



Field Guides Tour Report

Mexico: Oaxaca II 2018

Mar 17, 2018 to Mar 24, 2018

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



Overlooking the Oaxaca Valley is the breathtaking vista of Monte Albán, a view that has endured for 2500 years. This tour, along with seeing a fun array of birds, visited several human history sites that gave us lasting memories. Photo by guide Cory Gregory.

It was a luxury getting to explore the birds and human history sites from the convenience of one hotel but that's exactly what this Oaxaca tour is all about. We were surrounded by good food, fun people, lots of birds, and the thunderstorms even stayed away yielding relatively pleasant weather.

We started out by exploring the waterbirds at Presa Piedra Azul, the reservoir that was dominated by Least Grebes and a variety of herons, while the shoreline was abuzz with Killdeer, Spotted Sandpipers, and a few American Pipits. Nearby, we got our first taste of Bridled Sparrows, Black-vented Orioles, and other dry-country species. Farther up the slopes above Teotitlán, we visited the switchbacks known as El Jilguero and Rio Verde where we added specialties like Mountain Trogon, Blue Mockingbird, and a fabulous Northern Pygmy-Owl that swooped in and gave us extended looks!

On our second day, we ventured uphill to Cerro San Felipe stopping at Pollo Nino en route scoring us several Mexican endemics such as Red-headed Tanager, Golden Vireo, and Oaxaca Sparrow. Higher up, we entered the pine forests where, after lunch, we found a magical flock of birds including the range-restricted Dwarf Jay, Gray-barred Wren, and, believe it or not, a pair of Long-tailed Wood-Partridge!

We changed up the scenery again for our third day and went downslope, towards the coast, where we birded up a dry wash yielding a wide range of new species. We found ourselves face-to-face with some gaudy specialties like Russet-crowned Motmot, Orange-breasted Bunting, and White-throated Magpie-Jay! We added to our success by even finding a Lesser Roadrunner before lunch. Jorge gave a great tour at Mitla in the afternoon and we followed that up by a quick visit to Yagul.

One of the benefits of this tour is that we're able to revisit some locations and we did just that for our fourth day. We returned to the hillsides above Teotitlán where we had success digging up a sneaky Ocellated Thrasher, a couple of West Mexican Chachalacas, and a relatively tame Dwarf Vireo. Higher yet, we enjoyed a couple of quick White-throated Thrushes and an attractive Red-faced Warbler before having lunch at the Mendoza sisters' restaurant in Teotitlán. It was a treat having an in-depth demonstration of the dying and weaving process in addition to a traditional lunch! After lunch, we enjoyed a cute, walk-around tour by a young guide at the Tule Tree and an almost-inclusive group photo.

The amazing ruins of Monte Albán awaited us the following morning where Jorge gave us another a great tour. The birding at the ruins was great too and we added Pileated Flycatcher, a couple of migrating Swainson's Hawks, and a very sneaky Slaty Vireo. That afternoon and evening, we returned to the higher elevations of Cerro San Felipe and, although the wind kept birds quiet, we did finally add the little-known Strong-billed Woodcreeper.

Our final day we ventured back up to La Cumbre and birded the Yuvila Road which, although chilly in the breeze, still yielded nice looks at a Short-tailed Hawk, more Gray-barred Wrens, a sneaky MacGillivray's Warbler, good looks at Spot-crowned Woodcreeper, and a couple of Russet Nightingale-

Thrushes. Lunch at the Colibri Cafe was pleasant, especially with the Blue-throated Hummingbirds visiting the patio!

All in all, Yuca and I had a great time with you all and we want to thank each of you for joining us in Oaxaca and for making it such a fun trip. Thanks also to Jorge and Alex for their safe driving, and especially Jorge for his excellent tours at Monte Albán and Mitla. Thanks also to Sharon in Austin who managed this trip and who had everything under control before we even started. We hope to see you on another Field Guides trip in the future and, until then, good birding!

-Cory

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*) – This wintering dabbling duck species was found on Presa Piedra Azul both times we stopped there. [b]

RUDDY DUCK (*Oxyura jamaicensis*) – A few of these were also present on Presa Piedra Azul during our first visit there. [b]

Cracidae (Guans, Chachalacas, and Curassows)

WEST MEXICAN CHACHALACA (*Ortalis poliocephala*) – A good spot by Carla! We got to watch a couple of these endemics as they perched up on some bare branches on a hillside above Teotitlán. [E]

Odontophoridae (New World Quail)

LONG-TAILED WOOD-PARTRIDGE (*Dendrortyx macroura*) – Birding often comes down to chance and this sighting is a good example! We were birding along the road on Cerro San Felipe when a pair of these crossed right in front of us! After they were out of view, we got to hear their deafening songs as well. [E]

Podicipedidae (Grebes)

LEAST GREBE (*Tachybaptus dominicus*) – They weren't last but they were Least! This diminutive grebe was common on Presa Piedra Azul on both of our visits.

Ardeidae (Herons, Egrets, and Bitterns)

GREAT BLUE HERON (*Ardea herodias*) – Our second visit to Presa Piedra Azul netted us this familiar heron.

GREAT EGRET (*Ardea alba*) – Another familiar heron, one or two of these were hanging out at Presa Piedra Azul.

SNOWY EGRET (*Egretta thula*) – This slender and yellow-footed egret was standing on the cement wall at Presa Piedra Azul.

LITTLE BLUE HERON (*Egretta caerulea*) – A relatively rare bird in the Oaxaca valley, one of these was at Presa Piedra Azul on our first visit but was missing on our second visit.

