teotitlan.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – We saw these on the first day in Teotitlan, and then happily managed to essentially miss it the rest of the time.

MAMMALS

MEXICAN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus aureogaster*) – Most of these were seen around the hotel, though a couple were spotted while we were driving as well.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 170 bird taxa and 1 mammal taxa