CATTLE EGRET (*Bubulcus ibis*) – Seen at Presa Piedra Azul on both of our visits.

GREEN HERON (*Butorides virescens*) – Our second visit to Presa Piedra Azul netted us this small and unobtrusive heron.

Cathartidae (New World Vultures)

BLACK VULTURE (*Coragyps atratus*) – Seen on most of our days.

TURKEY VULTURE (*Cathartes aura*) – Common and widespread, this familiar species was spotted every day.

Accipitridae (Hawks, Eagles, and Kites)

WHITE-TAILED KITE (*Elanus leucurus*) – One of these graceful raptors was seen from the highway as we drove by. Unfortunately, not everyone got a glimpse.

NORTHERN HARRIER (*Circus hudsonius*) – This migrant can be missed on this tour but somehow we managed to scrounge up a couple of sightings starting with a high, migrating male we spotted on our first morning. [b]

SHARP-SHINNED HAWK (*Accipiter striatus*) – One of these small raptors was seen soaring in broad circles over the hillsides above Teotitlán.

COOPER'S HAWK (*Accipiter cooperii*) – Our first sighting was a quick, flying-away bird on the hillsides above Teotitlán. We found a second at Monte Albán a couple of days later.

WHITE-TAILED HAWK (*Geranoaetus albicaudatus*) – Sometimes missed on this tour, we barely squeaked out one of these during our visit to Monte Albán. Still, it didn't hang around for long and not everyone was on the scene to witness it.

SHORT-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo brachyurus*) – We had a beautiful, dark-morph fly over during our last morning of birding on the Yuvila Road.

SWAINSON'S HAWK (*Buteo swainsoni*) – Having this tour run a little later than usual gave us the benefit of seeing some migrants that we don't usually see. We saw several of these buteos high over Monte Albán, heading north. [b]

ZONE-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo albonotatus*) – We crossed paths with two of these interesting raptors including one at Monte Albán and another above the Yuvila Road.

RED-TAILED HAWK (*Buteo jamaicensis*) – Fairly common on this tour, they were seen on most of our days.

Rallidae (Rails, Gallinules, and Coots)

AMERICAN COOT (*Fulica americana*) – Presa Piedra Azul yielded a few of these winter residents. [b]

Charadriidae (Plovers and Lapwings)

KILLDEER (*Charadrius vociferus*) – A few of these plovers were seen running along the shoreline of Presa Piedra Azul on both of our visits.

Scolopacidae (Sandpipers and Allies)

LEAST SANDPIPER (*Calidris minutilla*) – This tiny shorebird was seen on the shores of Presa Piedra Azul. In fact, this is the smallest shorebird species in the world. [b]

SPOTTED SANDPIPER (*Actitis macularius*) – Several were seen running, and bobbing their rears, on the shores of Presa Piedra Azul. [b]

Columbidae (Pigeons and Doves).

ROCK PIGEON (*Columba livia*) – Widespread in urban areas. [H]

BAND-TAILED PIGEON (*Patagioenas fasciata*) – A small flock rocketed overhead as we were birding the hillsides above Teotitlán.

INCA DOVE (*Columbina inca*) – Fairly common in dry and urban habitats including on the grounds of our hotel.

COMMON GROUND-DOVE (*Columbina passerina*) – Although never as common as the previous species, a few were spotted at Monte Albán.

WHITE-TIPPED DOVE (*Leptotila verreauxi*) – A quick glimpse at KM 77 was all that we saw. However, we heard them several more times (they sound like someone blowing over a bottle).

WHITE-WINGED DOVE (*Zenaida asiatica*) – Common and widespread in many habitats, they were tallied every day.

MOURNING DOVE (*Zenaida macroura*) – Not as abundant as the previous species. Still, we managed looks at the first stop on our first day below Teotitlán.

Cuculidae (Cuckoos).

LESSER ROADRUNNER (*Geococcyx velox*) – Success! After the front van had looks at one running on the road at the Microondas, we filed out and waited for it to reappear. A few minutes later we spotted it perched up in a bush and we all ended up with great looks!

Strigidae (Owls).

NORTHERN PYGMY-OWL (MOUNTAIN) (*Glaucidium gnoma gnoma*) – We were birding along the road at Rio Verde when one of these swooped in and landed right in front of us! We all enjoyed it at length before we went on our way (walk-away looks!).

Caprimulgidae (Nightjars and Allies).

MEXICAN WHIP-POOR-WILL (*Antristomus arizonae*) – A few of these were heard near our picnic dinner spot up on Cerro San Felipe. [*]

Apodidae (Swifts).

SWIFT SP. (*Cypseloides* sp.) – Swifts can be a real challenge to ID on the fly! Although now-analyzed photos show that they were not Chimney or Vaux's swifts, we think they were either Chestnut-collared, White-chinned, or White-fronted. Unfortunately, with the height that they were foraging at, we may never know for certain.

WHITE-THROATED SWIFT (*Aeronautes saxatalis*) – A couple of folks glimpsed this sleek swift high over the hills above Teotitlán.

Trochilidae (Hummingbirds).

MEXICAN VIOLETEAR (*Colibri thalassinus*) – These were never easy to see although some folks got a glimpse at Rio Verde and then again at the Colibri Cafe during our final lunch. This species was a result of "Green Violetear" being split into two species: Mexican Violetear and Lesser Violetear. The latter is found farther south.

RIVOLI'S HUMMINGBIRD (*Eugenes fulgens*) – The paltry flower banks made it difficult to find this big hummer. We eventually saw one once or twice but it was always quick. Recently, "Magnificent Hummingbird" was split into two different species: Rivoli's Hummingbird, which is found from the US south to Nicaragua, and the Talamanca Hummingbird, which is found in Costa Rica and Panama.

BLUE-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Lampornis clemenciae*) – Our entertainment at lunch on our final day (at the well-named Colibri Cafe) came in the form of this big hummer that made repeated visits to the feeders. The big, white, corners to the tail is a good fieldmark.

BEAUTIFUL HUMMINGBIRD (*Calothorax pulcher*) – Only a few lucky folks got a glimpse of this small hummingbird near the ruins at Yagul. Unfortunately, most of us only saw it in flight as it zipped by. [E]

RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRD (*Archilochus colubris*) – Feeding on flowers in the wash at KM 77. Although we initially thought this might be a Black-chinned, I think it's more likely that it was a dull Ruby-throated migrating through. [b]

DUSKY HUMMINGBIRD (*Cynanthus sordidus*) – This drab but endemic hummer was often the most common hummingbird on tour. In fact, a number of these were at home on the hotel grounds. [E]

BERYLLINE HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia beryllina*) – This is another hummer that we eventually saw on the hotel grounds. Not quite endemic to Mexico, it's found south into Guatemala, El Salvador, and Honduras.

GREEN-FRONTED HUMMINGBIRD (*Amazilia viridifrons*) – A few of these white-breasted hummers were seen as we birded the dry wash at KM 77 downslope from Oaxaca. Not quite endemic to Mexico, they barely extend into Guatemala.

WHITE-EARED HUMMINGBIRD (*Hylocharis leucotis*) – Although they were fairly common at higher elevations, they didn't often sit still for us. We eventually caught up to one as it foraged upslope from us on Cerro San Felipe.

Trogonidae (Trogons).

MOUNTAIN TROGON (*Trogon mexicanus*) – We found a few but they seemed to be pretty wary! Our first one was at the El Jilguero corner above Teotitlán and then we heard more at Cerro San Felipe a couple of times.

Momotidae (Motmots).

RUSSET-CROWNED MOTMOT (*Momotus mexicanus*) – What a gorgeous bird! We had great luck with these in the KM 77 wash. This species of motmot is found only along the western edge of Mexico and a tiny bit in Guatemala.

Alcedinidae (Kingfishers).

BELTED KINGFISHER (*Megasceryle alcyon*) – Our first visit to Presa Piedra Azul yielded one of these migrant kingfishers. [b]

GREEN KINGFISHER (*Chloroceryle americana*) – We stopped at Presa Piedra Azul a 2nd time and it's a good thing we did; we snagged this tropical kingfisher in the process.

Picidae (Woodpeckers).

ACORN WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes formicivorus*) – If you're from the western US, this might be a familiar woodpecker for you. We found several as we birded the slopes above Teotitlán on our first day.

GRAY-BREASTED WOODPECKER (*Melanerpes hypopolius*) – A range-restricted endemic, this specialty materialized at our first birding stop on our first morning! They liked the dry, lower elevations with cacti and scrub. [E]

GOLDEN-FRONTED WOODPECKER (WEST MEXICO) (*Melanerpes aurifrons polygrammus*) – The only spot that we expected to find this species on tour was the dry wash at KM 77. Sure enough, we found a couple of these alongside the Gray-breasted.

YELLOW-BELLIED SAPSUCKER (*Sphyrapicus varius*) – Our first day yielded one or two of these migrants at the higher elevations above Teotitlán. [b]

LADDER-BACKED WOODPECKER (*Picoides scalaris*) – Our birding around Pollo Nino and the dirt, western spur road beyond it were good for this dry-country species.

HAIRY WOODPECKER (SOUTH MEXICAN) (*Picoides villosus jardinii*) – Believe it or not, these WERE Hairy Woodpeckers! Note the subspecies. There are half a dozen subspecies of this familiar woodpecker and some of the ones found farther south look quite a bit different. In this part of the world, it's a species of high elevations and that's where we found them, places like Cerro San Felipe.

NORTHERN FLICKER (*Colaptes auratus*) – Although these were probably the *C. a. mexicanus* "Red-shafted" variety, beware of intergrades of this complicated species. All the ones we detected were either flyovers or heard-only.

Falconidae (Falcons and Caracaras).

CRESTED CARACARA (*Caracara cheriway*) – Fairly common on the valley floor, these were seen on most of our birding days.

AMERICAN KESTREL (*Falco sparverius*) – These small falcons were spotted sitting on power lines at a variety of locations throughout the trip.

Psittacidae (New World and African Parrots).

WHITE-FRONTED PARROT (*Amazona albifrons*) – We'll include these here but be warned that many parrots in urban areas like this are suspected of being ex-pets! We had a few of these fly by as we waited for the bus one morning.

Furnariidae (Ovenbirds and Woodcreepers).

STRONG-BILLED WOODCREEPER (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Xiphocolaptes promeropirhynchus sclateri*) – Whew, talk about last minute! We eventually found a pair of these on Cerro San Felipe late in the evening during our owling adventure. This population was essentially unknown a decade ago. Additionally, they sound very different from other populations which should make you wonder if they might be a separate species!

WHITE-STRIPED WOODCREEPER (*Lepidocolaptes leucogaster*) – This Mexican endemic gave us quite the run-around on a couple of occasions. Although we heard them well, only a few came close enough to see. [E]

SPOT-CROWNED WOODCREEPER (NORTHERN) (*Lepidocolaptes affinis affinis*) – Our first encounter with this mid-upper elevation species was one we heard while preparing our picnic dinner. Thankfully we caught up to a couple more as we birded the Yuvila Road on our final morning.

Tyrannidae (Tyrant Flycatchers).

NORTHERN BEARDLESS-TYRANULET (*Camptostoma imberbe*) – Although it's easy to hear the mournful call notes of this flycatcher, they're much harder to see. We eventually came face-to-face with one at the KM 77 wash.

PILEATED FLYCATCHER (*Xenotriccus mexicanus*) – We ended up hearing quite a few of these during our tour of Monte Albán but our only views were from the trail we hiked before entering the ruins. [E]

TUFTED FLYCATCHER (*Mitrephanes phaeocercus*) – Fairly common above Teotitlán, these buffy-colored flycatchers were spotted at El Jilguero and Rio Verde.

GREATER PEWEE (*Contopus pertinax*) – The Pollo Nino area was especially loaded with these big pewees. Our scope looks made it possible to even see the hooked tip of the bill.

WILLOW FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax traillii*) – We got to study this migrant flycatcher at the KM 77 wash. It was calling alongside a Least Flycatcher which was a fun comparison. [b]

LEAST FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax minimus*) – One of these migrant empids was at the KM 77 wash giving "whit" call notes near a calling Willow Flycatcher. [b]

HAMMOND'S FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax hammondi*) – This is another migrant empid (short for the genus *Empidonax*). These favored the taller forests at higher elevations where they would perch quite high. [b]

DUSKY FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax oberholseri*) – Another in the series of migrant empids. We encountered just a couple of these within the ruins of Monte Albán where they favored to perch quite low. [b]

CORDILLERAN FLYCATCHER (*Empidonax occidentalis*) – This empid, unlike the previous four species, will actually breed here in the mountains of Oaxaca. These breeding birds are the southernmost breeders of this species (they range north into Canada).

BLACK PHOEBE (*Sayornis nigricans*) – Fond of water, these flycatchers were seen at Presa Piedra Azul and along a few creeks.

VERMILION FLYCATCHER (*Pyrocephalus rubinus*) – A welcome sight (and seen every day of tour!). These fireballs were fairly common and, given the seasonality, were amped up and doing a lot of flight displays.

DUSKY-CAPPED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus tuberculifer*) – Although we heard several, only one was spotted at El Jilguero.

ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER (*Myiarchus cinerascens*) – This *Myiarchus* is a migrant and we chanced into several in the dry scrub habitats of Pollo Nino, the Teotitlán area, and KM 77. [b]

NUTTING'S FLYCATCHER (NUTTING'S) (*Myiarchus nuttingi inquietus*) – Extremely similar to the previous species, this *Myiarchus* is best identified by voice. Our best looks came from the KM 77 wash.

BROWN-CRESTED FLYCATCHER (ARIZONA) (*Myiarchus tyrannulus magister*) – Another *Myiarchus*, this one has a monster bill. We found this resident species in the KM 77 wash area.

GREAT KISKADEE (*Pitangus sulphuratus*) – Better late than never! We finally caught up to this common species at our hotel on our final afternoon!

SOCIAL FLYCATCHER (SOCIAL) (*Myiozetetes similis pallidiventris*) – Rather scarce. A pair along the road near Yagul were our only ones.

TROPICAL KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus melancholicus*) – Common and widespread, these were heard calling most mornings at our hotel.

CASSIN'S KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus vociferans*) – This was our most numerous kingbird and it was seen nearly every day. [b]

THICK-BILLED KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus crassirostris*) – We had two encounters; first above Teotitlán and then another calling near Monte Albán.

WESTERN KINGBIRD (*Tyrannus verticalis*) – One or two were seen briefly at Monte Albán. [b]

SCISSOR-TAILED FLYCATCHER (*Tyrannus forficatus*) – One of these graceful flycatchers, which are in the same genus as kingbirds, flew over the hotel one morning! [b]

Laniidae (Shrikes).

LOGGERHEAD SHRIKE (*Lanius ludovicianus*) – Our one and only sighting came at our first stop on our first day, below Teotitlán.

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

CHESTNUT-SIDED SHRIKE-VIREO (*Vireolanius melitophrys*) – What a big and gorgeous vireo! It took a couple of minutes of searching but we eventually trained a scope on one perched quite high in the canopy on the hillsides above Teotitlán. We would go on to hear them several more times including along the Yuvila Road.

GOLDEN VIREO (*Vireo hypochryseus*) – This snazzy endemic vireo turned up in several locations including the Pollo Nino corner as well as downslope at KM 77. [E]

SLATY VIREO (*Vireo brevipennis*) – Goodness, it took quite an effort but we were eventually rewarded with brief views of this attractive endemic at Monte Albán. [E]

DWARF VIREO (*Vireo nelsoni*) – What is normally a very skulky and hard-to-see vireo, a surprisingly-bold bird appeared on the hillsides above Teotitlán. Not only did it come out, it moved around in bare bushes giving everyone a decent look. [E]

HUTTON'S VIREO (*Vireo huttoni*) – These look like slow-moving kinglets. We saw (and heard) several during our time at higher elevations in the pine-oak forests.

CASSIN'S VIREO (*Vireo cassinii*) – One of these was heard singing on our second day when we were up on Cerro San Felipe. [b*]

BLUE-HEADED VIREO (*Vireo solitarius*) – We got a few glimpses of one on our final day as we birded the Yuvila Road. Of the three species formerly lumped in the "Solitary Vireo" complex, this species is the only one found in the Eastern USA. [b]

PLUMBEOUS VIREO (*Vireo plumbeus*) – The very burry quality of the song was a good hint to the identity of this bird. [*]

WARBLING VIREO (*Vireo gilvus*) – A fairly common player in the many mixed flocks we stumbled across. [b]

Corvidae (Crows, Jays, and Magpies)

DWARF JAY (*Cyanolyca nanus*) – Success! This range-restricted specialty is only found in a small part of Mexico. They took a while to find but they finally materialized over our heads in a mixed flock including Gray-barred Wrens. [E]

WHITE-THROATED MAGPIE-JAY (*Calocitta formosa*) – Now THIS is a showy jay! We found a small flock as we birded the wash at KM 77.

STELLER'S JAY (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Cyanocitta stelleri coronata*) – We're not sure why but these weren't very common this time around. Still, we squeaked out a couple of sightings at higher elevations such as the La Cumbre area.

WOODHOUSE'S SCRUB-JAY (SUMICHRAST'S) (*Aphelocoma woodhouseii sumichrasti*) – When "Western Scrub-Jay" was recently split, the "Sumichrast's" subspecies was then joined on to Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay. We had fairly good luck with these with several sightings early on including scope looks near the Pollo Nino/Crucifijo Dump area.

COMMON RAVEN (*Corvus corax*) – Seen on about half of our days, these popped up rather randomly; sometimes around Presa Piedra Azul, other times over the dry wash at KM 77.

Hirundinidae (Swallows)

NORTHERN ROUGH-WINGED SWALLOW (*Stelgidopteryx serripennis*) – Fairly common. This swallow has a more direct style of flying compared to the following two species.

VIOLET-GREEN SWALLOW (*Tachycineta thalassina*) – What a swarm that was swirling over Presa Piedra Azul!

BARN SWALLOW (*Hirundo rustica*) – A few folks saw this fork-tailed swallow in flight a few times. Unfortunately, not everyone managed looks. [b]

Paridae (Tits, Chickadees, and Titmice)

MEXICAN CHICKADEE (*Poecile sclateri*) – High in the trees at high elevations, this chickadee was seen during our time on Cerro San Felipe on our second day.

BRIDLED TITMOUSE (*Baeolophus wollweberi*) – An attractive member of the Paridae family! Our best luck came on the days we visited the oak forests above Teotitlán.

Aegithalidae (Long-tailed Tits)

BUSHTIT (MELANOTIS GROUP) (*Psaltriparus minimus melanotis*) – The black ear patches were quite obvious on some of the ones we saw. We saw them at Monte Albán the best.

Sittidae (Nuthatches)

WHITE-BREASTED NUTHATCH (INTERIOR WEST) (*Sitta carolinensis mexicana*) – The nuthatches we heard (and a few saw) are the southernmost nuthatches in the Americas.

Certhiidae (Treecreepers)

BROWN CREEPER (ALBESCENS/ALTICOLA) (*Certhia americana alticola*) – Although we heard them more than we saw them, these were fairly common in the pine forests at high elevations.

Troglodytidae (Wrens)

ROCK WREN (*Salpinctes obsoletus*) – We may have had to interrupt our interpretive tour at Mitla to see them, but a few of these were seen foraging on the ruins (and later at Monte Albán as well).

CANYON WREN (*Catherpes mexicanus*) – This wren is typically easy to hear but hard to see. We had them both at Yagul and Monte Albán.

HOUSE WREN (NORTHERN) (*Troglodytes aedon parkmanii*) – This migrant subspecies was spotted briefly from the parking lot of Monte Albán. [b]

HOUSE WREN (BROWN-THROATED) (*Troglodytes aedon brunneicollis*) – This resident subspecies of House Wren is typically found at higher elevations. Our best views were along the Yuvila Road on our final day of birding Cerro San Felipe.

BEWICK'S WREN (*Thryomanes bewickii*) – At least heard daily, some folks got looks here and there too. They were especially vocal at our hotel.

GRAY-BARRED WREN (*Campylorhynchus megalopterus*) – What a fascinating endemic species! Although in the *Campylorhynchus* genus (same as our Cactus Wren), this wren is arboreal and prefers to probe through mossy and lichen-covered branches at high elevations. We found a small flock of these just in the nick of time on Cerro San Felipe (along with Dwarf Jays). We would go on to see more along the Yuvila Road on our final day. [E]

RUFIOUS-NAPED WREN (SCLATER'S) (*Campylorhynchus rufinucha humilis*) – Found in dry habitats from Mexico south to Costa Rica, this wren came out for us along the KM 77 wash.

BOUCARD'S WREN (*Campylorhynchus jocosus*) – This endemic was seen nicely on various cacti on our first day below Teotitlán. We would see more including behind our lunch restaurant, Rancho Zapata, and at Monte Albán. [E]

GRAY-BREASTED WOOD-WREN (CENTRAL AMERICAN) (*Henicorhina leucophrys festiva*) – What a skulky little thing! It took a bit of time before we got brief views of this mountain mouse on Cerro San Felipe.

Poliptilidae (Gnatcatchers)

BLUE-GRAY GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila caerulea*) – Rather uncommon on this tour for some reason, only a few of these migrants were seen around the Pollo Nino and Crucifijo Dump area. [b]

WHITE-LORED GNATCATCHER (*Poliptila albiloris*) – This was one of our targets at KM 77 and they fell into place nicely. These are typically found at lower elevations along the coast between Mexico and Costa Rica.

Regulidae (Kinglets)

RUBY-CROWNED KINGLET (*Regulus calendula*) – A few of these fidgety kinglets were seen at high elevations a few times but they were never very common. [b]

Turdidae (Thrushes and Allies)

BROWN-BACKED SOLITAIRE (*Myadestes occidentalis*) – A gifted songster, these thrushes were easy to hear throughout the tour but quite difficult to see. We finally had beautiful, eye-level looks at one sitting motionless on a perch!

ORANGE-BILLED NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus aurantirostris*) – Although it was a "heard only" for most of us, a few lucky people got a quick glimpse at the Crucifijo Dump.

RUSSET NIGHTINGALE-THRUSH (*Catharus occidentalis*) – This endemic thrush was rather sneaky for some! We had repeated chances as we birded the Yuvila Road on our final day. [E]

HERMIT THRUSH (*Catharus guttatus*) – Only one was spotted, a bird that briefly showed up near the stream at Pollo Nino. [b]

BLACK THRUSH (*Turdus infuscatus*) – A few folks at the front with the leaders got a quick but nice look at this handsome thrush up on Cerro San Felipe on our second day. We heard another of these while we were preparing our picnic dinner as well.

CLAY-COLORED THRUSH (*Turdus grayi*) – A common species on the grounds of the hotel.

WHITE-THROATED THRUSH (WHITE-THROATED) (*Turdus assimilis oaxacae*) – Fairly wary, a couple of these moved up-canyon while we were birding the El Jilguero corner above Teotitlán.

RUFIOUS-BACKED ROBIN (*Turdus rufopalliatus*) – This Mexican endemic was fairly common around the hotel and, thankfully, we eventually all had looks by our final day. [E]

AMERICAN ROBIN (MIGRATORIUS GROUP) (*Turdus migratorius phillipsi*) – These non-migratory American Robins, which are the southernmost in the world, are high-elevation thrushes in Oaxaca. We saw a few at ~9000 feet on our final day birding the Yuvila Road.

Mimidae (Mockingbirds and Thrashers)

BLUE MOCKINGBIRD (*Melanotis caerulescens*) – Although a secretive species (usually!), these weren't too hard on this tour including sightings at Monte Albán, above Teotitlán, and even on the hotel grounds. [E]

CURVE-BILLED THRASHER (CURVIROSTRE GROUP) (*Toxostoma curvirostre curvirostre*) – Our very first birding stop on our first day produced a couple of these dry-country specialists below Teotitlán.

OCELLATED THRASHER (*Toxostoma ocellatum*) – Although it took a few minutes of constant searching, we finally connected with this songster high on a scrubby slope above Teotitlán. Scope views were had by all! [E]

NORTHERN MOCKINGBIRD (*Mimus polyglottos*) – Oaxaca is about as far south as this species reaches before it's replaced by Tropical Mockingbird. We saw a few at a variety of stops including some just downslope of Teotitlán.

Motacillidae (Wagtails and Pipits)

AMERICAN PIPIT (*Anthus rubescens*) – These migrants were seen foraging at the edge of Presa Piedra Azul on both of our visits. [b]

Bombycillidae (Waxwings)

CEDAR WAXWING (*Bombycilla cedrorum*) – It had been a good winter for this nomadic species in Mexico and we came across some both at the hotel grounds and then at a fruiting tree in Monte Albán. [b]

Ptiliognatidae (Silky-flycatchers)

GRAY SILKY-FLYCATCHER (*Ptiliognys cinereus*) – Although not quite endemic to Mexico (they barely range into Guatemala), they are still a very attractive and fun species to spend time with. We had good numbers on the slopes of Cerro San Felipe and Teotitlán. The Pollo Nino corner was especially productive where flocks of a dozen or more would swoop over.

Peucedramidae (Olive Warbler)

OLIVE WARBLER (*Peucedramus taeniatus*) – Note the family... it's no longer treated as a "New World Warbler". These pine specialists were quite common at higher elevations at Cerro San Felipe on our second day.

Parulidae (New World Warblers)

LOUISIANA WATERTHRUSH (*Parkesia motacilla*) – One was heard chipping near the stream at Pollo Nino on our final day. [b*]

CRESCENT-CHESTED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis superciliosa*) – This warbler turned out to be one of the most abundant birds at high elevations on the tour. The Yuvila Road was just loaded with them, singing up a storm. In fact, I would guess we tallied 50+ of these on this tour.

ORANGE-CROWNED WARBLER (*Oreothlypis celata*) – This relatively-plain warbler was tallied on three of our days including the first visit to Presa Piedra Azul. This is a migrant species and they'll be heading north shortly. [b]

NASHVILLE WARBLER (*Oreothlypis ruficapilla*) – Spotted only a few times at mid-elevation sites such as El Jilguero and Pollo Nino. [b]

VIRGINIA'S WARBLER (*Oreothlypis virginiae*) – We had only fleeting glances near Presa Piedra Azul on our first day. Unfortunately, not everyone managed to get eyes on it before it bugged off. [b]

MACGILLIVRAY'S WARBLER (*Geothlypis tolmiei*) – Mega-skulky, this migrant played tag with us as it hopped back and forth through a bush on our final day near the road to Yuvila. [b]

YELLOW WARBLER (*Setophaga petechia*) – One of these migrants was spotted by folks on the grounds of the Hotel Mision de Los Angeles. [b]

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (MYRTLE) (*Setophaga coronata coronata*) – This subspecies, which has a white throat (among other things), was always outnumbered by the following subspecies. We ended up with looks at places like Presa Piedra Azul. There have been recent talks of

potentially splitting these out (again) so make a note of the different subspecies. [b]

YELLOW-RUMPED WARBLER (AUDUBON'S) (*Setophaga coronata auduboni*) – An attractive migrant from the north, these were quite common including right on the grounds of the hotel. [b]

BLACK-THROATED GRAY WARBLER (*Setophaga nigrescens*) – We had a few sightings the first two days of tour but then they all but dried up. This is a migrant species that breeds in the western US and Canada. [b]

TOWNSEND'S WARBLER (*Setophaga townsendi*) – A fairly common warbler at high elevations, these were tallied on half of our birding days. [b]

HERMIT WARBLER (*Setophaga occidentalis*) – Wherever we saw the previous species, we almost always found this species as well (and the two will sometimes hybridize). The yellow cheek/head was usually easy to see. [b]

RUFOUS-CAPPED WARBLER (RUFIFRONS GROUP) (*Basileuterus rufifrons rufifrons*) – This sharp warbler was fairly common in brushy sites including a couple at Monte Albán.

GOLDEN-BROWED WARBLER (*Basileuterus belli*) – Wow, this is an attractive warbler! We got glimpses here and there at high elevations including the humid portions of Cerro San Felipe. This species is considered very closely related to Rufous-capped Warbler and, once you think about it, it makes sense.

WILSON'S WARBLER (*Cardellina pusilla*) – A common migrant warbler we found in a variety of habitats and elevations. [b]

RED-FACED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubrifrons*) – Not a common species on this tour, the only one we came across was a bird high above us at the Rio Verde corner. Later it came across the road and a bit lower for better views.

RED WARBLER (*Cardellina rubra*) – A beautiful warbler that's only found in Mexico. We ended up seeing several of these once we got to higher elevations such as La Cumbre of Cerro San Felipe, Yuvila Road, etc. [E]

PAINTED REDSTART (*Myioborus pictus*) – An attractive warbler that's found in pine-oak forests from the US south to Nicaragua. We chanced into a couple at places like El Jilguero and Rio Verde.

SLATE-THROATED REDSTART (*Myioborus miniatus miniatus*) – Sharing the genus with the previous species, this redstart is quite similar except that it lacks the white in the wing. We spotted them at the Crucifijo Dump, El Jilguero, and a few other locations.

Passerellidae (New World Buntings and Sparrows)

BRIDLED SPARROW (*Peucaea mystacalis*) – Who said sparrows were boring?! This is a gorgeous endemic that turned out to be fairly common at Presa Piedra Azul and other dry hillsides. [E]

GRASSHOPPER SPARROW (*Ammodramus savannarum*) – A few of these big-headed sparrows perched up on a fence during some roadside birding below Teotitlán on our first morning. [b]

CHIPPING SPARROW (*Spizella passerina*) – Only a few spots were hosting this familiar migrant this time around; the spur road beyond Crucifijo Dump and then again at Monte Albán. [b]

CLAY-COLORED SPARROW (*Spizella pallida*) – Quite a number of these were foraging on the ground at our first stop below Teotitlán on the first morning. We had side-by-side views of them with Lark Sparrows. [b]

LARK SPARROW (*Chondestes grammacus*) – This is another migrant sparrow that was common at the roadside stop below Teotitlán on our first morning. The white corners to the tail were especially obvious as they flew. [b]

CHESTNUT-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH (CHESTNUT-CAPPED) (*Arremon brunneinucha suttoni*) – A handsome brushfinch of thick undergrowth where, once or twice, we got glimpses of the puffy, white throat. We had looks at Rio Verde (looking downslope into the creek bed area) and then another in the humid forests of La Cumbre.

YELLOW-EYED JUNCO (*Junco phaeonotus*) – Fairly common on the ground in the pine forests at high elevations. Most of our best looks came on our final morning as we birded the road to Yuvila.

LINCOLN'S SPARROW (*Melospiza lincolni*) – This migrant sparrow was spotted along the dirt spur road beyond Crucifijo Dump. [b]

WHITE-THROATED TOWHEE (*Melospiza albicollis*) – Although this endemic is quite range-restricted, found mostly in Oaxaca, they were quite common and we had lots of looks including at the hotel grounds and other dry, bushy sites. [E]

RUFOUS-CROWNED SPARROW (*Aimophila ruficeps*) – Seen twice; first at the dirt spur road beyond the Crucifijo Dump and then again at Monte Albán. This sparrow, although similar to the following species, has a smaller bill with a less contrasty face.

OAXACA SPARROW (*Aimophila notosticta*) – An endemic sparrow that's very nearly restricted just to the state of Oaxaca! We had our first looks at the Pollo Nino corner and then again at the dirt spur road beyond Crucifijo Dump. [E]

SPOTTED TOWHEE (MACULATUS GROUP) (*Pipilo maculatus oaxacae*) – Not abundant on this tour. We had a brief look at the Microondas tower area and then a better look of a singing bird along the Yuvila Road.

COLLARED TOWHEE (*Pipilo ocai*) – This particular towhee gave us fits as it darted back and forth in the thick brush up at La Cumbre on our second day. This species is incredibly similar in plumage to the Chestnut-capped Brushfinch. [E]

RUFOUS-CAPPED BRUSHFINCH (*Atlapetes pileatus*) – The first of our sightings came at Rio Verde where, if you were standing at the right place at the right time, you might have seen it. Thankfully, we found another on our final day at the Cafe Colibri lunch stop. [E]

Cardinalidae (Cardinals and Allies)

HEPATIC Tanager (NORTHERN) (*Piranga flava hepatica*) – Our one and only was spotted in the dry, oak forests on the slopes uphill from Teotitlán.

SUMMER Tanager (*Piranga rubra*) – Only one was spotted at Monte Albán by a few folks. [b]

WESTERN Tanager (*Piranga ludoviciana*) – Especially common at the hotel where the fruiting trees were attracting large numbers of migrants. [b]

RED-HEADED Tanager (*Piranga erythrocephala*) – This *Piranga* tanager is only found in the mountains of western Mexico. Our tour was timed well for finding this species and we ended up seeing several different birds at the Rio Verde corner and then again at the Pollo Nino area. [E]

ROSE-BREASTED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus ludovicianus*) – The Pollo Nino corner hosted this migrant although the looks were brief. [b]

BLACK-HEADED GROSBEAK (*Pheucticus melanocephalus*) – We saw this attractive grosbeak both times in the Pollo Nino area. [b]

BLUE GROSBEAK (*Passerina caerulea*) – A brief sighting at Presa Piedra Azul and then another at Monte Albán. Unfortunately, they always seemed like they had to get somewhere in a hurry. [b]

LAZULI BUNTING (*Passerina amoena*) – This was a good sighting, these are usually missed on this tour. Several females and males perched up at Presa Piedra Azul on our first visit. This is about as far south as this species ever reaches. [b]

INDIGO BUNTING (*Passerina cyanea*) – We chanced into this migrant a couple of times including at the dirt spur road beyond the Crucifijo Dump and again on the dry slopes above Teotitlán. [b]

ORANGE-BREASTED BUNTING (*Passerina leclancherii*) – A crowd-favorite, this gorgeous bunting perched nicely for us at KM 77. This is a fairly range-restricted bunting that's only found in western Mexico. [E]

VARIED BUNTING (*Passerina versicolor*) – Our only encounters with this "flying bruise" (blackish, blue, rosy in color) were of several at the KM 77 wash on our third day.

Icteridae (Troupials and Allies)

EASTERN MEADOWLARK (*Sturnella magna*) – Fairly common in the grasslands below Teotitlán, they were seen on our first morning.

BLACK-VENTED ORIOLE (*Icterus wagleri*) – Also fairly common and quite attractive! This big oriole was seen especially well at the ruins of Monte Albán where a pair was feeding in a flowering tree.

ORCHARD ORIOLE (ORCHARD) (*Icterus spurius spurius*) – Only a few of these small orioles were seen on the hotel grounds including a male on our final afternoon. [b]

STREAK-BACKED ORIOLE (*Icterus pustulatus*) – Fairly common in the wash at KM 77.

BULLOCK'S ORIOLE (*Icterus bullockii*) – A bright male was at the Pollo Nino area both times we visited. [b]

AUDUBON'S ORIOLE (DICKY'S) (*Icterus graduacauda dickeyae*) – This is a large, black-and-yellow oriole that we saw well at the dirt spur road beyond the Crucifijo Dump. Note the subspecies; the "Dickey's" variety is endemic to Mexico.

BALTIMORE ORIOLE (*Icterus galbula*) – This familiar migrant was spotted a few times at mid-elevation sites but was never abundant. [b]

BRONZED COWBIRD (*Molothrus aeneus*) – Seen around the hotel, Monte Albán, and a few other sites in the valley. The red eye always seems to give this brood parasite a devious look.

BROWN-HEADED COWBIRD (*Molothrus ater*) – Not an abundant species on this tour. We spotted one perched up at the KM 77 wash but that was our only confirmed sighting.

GREAT-TAILED GRACKLE (*Quiscalus mexicanus*) – Common and widespread in urban areas.

Fringillidae (Finches, Euphonias, and Allies)

ELEGANT EUPHONIA (*Euphonia elegantissima*) – What a looker! We had numerous encounters with this splendid species including memorable looks at Pollo Nino, Monte Albán, and El Jilguero. This species is quite fond of mistletoe fruit.

HOUSE FINCH (COMMON) (*Haemorhous mexicanus roseipectus*) – The ones we saw around Oaxaca on this tour looked downright supercharged! The bright red plumage gives it a different look from the ones back north.

RED CROSSBILL (*Loxia curvirostra stricklandi*) – A few folks heard some of these calling at La Cumbre but these finches were probably flyovers and weren't heard by most. [*]

LESSER GOLDFINCH (*Spinus psaltria*) – Fairly common, the first views came from Presa Piedra Azul on our first morning.

Passeridae (Old World Sparrows)

HOUSE SPARROW (*Passer domesticus*) – Common in urban areas. [I]

MAMMALS

MEXICAN GRAY SQUIRREL (*Sciurus aureogaster*) – Common at the hotel as well as in the oak forests above Teotitlán.

WHITE-TAILED DEER (*Odocoileus virginianus*) – Spotted by a few folks in the Teotitlán area as we drove by.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Totals for the tour: 197 bird taxa and 2 mammal taxa